

UPTON BY CHESTER AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL



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Minutes of the Upton by Chester and District Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11 December 2023, 7.30pm, at Upton Pavilion, Wealstone Lane, Upton, Chester.

Present: Cllr S Akhtar, Cllr J Ebo, Cllr C Jeffery, Cllr R Lee, Cllr H Morgan, Cllr S Stanley (Chairperson) and Cllr H Wilman.

In attendance: Suzi Bull (Clerk/Proper Officer), one member of the public.

174.23. OPEN FORUM.

A representative of The Heath Youth Club attended the meeting to speak on agenda item 10; the draft budget.

A request for financial support towards the cost of recruiting a qualified youth worker and for new equipment was received.

Resolved: noted. Agenda item 10 will be brought forward.

175.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence, with reasons, were received from Cllr Bryan, Cllr Carter, Cllr Jackson and Cllr Lingard.

Apologies for late arrival were received from Cllr Akhtar.

Resolved: Noted.

176.23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Resolved: Cllr Lee declared a personal interest in part of agenda item 10; draft budget, in relation to The Heath Youth Club for which he is a trustee.

Agenda item 10 (Minute no: 183.23), was taken here.

177.23 COMMUNITY SAFETY.

Members of the Upton Safer Neighbourhood Team were unable to attend the meeting.

A crime report was received and circulated.

The Council discussed the frequency of attendance at Parish Council meetings by members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

It is understood that the Police and Crime Commissioner expects attendance at any meeting at which it is requested.

All ranks of police officers may attend; it is not restricted to that of the PCSO.

Resolved: Further consideration of the attendance of Safer Neighbourhood Team officers at Parish Council meetings will be referred to the Community Engagement Committee.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Clerk will write to the Beat Manager to advise him of the PCC's commitment to an officer being available to attend a Parish Council meeting when requested.

178.23 MINUTES.

Resolved: The Chairperson signed the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20 November 2023.

179.23 CLERK'S REPORT.

A report from the Clerk on action taken on resolutions made at the last meeting was received.

Mill View School Parking – a response to the Parish Council's request to see the school's road traffic plan was received and circulated. However, a plan was not available; the Parish Council was referred to CW&C Council.

Resolved: That reports regarding road safety will be reported to CW&C Council via the 'report it' portal to build the case for further parking restrictions.

180.23 HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The Parish Council received a copy of the new Risk Assessment as produced from the Health and Safety audit undertaken in November.

Actions from the audit are ranked; it was acknowledged that some more urgent level 2 actions such as an electrical wiring test at the pavilion have been carried out. It was also acknowledged that there is much work to be done to bring the overall risk assessment into a 'low risk' category from the current 'moderate risk' status.

Resolved: Cllr Lee, Cllr Morgan and Cllr Jeffery will assist the Clerk and the Facilities Manager in creating a program of work to address the H&S actions required. Worknest will be asked to include the smaller Parish Council owned sites such as the War Memorial and Village Pump along with an assessment of trees and in the next audit.

The Clerk confirmed the current process for winter gritting is that on previous insurance advice the Parish Council does not carry out regular gritting of its premises.

Resolved: Further advice will be clarified with the current insurer and Worknest.

'Near-miss' incidents observed by Councillors will be reported to Pavilion staff.

181.23 COMMITTEE MINUTES.

The draft Minutes of Committee meetings held since the last meeting were received.

- Planning 20.11.23
- Community Engagement 27.11.23
- Assets Management 27.11.23
- Planning 04.12.23

The following recommendations were approved:

Resolved: The current Website and social media Policy will be enforced and Cllr Jeffery and Cllr Lingard will be moderators on the website and social media.

Strategic Plan working party - no further meetings have taken place. It was acknowledged that work on 'strengthening foundations' in the Parish Council by way of the Employment Committee, the Finance Committee and the Health and Safety Audit are going well.

182.23 FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS REPORTS.

Resolved:

- **A list of payments, receipts and balances were received and noted.**
- **A budget variance report was received and noted.**

183.23 BUDGET.

This item was taken earlier in the meeting.

It was proposed by the Chairperson that Standing Orders be suspended to give the opportunity to a member of the public to join the discussion regarding a grant to the Youth Club.

Resolved: Approved.

Last year a grant of £3,000 to the Youth Club was agreed as a one-off budget line. It was suggested that in future the Youth Club should apply for grant funding via the Parish Council's small grant scheme. The annual value of the small grant scheme is currently £1,000.

Resolved:

The small grant scheme application form will be reviewed and updated as required. Once done the Clerk will liaise with the representative of the Youth Club and provide an application form.

The Parish Council will consider an increase to the small grant scheme fund in order to offer wider support to community projects.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

The Parish Council received and considered the draft budget. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee stated that the budget was still very much a draft and open to further discussion.

Also, as it stands, the budget would benefit from further scrutiny to ensure that committee requests are backed up by realistic predicted costs and that projects identified to be included will have the staff or volunteer resources to facilitate them.

The draft budget is set at an increase of 5 % against last year (in line with approximately +5% inflation rate and anticipated spending).

It was acknowledged that for the benefit of Upton residents, 'communication' is key; any increase will need to be justified.

Resolved: The Chairpersons of the Asset Management Committee and the Community Engagement Committee will review the relevant sections of the draft budget. After which, further discussion with the Clerk and the Chair of Finance will take place with a view to reducing the draft budget.

A final draft budget will be presented to the full Parish Council in January.

Cllr Akhtar arrived at the meeting at 20.08pm.

184.23 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORT.

A verbal report was provided by Cllr Akhtar on Borough Council matters which affect Upton.

A written copy will be provided to the Clerk and posted onto the website.

Resolved: The Parish Council will submit a response to the CW&C Council Travel Plan consultation in January. This will also be referred to the UPC Planning Committee as an action from the Neighbourhood Plan.

185.23 CORRESPONDENCE.

No correspondence requiring a decision of the Parish Council was received.

186.23 REPORT FROM THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER.

Members received feedback from the Police and Crime Commissioner liaison meeting; as mentioned above, there is an expectation that a representative of community policing is available to attend Parish Council meetings when requested. Information was provided on the availability via the P&CC of a static speed camera for use in the parish. However, only 9 cameras are available for use in Cheshire.

Resolved: That in January the Parish Council will consider a potential site for a speed camera to be used effectively.

187.23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

Resolved: The date and time of the next meeting will be 15 January 2024.

Meeting closed at 21.10pm