



# UPTON BY CHESTER AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

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Chester  
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**Minutes of the Upton by Chester and District Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18 March 2024, 7.30pm, at Upton Pavilion, Wealstone Lane, Upton, Chester.**

**Present:** Cllr S Akhtar, Cllr J Ebo, Cllr I Gibson, Cllr Y Gibson, Cllr H Jackson, Cllr C Jeffery, Cllr R Lee, Cllr A Lingard, Cllr H Morgan, Cllr S Stanley (Chair) and Cllr H Wilman

**In Attendance:** one member of the public

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

## **1. OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public wished to comment on any items on the agenda.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were accepted from Cllr M Carter.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests in any of the agenda items.

## **4. COMMUNITY SAFETY**

No members of the Upton Police Team were available to attend the meeting. A report was received and noted.

## **5. MINUTES.**

The Chair signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Cllr Ebo joined the meeting

#### **6. CLERK'S REPORT.**

In the absence of the Clerk, a report was received from the Acting Clerk, the Acting Line Manager and the Acting Responsible Financial Officer. As had been agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February, with the continuing absence of the Clerk on 26<sup>th</sup> February these roles had been taken up on an unpaid basis by the Chair, Cllr Lee and Cllr Wilman.

**Resolved:** Cllr I Gibson's offer to support the Council's new Income and Expenditure reporting at year end was accepted.

**Resolved:** The Facilities Manager will share a calendar with Councillors to indicate his availability to meet with Councillors.

**Noted:** Contextual updates and staff consultation on the new Employee Handbook is delegated to Cllr Lee together with Employment Committee.

#### **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY.**

A report on progress with the WorkNest Health and Safety Audit was received. Two High Priority items remain outstanding:

1. To develop a programme of basic Health and Safety training for staff and volunteers (including Councillors)
2. To produce a suite of risk assessments that cover all activities connected to the Parish Council

**Resolved:** Cllr Lee will facilitate the Health and Safety training for staff and volunteers.

It was noted that WorkNest offer a free training resource for up to five users (extended for UPC to 16) in the first year of the Council's contract, but there will be a charge for their training modules after that.

**Noted:** writing Risk Assessments is an ongoing process and it will take time to put the full suite of Risk Assessments in place

**Resolved:** a budget was agreed to provide safety boots to staff who use grass cutting equipment and/or gardening equipment

#### **8. STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Council received a report on progress to date, and the Chair thanked all Council members for their contribution and continued support.

A strong theme has begun to emerge around people having pride in where they live, and the potential for enhancing the visual appearance of Upton. This may lead to a Best Kept Village entry or equivalent.

**Resolved:** the Joint Chairs Strategic Group will make a proposal to full council in May on the next steps.

## **9. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

**Resolved:** Cllr Stanley and Committee Chairs (min 3 Cllrs) will meet to plan this event, to be held in April or May, and to agree a Communication Plan.

**Resolved:** the event will draw people in through inviting representatives from relevant organisations to answer questions on pertinent issues in Upton.

## **10. COMMITTEE MINUTES.**

The following minutes were received from recent Committee meetings and their contents noted:

- Assets Management Committee 26.02.24
- Planning Committee 26.02.24
- Finance Committee 11.03.24
- Employment Committee 11.03.24

**Resolved:** Following advice from WorkNest, the Employment Committee will recruit a part-time locum Clerk and a part-time locum Responsible Financial Officer. The roles will be paid for by funds previously set aside for an Assistant Clerk role in 2024/25.

**Resolved:** the Council appointed Councillor Ian Gibson to the Finance Committee.

**Resolved:** the Council appointed Councillor Yvonne Gibson to the Asset Management Committee.

## **11. FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS REPORTS.**

Partly completed reports were received for items a) and b) because the Council has not been able to gain access to all of its accounting systems whilst the Clerk is absent. As a result, d) could not be completed. No accounts have been updated for March at this point.

- a. Details of payments and receipts for February.
- b. A budget variance report.
- c. A statement of bank accounts.
- d. Bank reconciliation at end February 2024

**Resolved:** The Chair will endeavour to gain full access to Council accounting systems.

## **12. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORT.**

Cllr Akhtar presented a written report to be published on the Parish Council website. The Ward Councillor has been busy with lots of concerns from residents mainly with regards to parking; potholes; drainage; works in and around Upton; speeding and dog poo on streets.

Cllr Akhtar urged residents to share their views on the following Borough Council consultations:

1. [West Cheshire Museums and Libraries Consultation 2024 | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) – closing date 2 April 2024
2. [Working together for a Wilder Cheshire and Warrington | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) – closing date 31 March 2024

**Resolved:** the Chair will respond on behalf of the Parish Council to both Cheshire West and Chester Council's consultations in line with the feedback received in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

Cllr Akhtar attended a meeting on the Borough Council's Local Plan and what this will mean for Upton. Cheshire West and Chester Council Officers commended Upton's Neighbourhood Plan which had been developed by the Parish Council together with residents.

**Resolved:** thanks will be conveyed to residents David and Jean Evans who were instrumental, along with Cllr Stanley, in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Upton.

## **13. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair has prepared a response to a resident concerning Highways issues and roadworks, and the resident will be encouraged to contact [highways@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:highways@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) who are best placed to respond to the concerns.

A suggestion to consider a 'community champion' award scheme was welcomed by the Council and will be considered at a future date.

**Resolved:** a letter of thanks, from the Chair of the Council, will be sent to the volunteer who litter picks on Weston Grove as an appreciation of their efforts.

#### **14. ROADS AND TRAVEL**

The formation of a Working Group to act on road and travel issues will be deferred until Council has more capacity.

#### **15. USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Resolved:** the Council approved the Information Technology policy.

**Resolved:** the Council approved the terms of engagement for the Council's IT services consultant.

#### **16. INTERNAL AUDITOR**

**Resolved:** JDHBS were appointed as the Internal Auditor to the Council for the 2023/2024 financial year.

#### **17. GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Resolved:** A Working Group, led by Cllr Lingard and joined by Cllr I Gibson, will report to the May meeting on progress, and draw on Cllr expertise and outside expertise where necessary.

#### **18. COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**Resolved:** Cllr Lingard will share an update on Funday plans

**Resolved:** the Council will purchase a D-Day flag to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day

**Resolved:** the Council will not support a commercial funfair in May due to limited Councillor capacity at this time

The Council thanked Cllr Jackson for her preparation of an online newsletter, which will be shared with key community contacts, with the expectation that they will cascade it to their members and contacts.

#### **19. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.**

**Resolved:** the date and time of the next full Council meeting is Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.