

# DRAFT

## Upton Snodsbury Parish Council

### Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 7.30pm Upton Snodsbury Village Hall

**Parish Councillors Present:** Martyn Macefield (MM) (Chairman), Alan Grainger (AG), \*Brett Griffiths (BG) \*Cllr Waters  
District/County Cllr L Robinson

**Clerk/RFO:** Nicola Harding

**In attendance:** Four parishioners

**24/11 Apologies:**

Received from Cllr Waters.

**24/12 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations.

**24/14 WCC Community woodland & orchard**

WCC's senior greenspace officer was in attendance to provide the meeting with updates of the Countryside Department's woodland planting initiatives, as part of their Green agenda. Central government and Coronation Heritage funding is enabling 150,000 trees to be planted over a five-year period, on a short list of suitable land owned by the County Council, of which Double Gates Farm is one. A map of this 50-acre plot was circulated for information, outlining plans for 16,000 saplings of various species to be planted over a two-year period in addition to the creation of a community orchard – a small section of land up to the road at the front of the site will be sold. Plastic tubing protecting the saplings is recyclable and necessary to preserve the trees from deer and rabbit grazing. Promotion of the site will take place in two years once the saplings have established and it was agreed this will be a positive public amenity space as well as a haven for wildlife. Two parishioners have offered their time and support in assisting with the first half of planting in addition to the First School, and the remaining trees will be planted in the Autumn. Community involvement is actively encouraged by the Countryside Department in the future once the trees are mature, to undertake pruning and fruit collection.

The Chairman requested updates regarding the Bio-diversity net gain associated with the site – it was confirmed that WCC are not legally permitted to undertake their own net gain and further detail would need to be checked in this regard. It was also noted that Spanish bluebells which have spread locally would need to be monitored, to avoid them spreading further to the planting site.

*\*At this stage in the meeting, due to an emergency, Cllr Griffiths left the meeting and the Council was therefore not quorate. The Chairman requested if Cllr Waters may be able to attend in order to ensure items of business on the agenda could be formally transacted and in the interim, information was shared with the meeting regarding updates from a parishioner's comment and progress reports.*

**24/14 Parishioner's Comments:**

One comment had been received ahead of the meeting regarding the condition of the car park entrance. It was noted that the scheduled car park resurfacing works, earmarked as part of the legacy project, would hopefully be undertaken in the school Summer holidays and in the meantime, the footpath volunteers may be able to assist to complete some surface patching works.

*Action: Clerk to update parishioner, AG to liaise with footpath volunteers.*

**24/17 Progress reports from Parish Activities - brief updates:**

a. NH – *Grass-cutting:* A quotation had been accepted and an order forwarded to Smart Cut for approval of up to 14 cuts for the 2024 season.

*Lengthsman:* The Clerk confirmed that a lengthsman contact from a neighbouring parish has agreed to take on Upton Snodsbury as an additional parish at the start of the new financial year. It was confirmed that Cllr Grainger has made contact to set up a meeting to discuss the role further. *Action: AG/Clerk to complete contract 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and inform WCC lengthsman scheme.*

Cllr Robinson also informed the meeting of new changes initiated by County in reporting lengthsman's monthly tasks – as of 1<sup>st</sup> April, a new lengthsman 'dashboard' scheme will be in operation, whereby Clerks will now be required to submit all tasks completed online for processing and approval by WCC. Trials currently underway have highlighted several concerns raised by Clerks regarding the additional time this extra administrative task is requiring. This will therefore need monitoring as additional paid Clerk's time may be required once the system is up and running.

*Action: Clerk to attend training and report to Cllrs.*

b. MM – *School:* The Chairman requested any updates from Cllr Robinson regarding potential lines to be painted in front of the school to deal with problem parking at peak school times. Cllr Robinson agreed to follow this request up again with WCC Highways. *Action: LR.*

*Village Hall/Legacy project:* Confirmation has been received that both grants applied for towards village hall & car park improvements have been approved and funds are due to be released imminently. It was noted that as costs continue to rise, there may be additional funding opportunities available if needed. It was also agreed that car park resurfacing works will ideally be completed in the Summer holidays, when school parking will not be an issue, and that Cllr Macefield would familiarise with the current car park agreement given this is also used by residents of the Furlongs. None of the scheduled works at the village hall require planning permission as nothing structural is planned.

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*Action: MM to explore parish council car park agreement & liaise with village hall committee regarding schedule of works.*

Subsequent to the meeting, funds have been credited to the Parish Council from Wychavon for the approved Jubilee grant awarded. Cllr Robinson also confirmed that willing volunteers are available to support the project once underway.

c. AG – *Footpaths*: Recent weather has prohibited work, but there has been little cutting back required to date. No reports of damage to gates or stiles had been received. As the footpath volunteer group work regularly along all the public rights of way, it was agreed that the lengthsmen's time would not be required for additional tasks here. For the purpose of the meeting, Cllr Grainger outlined the role of the volunteer group and the area within the parish boundary.

Cllrs were asked to consider if rotten wood removed on the bench near to the bus stop should be replaced. It was agreed that AG would cost up a replacement section of wood. *Action: AG*. It was also noted that brambles growing in this vicinity could be a future task for the new lengthsmen once his role commences.

*Neighbourhood Watch*: Although there is a neighbourhood watch WhatsApp group, there has been little activity in terms of face to face meetings since Covid, so it was agreed that this could be resurrected. There have been some incidents of opportunist thieves in the locality, therefore the recent poor attendance at the parish Smart Water event was disappointing, as an ideal opportunity to gain advice and materials from the rural police crime team to mark and protect property.

*Phone box*: Internal works have been successfully completed and final waterproofing of the base and wood preservation of the shelves will finalise the works. Remaining costs, including the internal works approved in January 2024 and expenses presented under item 24/18, will be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy funds. A date will be agreed for an official opening of the box, to be used as an information hub/book swap, once completed. A payment for the internal works, as formally approved at the January meeting, minute reference 24/06e, is now payable, given the works are complete.

*Action: Clerk/AG/RP*

*\*Cllr Waters arrived at the meeting, and as the meeting was therefore quorate, the Chairman resumed the items of business not yet transacted as per the agenda.*

d. VAS/Safer Roads fund: It was confirmed that the Parish Council has been awarded £3,242 following a successful application to the Safer Roads fund, the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioners grant scheme. The funding will be utilised towards two new vehicle activated speed signs (VAS), one to be positioned opposite the Oak as one was previously located, and another on the existing pole at Cutts Pool. The Parish Council appreciate the support provided by the Police & Crime Commissioner for this double VAS project. WCC Highways had confirmed that it was not possible to site a VAS near to the school due to regulations, however Cllr Robinson suggested a flashing school sign may be an option for consideration in the future. It was agreed that Cllr Macefield & Cllr Waters would attempt to retrieve further data from the existing VAS in use, as this has proved difficult previously, with only partial data able to download. Following the recent road collision at Spetchley, safety along the nearby A422 remains a high priority and Cllr Robinson confirmed that an approach has been made to West Mercia's Police & Crime Commissioner to request possible sites for a speed enforcement van to be located along this stretch of road. Cllr Grainger agreed to look again at the site previously considered suitable, along with additional potential sites which could include, with agreement, the sides of businesses, spare driveways and gateways to tracks only occasionally used. Potential sites will be confirmed with Cllr Robinson.

*Action: Cllrs Macefield, Waters and Grainger.*

The Chairman moved to item 24/15.

## **24/15 Minutes of the last meeting, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024:**

Proposed Cllr Waters, seconded Cllr Grainger, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

## **24/16 Casual vacancies:** Proposal to fill casual vacancy on the Parish Council by co-option.

Proposed Cllr Macefield, seconded Cllr Grainger, all in favour to appoint J Britton as new Cllr.

A new Cllr declaration was signed and completed and the Clerk confirmed that a register of interests form, along with other essential Council documentation would be forwarded after the meeting.

*Action: Clerk to forward documents to Cllr Britton and inform Wychavon's election team of the Council's co-option – there now remains three vacant seats on the Parish Council.*

## **24/18 Finance**

a) Current Balances at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Business Account:	£24,663.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£24,663.67</b>

b) Payments to report:

Salary back-pay	£195.03
*Bow Brook border Morris	£40.00
Salary: February 2024	£323.92

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Village hall hire	£74.40
Salary: March 2024	£323.92
ICO Annual data protection fee	£35.00
Telephone refurbishment expenses	£57.38
Internal audit fee 2022/23 accounts	£60.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,109.65</b>

*\*Cllr Grainger agreed to establish further information for the next meeting for consideration of future donations to Bow Brook Morris group.*

c) Section 106 contributions: confirmation has been forwarded from Wychavon DC of monies received and what they must be spent on, relating to the Owls Homes development of Woodview Cottage & garage site. The following contributions are awarded:

Off-site play provision @ £6,029.19 & Off-site formal sports @ £38,582.02

The Clerk confirmed that confirmation of time scales in which to utilise these funds had been requested from Wychavon's head of legal services & Cllr Waters agreed to liaise with Uspra to request ideas for off-site play provision.

*Action: Clerk to forward response from WDC to Cllrs & Cllr Robinson/Cllr Waters to liaise with Uspra.*

d) Proposal to approve allocation of £1250 from Parish reserves towards VAS purchases/batteries.

*Proposed Cllr Waters, seconded Cllr Macefield, all in favour to approve the payments presented, including the outstanding internal audit fee for the 2022/23 accounts & £1250 from reserves towards VAS expenditure.*

It was also proposed and resolved that Cllr Waters had authority to complete the outstanding Lloyds bank mandate changes to remove old signatories and add two new signatories, given that Cllr Waters is the only existing authorised signatory at present.

*Action: Cllr Waters to upload signed documentation to Lloyds/Cllrs Macefield & Griffiths to confirm changes via email forwarded by Lloyds as received.*

## 24/19 Planning

**W/23/02161/FUL:** Land at Cowsden: Erection of a small timber framed cabin to be used by a local specialist occupational therapist as a sensory room containing specialised equipment and fixtures for the benefit of local autistic children. A decision remains pending, therefore no further updates to report at present.

**W/23/02209/FUL: Land off Chapel Lane** - Construction of 25 homes alongside provision of a new access road, SUDs and landscaping features. Comments of objection were forwarded to WDC on 8 December 2023 – a decision remains pending, therefore no updates to report at present.

Cllr Waters drew attention to a vehicular entrance that has been opened up onto Cowsden Lane, which could mean extra vehicle movements in addition to any potential Orchard site vehicles, should this application be approved. It was agreed that Cllr Robinson would look at this further and following the meeting, it was noted that the main gate into the field is currently swampy with deep ruts, and this may therefore be a temporary drier and more passable access into the field. *Action: Cllrs to monitor/Cllr Robinson to look on site.*

Cllr Robinson confirmed that she is in communication with CC Highways, which is a separate process to the planning application under consideration with the District Council, regarding access concerns and safety at the Pershore Road junction with Cowsden Lane. It was agreed that should the Orchard site application be approved; money would need to be spent on significantly improving the highways access to ensure safety. The Parish Council therefore needs to be fully prepared in its response to this effect.

*Action: MM to formalise responses compiled to date. BG to confirm if aerial images of the junction have been acquired.*

Cllr Robinson also raised the importance of Neighbourhood Plans in providing protection against future development. This can be a lengthy, costly process, however it was confirmed that basic ones can be produced in shorter timeframes. The Chairman, in conjunction with Cllrs Grainger & Britton, agreed to explore this process further.

*Action: MM/AG/JB.*

**W/23/02447/SCR: Land At (OS 9463 5414) Naunton Road**, Naunton Beauchamp - 76 dwellings with access from the B4042 through its southern boundary. A request for a full environmental impact statement was forwarded to WDC on 20/12/23 on behalf of the Parish Council, however a decision remains pending therefore there are no further updates at present. It was confirmed however that Highways have already been asked to consult on this application whilst the environmental impact study is underway.

## 24/20 Correspondence

Platform Housing	Confirmation has been received that the floodlight at Rooftop properties in Hillside Close has now been replaced with a motion sensor version.
WCC	New Community Orchard and Mini Forest Funding available from The Coronation Living Heritage Fund, as reported under item 24/13. Further information is available via WCC's Senior Greenspace Officer: <a href="mailto:WMuggleton@worcestershire.gov.uk">WMuggleton@worcestershire.gov.uk</a> 01905 844 946

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Nigel Huddleston MP

A request to contribute and feature in future parish newsletters to keep residents up to date on local issues currently being resolved, has been forwarded for consideration. It was agreed to include an update in the next March newsletter.

*Action: Clerk to forward to DW as received.*

## **24/21 Reports: District/County Cllr Robinson**

A report received from Cllr Robinson was circulated ahead of the meeting for information. In summary:

- The new District & County Council budgets have been approved. In line with many other regional authorities, the County Council budget will cover a net £22.2 million overspend in funding and significant pressures have been highlighted in respect of children's social care, home to school transport and adult social care. A 4.99% increase in precept has been approved.
- Wychavon has announced positive plans for the district which will support residents' health & well-being, boost the natural environment, transform town centres and increase access to housing. The 'We are Wychavon' plan includes numerous promises to be delivered over the next four years, based upon the council's priorities of People, Place & Environment.
- The County Council, has unveiled a brand new rail strategy to transform travel across the County, which highlights the County's 'ambitions for driving forward rail improvements and recognising the role that rail plays in connecting people, communities and businesses.'
- The director for public health in Worcestershire has urged people and parents across the County to ensure MMR vaccinations are up to date, following a significant measles outbreak across the West Midlands.

It was agreed to ensure that a copy of Cllr Robinson's district and county reports be made available online, to enable greater access to information by residents.

*Action: Clerk to request the March report is uploaded onto the website with CY.*

**24/22 Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at 7pm: *to be confirmed.*

Signed .....

Date.....

**Chairman**