



# UPTON BY CHESTER AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the meeting of Upton by Chester and District Parish Council, held on Monday 10 January 2022, 7.30pm, Upton Pavilion, Wealstone Lane, Upton.

**Present:** Cllr A Bennion (Chairman), Cllr S Booth, Cllr M Bryan, Cllr M Carter, Cllr Greenhalgh, Cllr J Houlbrook, Cllr G Hulmes, Cllr M Keenan, Cllr N Poulton, Cllr F Samuel and Cllr B Walker.

**In attendance:** Suzi Bull (Clerk/Proper Officer), members of public.

## 1. OPEN FORUM.

A member of the public attended the meeting to make comments on agenda item 11. A statement was read out containing the opinion of the member of public on several matters regarding the Parish Council's consideration of the appointment of an additional officer.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman thanked the member of public for their comments.

A member of the public attended the meeting who had sent a written representation for agenda item 12 on the day of the meeting, regarding the draft budget. This had been circulated by the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman thanked the member of public for their comments.

The Chairman asked the Council to approve bringing forward agenda item 11 and 12. Approved.

## 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence, with reasons provided, were received from the following Councillors:

Cllr Evans

Cllr J Egerton-Parry

Cllr T Egerton-Parry

Cllr Schmidt  
Cllr Southward

**Resolved: the apologies for absence were noted.**

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **4. COMMUNITY SAFETY.**

No member of the community safety team were present at the meeting and no crime report was available.

### **5. MINUTES.**

**Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Houlbrook, seconded by Cllr Greenhalgh. All agreed.**

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

**Resolved: the Clerk's report was received and noted.**

### **7. COMMITTEE MINUTES.**

General Purposes Committee 22 November. **Enc**  
Employment Committee 29 November – cancelled.  
QE II Sub-Committee 29 November – cancelled.  
Communications Committee 8 November - cancelled.  
Finance Committee 8 November - cancelled.

**Resolved: the committee meeting Minutes were received.**

### **8. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

The Chairman of the Steering Group was not present at the meeting. The Clerk reported that the plan is currently at the Regulation 16 Publicity Stage which starts formally on Thursday 13 January.

### **9. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS.**

Resolved: a verbal report from Cllr Bryan and a written report from Cllr Houlbrook on matters which affect Upton were received.

Cllr Houlbrook reported that a planning application at Chester Zoo has been called in for consideration by CW&C Council's Planning Committee.

**Resolved: the Clerk will convene a Planning Committee meeting on 17 January to consider the planning applications.**

### **10. FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS REPORTS.**

**Resolved: Payment of invoices for goods and services rendered were approved. Receipts and details of current balances were noted. Proposed by Cllr Bennion, seconded by Cllr Greenhalgh.**

### **11. APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL OFFICER. Taken after item 3**

As part of a wider discussion the Parish Council Finance Committee created an 'action list' for the Parish Council. One of the items was to carry out a workforce and

skills audit for the purpose of assessing how Parish Council can deliver its projects and services. Under LGA 72 s112 a Council must appoint sufficient officers to discharge its functions. No decisions have been made with regards to the appointment of additional staff, however, should this be decided as the best course of action, the Employment Committee asked for provision to be made in the budget to support this and asks for the Parish Council to consider the potential action of the Employment Committee and to approve the provision of supporting funds in the new budget.

**Resolved: The Parish Council supports the Employment Committee in the review of the workforce and skills of the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Keenan, seconded by Cllr Houlbrook.**

**Vote: for - 11. Unanimously carried.**

### **12. BUDGET. Taken after item 3**

Over the past few years some costs have increased significantly and income has reduced due to the pandemic. Insurance and energy costs are expected to rise significantly in the next financial period. Investment in the Parish Council facilities and staff will expand the capacity for more income. Reserves are at the low end of what may be considered prudent according to the Governance and Accountability for the Smaller Authorities Guide.

The budget as proposed will result in an increase of 0.83p per month per household.

**Resolved: The budget as proposed was approved.**

**Proposed by Cllr Greenhalgh, seconded by Cllr Houlbrook.**

**Vote: for – 11. Unanimously carried.**

### **13. QE II PROJECT UPDATE.**

The Chairman of the QE II Sub-Committee provided a verbal update on progress with the playground and the tennis courts projects.

A request was put forward to refurbish the outdoor gym equipment rather than to dispose of it. Cllr Bryan offered funding towards this from his Members Budget.

**Resolved: noted.**

### **14. POND.**

**Resolved: the new pond will not be fenced off.**

### **15. GRANT AWARD SCHEME.**

An application has been received for funds from UPC's small grants scheme.

**Resolved: that the Parish Council is unable to offer funding to this applicant as it is funded by another authority.**

### **16. INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT TASKFORCE.**

The CW&C Council's Sustainable Transport Taskforce and Active Travel Forums have been replaced by the Integrated Sustainable Transport Taskforce. The new group will only invite attendees from its 'core membership'; UPC is not part of that group.

**Resolved: it is noted that UPC has not been invited to attend the meetings of the new group. The Clerk will request regular updates on the work and progress of the ISTT.**

**17. COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Members were asked to consider if the structure of UPC committees was meeting the needs of the Parish Council and if the number of meetings held were appropriate or as indicated by recent non-attendance, counterproductive to achieving results.

**Resolved: The full Parish Council meeting schedule will remain unchanged. The General Purposes Committee will absorb the work of the Communications Committee. The Employment and Finance Committees will be retained but fewer meetings will be scheduled.**

**The QE II Sub-Committee will become a working party; all decisions will be ratified at the General Purposes Committee meetings.**

**Online working party meetings will be held in lieu of committee meetings with any decisions being deferred to or ratified at the next meeting.**

**The Clerk will draft a new meeting schedule to be circulated and approved at the next meeting.**

**18. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.**

Resolved: The date and time of the next meeting will be on 14 February 2022 at 7.30pm.

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