
Upwell Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Upwell Parish Council, Monday 14th April 2025, 7pm

Committee Members: Cllr Aston (Chair), Cllr Gooch, Cllr A Harrison, Cllr Shorting, Cllr Pope, Cllr K Harrison, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Carr, Cllr Judd, Cllr Singh, Cllr Spikings, Cllr Fairbrother (Vice Chair).

Those Present: Cllr Aston, Cllr A Harrison, Cllr Shorting, Cllr K Harrison, Cllr Judd (arrived at 7.20pm), Cllr Gooch, Cllr Fairbrother, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Pope, Cllr Carr, BCllr Spikings, BCllr Rose, CCllr Dawson, M Hilton Clerk.

Public: five

Apologies: Cllr Singh

MINUTES

1. **Welcome & opening remarks.** Cllr Aston welcomed all to the meeting.
2. **To consider and approve apologies for absence:** these were approved.
3. **To declare any conflicts and pecuniary interests on any items on this month's agenda:** None given.
Cllr Spikings wanted it known she does not have any involvement or discussions regarding planning applications that come through Upwell Parish Council as she sits on the planning committee at the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.
4. **Public Forum (ten minutes only):**
 - Mr Bill Smith raised concerns with Cllr Pope rejoining the Council. He reminded Council of past issues when Cllr Pope and Cllr A Harrison had tried to discredit him on social media and in a local store. He also reminded Council that Cllr Pope had misled Council concerning permission to use some tram rail belonging to the Council, taking it on himself to answer. Later Council gave permission but it was too late, as the project had been abandoned and materials and donations returned. At a meeting in camera, Cllr Pope was officially censured by the Council and Mr Smith received an apology.
Cllr Pope was subsequently prosecuted and found guilty of submitting election documents that were proved to be fraudulent. Mr Smith said he believes Cllr Pope does not have the qualities required to be a Parish Councillor and should do the decent thing and stand down.
 - David and Tracey Briggs asked for the Council to consider selling the small garden allotments on Low Side to them. Cllr A. Harrison said these small parcels of land could only be used for growing vegetables, a change of use via planning permission would be required to turn them into garden. The Chair said this would be discussed at the next meeting.
 - Paul Mather discussed the meeting with Jon Fenn from MLC. (see 9vi)

The Clerk asked if any Councillors would like to meet with Terry Jermy MP, as per recent correspondence, all Councillors declined to do so.

The Clerk read a thank you letter from Upwell and Outwell Youth Club for their kind donation.

5. **To approve the Minutes from the last meeting:**
 - February 2025 updated minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
 - March 2025 minutes, Cllr Robinson did not approve these, many members then read the minutes, the Clerk reminded Council they had been sent the minutes twice and should have been read before the meeting. The Chair asked for a show of hands, this was 5 for and 5 against. The Chair used her casting vote and the minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.
6. **To discuss and consider the Action Log from previous meetings:**

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- The Neighbourhood Plan review, this will stay on the action log until more information is received when the Borough Council adopt the Local Plan.
- Reduce the speed limit on New Road, the Clerk has contacted highways but has received no response. It was agreed to take this off the action log.

7. To discuss correspondence regarding Low Side land: please see public forum

8. To discuss the Responsibility Matrix: this was updated. Cllr Gooch asked if Prue Lester could be asked to continue with the working group for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk agreed to ask her.

9. Reports from individual Councillors, Council Groups and Clerk

i. To approve Planning applications decisions:

- Planning Application Consultation 25/00347/F. Variation of Condition 2 and Removal of Conditions 3, 4, and 5 of Planning Permission 24/01325/F: Proposed full application for barn conversion to dwelling, (to extend and alter Class Q approved scheme). Including conversion of adjacent building to associated domestic garage and defining of proposed garden area. at Commercial Buildings Northwest of 4 Millfield Town Street Upwell Norfolk. The Upwell Council Planning Group support this application, as the amendments have no detrimental effect on the permission already granted.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00270/F. Demolition of barn and construction of new self-build 3-bedroom dwelling, and formation of new access at Land and Buildings at E550219 N300679 Back Drove Upwell. The Upwell Council Planning Group objects to this application. The existing barn was granted a PACU3 notification for conversion into a dwelling, with no mention within that notification for its demolition. The demolition of the existing barn in favour of a new residential dwelling, whether on the same footprint or not, suggests that the existing barn was not fit for conversion, and therefore the PACU3 notification should not have been granted. The granting of a PACU3 notification relates only to the existing structure, not demolition and a completely new building. As such, this falls outside the development boundary for new build dwellings and is considered as a development in the rural countryside. Back Drove is unsuitable for regular vehicular usage. Refuse vehicles will need to reverse down to the site as there is no facility for turning. This could prove hazardous for such a vehicle in inclement weather given the overall condition of the Back Drove surface.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00297/O. OUTLINE APPLICATION SELF BUILD- Outline permission for single detached self-build dwelling. at Land E549465 N301039 N of 25 Dovecote Road Upwell. The Upwell Planning Group objects to this application. Despite the removal of hedging etc, the planning group does not believe that full and safe visibility can be achieved, requiring vehicles existing the site to be on the footpath and carriageway before full visibility of other traffic is possible. Any vehicles parked on the road would further restrict visibility. Vehicles approaching from either direction can appear very suddenly. Also, being an outline application, the planning group is concerned about the scale of the proposed two storey dwelling, giving the size of the plot, and would like to see more outline detail. The planning history of the site under applications submitted by 25 Dovecote Road, includes four refused applications and one withdrawn application which should be taken into consideration. If approved, a condition must be included that all vehicles related to the construction of any dwelling should be parked on the site and not on the road, for safety reasons, either under Outline or Reserved Matters.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00499/F. Demolition of existing building, and construction of a single storey dwelling at Storage Building N of West Villas Pius Drove Upwell. The Upwell Planning Group feels it has little choice but to support this application, as the fallback position to the original PACU3 application for this site. Unfortunately, this is becoming the normal practice to demolish buildings which benefit from the PACU3 approval, in favour of a new building.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00489/FM. Extension to factory at Fountain Foods Ltd 79 New Road Upwell Wisbech PE14 9AB. The Upwell Council Planning Group support this application. It is a small extension within an established commercial site.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00468/F. Storage Shed for agricultural use at Red Roofs 113 Small Lode Upwell Wisbech PE14 9BL. The Upwell Council Planning Group support this application. The structure is screened from the highway and does not affect neighbours. Condition that the structure is used for agricultural storage only.
- Planning Application Consultation 25/00476/F. REMOVAL OF CONDITION 2 (AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY RESTRICTION) OF PLANNING PERMISSION M.3846: Erection of bungalow at New Haven Farm, The Pingle Upwell PE14 9BN. The Upwell Council Planning Group supports this application.

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- ii. **To finally resolve the grievance lodged by Cllr Gooch: *Cllr Gooch*.** The Clerk had written a timeline of events so far. A heated discussion followed. The Chair suggested that all three parties involved have a discussion outside of the meeting, Cllr Gooch refused this. Cllr Gooch asked for the whole Council to apologise to her, the Chair asked for a show of hands and this was agreed. The matter is now closed.
- iii. **To discuss quotes for works at Upwell cemetery:** Cllr Shorting had sent a report to Council. Cllr Shorting met with Borough Council Planning Officer and Arboriculturist Brian Ogden again on Tuesday 8th April to discuss tree roots that are erupting in the tarmac driveway and footpath. She has since sent his report to the tree surgeons and groundwork people.

Cllr Pope said Jill Lynn had contacted him regarding her brother's grave. Cllr Pope was told this matter had been dealt with many months ago. Jill Lynn has been informed she can only have kerb set installed by a stonemason and approval needs to be sought from the Parish Council. Cllr Spikings said Cllrs MUST not go off on their own on such matters. Jill Lynn also believes the headstone has been moved, Cllr Judd said categorically this had not happened.
- iv. **To discuss ground water monitoring at Upwell Cemetery:** Cllr Fairbrother has completed the six-month ground water measuring survey. A report has been produced and the main issue is the groundwater level as the EA guidance for a 1m unsaturated zone wouldn't be met without land raising. Given the water is of low sensitivity, the Environmental Solutions Team suggest that single depth burials are limited to 1.20m to ensure they stay above the water table. The site could then operate under exemption conditions. However, this would need EA approval. The Chair asked for a show of hands this was approved. The Clerk will contact the Environmental Solutions Team with the update.
- v. **To discuss dog fouling posters and dog waste emptying:** Cllrs Carr asked if there was anywhere else posters were required, Cllr Gooch said one could go on her fence as Small Lode was an issue. An article has been produced for the magazine which states how much this is costing the parishioners per annum.
- vi. **To discuss the recent Middle Level Commissioners meeting and Riverbank grass cutting:** Cllr Gooch said the conclusion from a recent meeting was that a Health and Safety cut of 1.2m from the aqueduct to Marmont Priory would take place on the North side. This will be about every five weeks. Paul Mather said there maybe some resistance regarding costs and Environmental issues. The MLC are not responsible for cutting the banks other than for H and S reasons. Householders on the South bank should be encouraged to maintain the banks themselves. An article will be in the magazine.
- vii. **To discuss streetlight stock and phased replacement of old stock :** Cllr Harrison asked for quotes for Col no 9057 pole 281 outside 134 School Road and Col no 9095 pole 232 near the church on Town Street. The Quote for a replacement lantern and bracket to be supplied and installed is £495 plus vat per column. This was approved. A solar column and lamp was discussed for Green Road but at a cost of £2700 this is not approved. It was agreed to have an ongoing maintenance programme to replace the old stock lighting when it is no longer feasible to repair. Currently the Parish has 148 streetlights.
- viii. **To discuss the War Memorial grounds:** Cllr A. Harrison said the grass is in a poor state. Also the hedging has gaps. It was agreed that the old hedge could be removed, chain link fencing installed and new hedge planted. It was agreed to allow Cllr Harrison to quote for chain link fencing. The state of the grass to be discussed at the next meeting. The war memorial working group will get quotes together for the next meeting so a decision can be made.

10. To note any Health and Safety issues:

Cllr Shorting said the sign on the village hall near the car park is loose, but it doesn't need removing. The Chair asked her to bring this up at the next village hall meeting.

11. Finance

- i. **To note payments made since last meeting:** these were noted.

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Payments for March 2025 Authorisation

Payee	Goods/Services	VAT	TOTAL	DD/EP electronic payment /direct debit	Supplier/Service
Melanie Hilton expenses	60.51	7.31	67.82	EP	HMRC allowance for home working, paper, folders
Salaries	2609.16	0.00	2609.16		
Clerk				EP	90 Hours Clerk, 10 hours village hall
Cleaner				EP	25 Village Hall cleaner hours plus holiday
HMRC	1303.41	0.00	1303.41	EP	Month 11
Nest Pension Scheme	106.96	0.00	106.96	DD	Clerks pension
Groundsman				EP	32 Groundsman Hours
Gardener				EP	10 hours garden cemetery
Upwell Village Hall	22.00	0.00	22.00	EP	Hall Hire
DJ Boyce	87.50	17.50	105.00	EP	Flailed hedge Low Side
Upwell and Outwell Youth Club	250.00	0.00	250.00	EP	Donation for start up of Youth Club
SD Building and landscaping	12000.00	0.00	12000.00	EP	Works at Upwell Village Hall (pd 19/3/25)
ASB	30.00	0.00	30.00	EP	Window Cleaning Bus stops
Cozens	108.00	21.60	129.60	SO	Street Light Maintenance
WAVE	6.24	0.00	6.24	DD	Water for Cemetery
Veolia	177.46	35.49	212.95	DD	Waste disposal
TOTAL	16,761.24	81.90	16,843.14		

- ii. **To note income and expenditure balances reconciled from the previous month:** these were noted.
- iii. **To note income and expenditure balances reconciled for the Village Hall account:** these were noted.
- iv. **To note the QPAB:** this was noted
- v. To approve **Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25** *the Annual Governance Statement* (part of the external audit document): this was approved and signed by the Chair.
- vi. To approve **Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 – the Accounting Statements:** this was approved and signed by the Chair.

Cllr Pope asked the Clerk what the £12k spend was for. He also noticed the cashbook totals had not tallied correctly. The Clerk said this was a spreadsheet error and would amend it.

12. To propose any items for the next agenda: please advise the Clerk at least a week before the next meeting date. The Chair reminded Cllrs to get reports in in good time and to send to the Clerk.

13. To note the date of the Annual Parish Council meeting –12th May 2025 at 6.30pm at Upwell Village Hall.

Cllr Dawson commended the Council on completion of the first hurdle of extending Upwell Cemetery. He also said 'well done' on the Parish Partnership Scheme application for the waterside railings.

14. Close: the meeting closed at 20.48pm

Signed by the Chair **Date**

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15th April 2025