



UPTON BY CHESTER AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

Upton Pavilion
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Upton
Chester
CH2 1HD

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Minutes of the meeting of Upton-by-Chester and District Parish Council, held at 7.30 pm on Monday 15th April 2024 at Upton Pavilion, Wealstone Lane, Upton, Chester, CH2 1HD.

Present: Cllr M Carter, Cllr J Ebo, Cllr I Gibson, Cllr Y Gibson, Cllr R Lee, Cllr A Lingard, Cllr S Stanley (Chair) and Cllr H Wilman

In the absence of the Clerk, Cllr Wilman took the minutes.

208.24 OPEN FORUM.

No members of the public were present.

209.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Resolved: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S Akhtar, Cllr H Jackson, Cllr C Jeffery and Cllr H Morgan. Cllr M Bryan was also absent.

210.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest in items on the agenda were made.

211.24 COMMUNITY SAFETY

Resolved: A report from the Upton Police and Community Support Officer, PCSO Eva Williams., was received and noted.

The Council noted that three Upton Community Speedwatch volunteers have been trained.

The Council was pleased to receive advance notice of the dates that the Upton PCSO can attend Committee and Council meetings between now and December 2024.

In a separate meeting with the Chair, PCSO Williams advised that the main concerns reported to her in Upton are around speeding and parking. The PCSO asks that people report parking on double yellow lines at The Bache to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Civil Enforcement team.

Anti-Social Behaviour incidents were noted: on St James Avenue in relation to young people deliberately running into the road; and by young people on the QEII field. It was noted that the Head of Upton High School has met with the Parish Council Chair and has been supportive of encouraging good behaviour of their learners outside of school. Parish Council staff continue to dispose of nitrous oxide cannisters discarded at the Chemistry Pits, and the Police now frequently patrol this area.

Resolved: On the advice of the PCSO, the Council will ensure that undergrowth at the pond on QEII and in the wildlife area at Chemistry Pits is kept low to reduce hidden areas where people might gather.

Resolved: The Assets Management Committee will continue to work with the PCSO to explore deterrents at Chemistry Pits, including considering locking the gates at night.

Resolved: The Council requested a report from the Facilities Manager to understand how effective its CCTV system is in deterring Anti-Social Behaviour.

212.24 MINUTES

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting on Monday 18th March 2024 were accepted by the Council as a true record and signed by the Chair. Proposed Cllr I Gibson; Seconded Cllr R Lee.

Resolved: The above wording will be used in future agendas and minutes.

Resolved: The Council agreed to continue to publish draft minutes on the website for information, once the Chair of a meeting has reviewed them. A note will be placed on the website advising that draft minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting and may be subject to amendment. Minutes that have been approved as a true record of a meeting will be clearly marked as such on the Council's website.

213.24 CLERK'S REPORT

Resolved: The Acting Clerk's report was received and noted.

A further update advised that two more applications had been received for the advertised Locum Clerk/RFO vacancies.

Resolved: The Acting Responsible Financial Officer's report was received and noted.

Resolved: The Acting Line Manager's report was received and noted.

Cllr R Lee explained the changes to parts of the Employment Handbook, to improve Councillor understanding.

214.24 HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Resolved: The Health and Safety report was agreed and noted.

The Council was pleased to note that maintenance issues are progressing well at the Pavilion and at Chemistry Pits.

Resolved: The Council requests that staff obtain advice on whether the rail next to the disabled toilet should be replaced after it was removed due to coming loose.

215.24 ANNUAL MEETING

Councillors were reminded that the Annual Meeting on 20th May deals with a number of governance and statutory items as detailed in the Council's Standing Orders Section 5.

Councillors are requested to fully review all documents before the meeting.

Proposals for changes to the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or policies should be submitted in writing a week before the meeting.

The election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Full Council for 2024-25 will take place at this meeting, and the Chair asked Councillors to give some consideration to this matter.

216.24 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Resolved: The minutes of the following Committees were received and the Council approved all of the Committee recommendations:

- Community Engagement Committee 25.03.24
- Assets Management Committee 25.03.24
- Finance Committee 8.04.24
- Employment Committee 8.04.24

Councillors were reminded that the committee terms of reference and membership for the year 2024-25 will be agreed at the Annual Meeting in May, as well as confirmation of the proposed Meetings Calendar.

Councillors should propose changes around the Committee Structure and the Meeting Schedule for consideration at the May Annual meeting in writing at least a week before the meeting.

Elections for Committee Chairs will take place at a later date at the individual committee meetings.

217.24 PARISH COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Updates were received from the following Working Groups:

- IT Audit Working Group : members are working on the security and back up procedures for the laptop used by the Clerk
- Business Continuity and Emergency plans: this group has yet to meet
- General Risk Assessment: work has progressed well to produce a draft and detailed General Risk Assessment. The Working Group will now allocate some responsibilities and ownership to committees. The Council recognises that staff will be integral to this document so that it can be used in practice now and with future Councils.

Resolved: The GRA Working Group will continue with their work, including proposals for allocation of responsibilities and ownership to specific committees, all actions and how to operationalise the Risk Assessment in practice

218.24 FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS REPORTS

Resolved: An estimate of the 2023/24 Year End position and a Treasury Management report were received and noted.

219.24 BANK ACCOUNTS

Resolved: The Council will open a 95-day Notice Savings Account with Redwood Bank. Proposed by Cllr J Ebo, seconded by Cllr I Gibson. All agreed.

220.24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In view of the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed, the Council resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting for item 13, pursuant to s.1, Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

221.24 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Resolved: The Financial Regulations were waived to extend the Grounds Maintenance Contract for one year to 31 March 2025. The Council will undertake a procurement process for the contract from 1 April 2025.

222.24 The meeting was reopened to the press and the public.

A report on a meeting between the Chair and Upton Junior Football Club was received and noted here.

Resolved: the Facilities Manager will consider the requests for improvements to the pitches including weekly mowing during May and June; better maintenance/reseeding around the goals and bare areas; flattening of the bumps; two people on duty in the shop to serve everyone during training; a trophy cabinet in the Pavilion; and free sanitary protection in the toilets possibly in partnership with Tesco.

The Council noted that the Football Club is awaiting a report from Cheshire Football Association on the current condition of the pitches, with a view to jointly submitting a funding bid to Cheshire FA's grass maintenance programme in partnership with the Parish Council.

223.24 SMALL GRANTS POLICY

Resolved: The updated Small Grants Award Policy was approved.

224.24 FUN DAY

The Council received an update on progress towards the Funday on 14th September.

- The Event Application, Event Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan have been submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council for approval
- Food and Drink stalls have been booked, along with some amusements. The Facilities Manager will continue with the procurement and booking of key suppliers and stalls

- It is planned to invite Samantha Dixon MP and Chester's Mayor Cllr Sheila Little to the event, dependent on any pre-election restrictions.

Resolved: Councillors requested an update on progress with the hire of a marquee for a "village show" type competition.

Resolved: Councillors are asked to submit nominations at least a week before the May meeting for a charity to benefit from a donation from the September Funday.

225.24 CORRESPONDENCE

Resolved: The Council agreed a response to a resident's concerns around the poor road condition and potholes on Upton Drive.

The resident is encouraged to contact highways@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk and if the resident is dissatisfied with the response from the Borough Council's Highways department, to contact the Upton Ward Councillors.

226.24 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

Resolved: The next meeting will be the Parish Council's Annual Meeting on Monday 20th May at 7.30pm.

The meeting finished at 9.20pm.