



Upavon Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 15th January 2025 7pm

Village Hall, Andover Road, Upavon

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm

25/01	Absence apologies and Declaration of Interests (CLB) Present: Chairman Charles Leigh-Bennett (CLB), Vice-Chairman Andrew Flack (AF), Anthony Gallagher (AG), Rebecca Lamb (RL), Phil Garside (PG), Tom Bradshaw (TB), Rosalind Ayling (RA), Bee Barff Clerk (BB), Paul Oatway WCC (PO), Lesley Dolan Village Hall Committee, Anna Morton from Avon Valley Practice and 7 members of the public. Apologies: Apologies were received from Grant Ingleton Lt Col (GI).	
25/02	Minutes of previous meeting (CLB) The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 20 th November 2024 were approved and signed as a true copy by the Chairman. (CLB).	
25/03	General Updates I. Anna Morton from Avon Valley Practice CLB expressed concerns about the uncertainty surrounding the impact of Wiltshire Medical Practice's reluctance to undertake unpaid work. Anna explained that negotiations are ongoing and that she will provide an update as soon as possible. Anna also explained that the practice is implementing a new phone system that will allow patients to access most online services via telephone 24/7. For example, ordering medication will be directly linked to a patient's medical records, simplifying the medication collection and appointment booking processes. This improvement aims to enhance accessibility for all patients and is expected to be in place within 4–6 weeks. A member of the public enquired about the Practice's YouTube updates, and their question was answered. II. Updates from PO PO explained that the Household Support Scheme and grants are still available, but only 17% of the £7 million allocated has been claimed, highlighting the need for increased public awareness to encourage more applicants. PO also mentioned that the new government wants England to be devolved, and Wiltshire, Somerset, and Dorset councils have come together to form a new authority called the "Heart of Wessex." Wiltshire is encouraging Swindon to join, though this has not been met with a positive response. The new authority will require a mayor, despite strong objections from within, as the government will reduce its £20 million budget for the authority unless a mayor is	

	<p>appointed. PG inquired if the mayor would be elected by the public, and PO confirmed that an election will be held in May. PO also reported that he spoke to Mark Stensby from WC Highways, and plans are in place for the Greyflags pavement, with a total cost of £44,000. £25K of this will be supported by the WC, provided UPC agrees to contribute and proceed. All councillors agreed to the proposal and requested PO to send confirmation to Mark. PO added that the investigation into the bridge supports is still ongoing. The engineer will revisit the site to follow up on the enquiry that TG had sent to PO.</p> <p>III. Trenchard Lines – no updates</p> <p>IV. Village Hall Lesley expressed that the Village Hall Committee was not entirely pleased with the proposal to increase UPC's annual donation to £500 on the condition that the Parish Council would receive 25 hours of free hall use for meetings. She also highlighted the history behind the donation, explaining that the Village Hall had always received £500, but approximately 4–5 years ago, this was reduced to £250 without explanation. While the committee remained grateful for the support, the reduction in funding meant they were unable to offer UPC free use of the hall. The Village Hall Committee has now requested that UPC review the possibility of increasing the donation, particularly in light of the £1,000 donation given to St Mary's Church. Lesley also emphasised that the Village Hall never retained any profits, as all funds raised were donated to charity. At this point, CLB interjected and requested that Lesley hold her concerns until the discussion reached the relevant agenda item.</p>	
<p>25/04</p>	<p>Recruitment of Councillors UPC is continuing to welcome applications from prospective new councillors.</p>	
<p>25/05</p>	<p>Finance Bank reconciliation on 8th January 2025 has been shared and approved. A cheque for £64.66 for UPC Website hosting fee has been signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chair. BB explained that the Precept for 2025-2026 will increase from £31,000 to £36,500 due to inflation and the acquisition of new land. This increase is necessary to ensure the continued maintenance of the village and its facilities, as previous savings had been used in past years to avoid raising the Precept. The increase represents a 16.60% change for Band D households, equating to an additional £10.00 per household, based on the Council Tax Precept Calculator. The paperwork to be submitted to Wiltshire Council was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.</p>	
<p>25/06</p>	<p>Councillor updates of work undertaken since last meeting:</p> <p>I. SIDs police reporting (AF) AF attended the Area Board meeting and requested increased police presence in the village. He noted that a new inspector at Devizes is very keen to engage with and support Upavon.</p> <p>II. Rights of Way & Landmarc update (TG/CLB)</p>	

	<p>TG reported that Watson Close has been cleared, and the invoice for the work will be arriving shortly. CLB also mentioned that Landmarc has carried out significant tree cutting work at the lower playing field.</p> <p>III. Community Centre / Blue bus UPC will continue to support the Blue Bus project and has recently applied for funding for it through the Area Board. Additionally, UPC is exploring ways to support the children of the village, including the construction of a community centre.</p>	
<p>25/07</p>	<p>Issues for discussion</p> <p>I. WC Rural Play area and land transfers UPC has sent the confirmation to Wiltshire Council that our parish is willing to take on the responsibility of the playground. As part of the process, open space notices were published on site last week. These notices will allow for any objections to be submitted by the 30th of January. Assuming there are no objections and the legal documents are agreed upon, we are on track to complete the transfers by February 2025. UPC has potential playground plans, and BB will share them with the local kids who sent the new playground plan proposal letters for their opinion. PO added that UPC can always apply for grants for activities or facilities aimed at older children. PG suggested that the decision regarding the playground plan should be added to the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>II. Village Hall donation Lesley reiterated that UPC's suggestion of increasing the donation to £500, along with 25 hours of free use of the hall, only resulted in an additional £38 compared to the previous arrangement, which was not quite what they had expected. She recalled that during the meeting between the Village Hall Committee and UPC regarding the donation increase, UPC had been positive about matching the donation to the village hall with the amount given to the church. PG proposed his support for the idea of a £1,000 donation with 25 hours of free use of the hall, and the proposal was agreed upon. BB added that the £500 donation would need to be rearranged within the previously agreed budget.</p> <p>III. Whistledown pathway (Yellow brick road) RL reported that the path has been cleared and improved with her personal arrangements and the help of a group of people from Whistledown. It is now wider and in much better condition. PO suggested that if Whistledown residents organise a community group, they could apply for a grant from the Area Board to help cover the maintenance costs for the path.</p> <p>IV. Chapel Lane RA mentioned that a couple of people from the village have raised concerns about the condition of Chapel Lane. AF responded that it is WC's responsibility and should be brought up at the LHFIG meeting. All agreed to raise the issue at the LHFIG, and AF will take it forward to the next LHFIG meeting.</p> <p>V. 21 Down View Disabled parking bay UPC received a proposal from the residents of 21 Down View regarding improvements to access the main road, including the</p>	

	<p>addition of drop curbs and a disabled parking bay. CLB, TG, and Paul visited the property and the site. The proposal needs to be discussed with Highways, LHFIG, and Aster, as the neighbouring property is owned by Aster. PO expressed that this may be difficult to achieve but will speak to Aster about it. AF suggested discussing the matter further at the LHFIG meeting.</p>	
25/08	<p>Clerk's Report & Correspondence BB reported that work is underway to complete the VAT return, and an update will be provided once it has been finalised and submitted. Several public enquiries have been received regarding the grit bin. The salt bags, originally scheduled for delivery in December, have been delayed. However, it has been confirmed that they will be delivered this week. Once received, the grit bin will be refilled promptly to ensure it is ready for use. BB also mentioned that an application for a £2,000 Area Board Grant to support the Blue Bus service is in preparation. The council will be kept updated on the progress of the application.</p>	
25/09	<p>Reports from other bodies –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) - The next LHFIG is on 5th February. II. Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP) - none III. Pewsey Area Board – AF attended, covered above. 	
25/10	<p>Questions and queries from the public A member of the public raised an issue regarding hare coursing and mentioned that she is a long-term resident facing eviction from her neighbour following a noise complaint. No answers were given at the time.</p>	
25/11	<p>Close The meeting closed at 8.40pm</p>	

Bee Barff
Clerk to Upavon Parish Council

29/01/2025

Dates of future meetings on 2025 all at 7pm

- Wednesday, 12th March
- Wednesday, 14th May (including the Annual Meeting)
- Wednesday, 16th July
- Wednesday, 17th September
- Wednesday, 19th November