

Upwell Parish Council

Minutes of Upwell Parish Assembly, Monday 11th March 2024, 6.30pm

Those Present: Cllr. Lester, Cllr. Aston, Cllr. Shorting, Cllr Carr, Cllr K. Harrison, Cllr A. Harrison, Cllr Fairbrother, Cllr Gooch, Cllr Judd, Clerk M Hilton.

Public: two

Apologies: Cllr. Robinson, Mike Turner, BCllr Rose

MINUTES

- 1. Welcome and to consider apologies.** Apologies were approved.
- 2. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:** none were given.
- 3. Agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2023:** these were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. To receive a report from the Chair of the Parish Council:

The last 12 months seem to have passed quickly but the Parish Council has addressed and helped resolve some major issues that were brought to our attention.

Last Summer we heard from parents whose children had been allocated school places that practically and geographically, were not suitable. We added our support to the parent's group and to County Councillor Chris Dawson, who made this a priority and major thanks to him for helping find solutions. Unfortunately, this problem is not going away and once again, the problem has arisen and will continue to do so until new schools are built or existing expanded.

The Parish Council became involved in the flooding of the Health Centre car park problems, and literally with a shovel in some instances! After much debate over many months as to who was responsible for what, there seems to be a solution as the various agencies and parties take responsibility.

The interest in the flooding and the recent deluge of rain for our area resulted in some complaints regarding flooding on land around housing in the Parish. As for all of Fenland our land is managed by water courses and it became clear that ownership and responsibility for these has not always been made clear to land and property owners.

The Borough Council has now published a guide to maintenance and riparian ownership and we have reproduced this important information in the Parish magazine which is due to be delivered shortly.

Whilst on the subject of waterways, two Councillors aided by Tim Dewdney cut back, litter picked, repaired barriers, and tidied a long expanse of riverbank after complaints from parishioners. This was not really the responsibility of the Parish Council, but Andrew and Keith Harrison stepped in and did a sterling job. Thank you both and Tim.

The Parish Council has continued to support the other villages in the parish, with the completion of a new trod and refurbishment of the bus stop at Lakes End and more recently paid for representatives from Three Holes, Lakes End and Upwell to attend a course on how to use defibrillators as we now have quite a few within the parish.

We have very recently purchased new free standing notice boards for Upwell and Three Holes (we had already provided one for Lakes End) and Council decided to also include Upwell Playing Field so all these, once delivered, will stand in more prominent places so all the notices and adverts for forthcoming events can be easily seen.

Upwell Village Hall continues to be popular, being hired for many regular and one-off events. Due to recent changes and popularity the Hall now is run on a business footing, with the Hall Committee continuing to provide support and a Business Plan has been drawn up and signed off. A bookings manager has been appointed and he now has sole responsibility for all hirings and is also tasked with finding new business through existing channels and innovative ideas. A new dedicated email and phone number have also been set up.

Upwell Parish Council continues to wait for the Borough Council to process our formal taking over the management of Upwell Cemetery. The Borough Council has started quarterly Parish Council Chairs meetings with them, and I have voiced our concerns and frustration on the Borough Councils black hole system!

As there was little interest from developers and builders regarding the Lowside land potential development, we have engaged a company that develops self-build housing with a view to this being a viable way forward. They appear to

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share the councils and parishioners' vision for this development. We are around stage 2 of negotiations but have not committed and another public consultation I feel is probably not too far away if this is to proceed.

Since March 2023, we have seen a couple of changes in Councillors, with Zoe Harmer stepping down to concentrate on her studies and after advertising for casual vacancies to be co-opted onto the council, we welcomed Tom Fairbrother in December who received the required number of votes.

The Parish Council undertakes many tasks, a lot of which are never highlighted. Such as making sure dog bins are emptied, street lighting, public rights of way, cutting of foliage, repairs to the War Memorial to name but a few. And so, I wish to thank County Councillor Chris Dawson, Borough Councillors Vivienne Spikings and Colin Rose for their continued support and work for us and lastly but by no means least, to thank my fellow Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their support and commitment.

5. To receive a report from our Borough Councillors: From Borough Councillor Rose

None in attendance.

6. To receive a report from County Councillor Dawson:

Not in attendance.

7. To receive the Chair's and treasurer's report for Upwell Village Hall:

Following a joint meeting with Parish Council and village hall committee 26th September 2023 I was appointed Chair. The committee welcomed Councillors Harrison, Judd, Lester, Robinson and later Ann Wildman, Rob and Emma Shaw. Cllr Harrison has since resigned.

A successful Christmas Craft fayre was held in November with the lead being taken by Rob Shaw, and with some new stalls.

Unfortunately, due to lack of sales and most unusually New Years Eve dance was cancelled, but we were not the only local hall to cancel their event.

REFURBISHMENT: As part of the refurbishment we have had new curtains in the main hall which has brightened the hall from the dark green and a blind fitted to the ladies toilet window.

I have met with many a tradesperson over the last few months, door fitters, plumbers, etc., we have confirmed refurbishment of disabled toilet but no start date, thus meaning new water heaters on hold.

Doors will be fitted when the weather is warmer, and no heating required for hirers. Porch fascia hopefully sooner, a sign is being looked at with logo.

Awaiting visit for roof lights. Two companies contacted one visiting this week. Received one quote for automated doors for reception to outside, awaiting for contact second supplier.

I would like to see toilets and hallway completed before Easter.

More recently I have met with a roofer regarding the ladies toilet roof, where I noticed fungi growing on the ceiling – so how long has it been growing? and possible leak above committee room, this has been attended to but we may need a new flat roof to toilets. Last week during the pouring rain I had Community Service clear the brambles from behind the hall, so the fascia on the cellar can be looked at, Cllr Judd removed all rubbish from site.

There is an over spill of rubbish from neighbouring field.

I would suggest that anyone noticing anything please report and do not think it is not my place...to say anything it is, you are a committee member.

I would like to see more events being held by committee, anyone suggesting an event taking it on from start to finish. We should not be relying on our hirers to provide all the income.

200 CLUB: Disappointed that some tickets have been returned unsold, I suggest we reduce to 150 or stop altogether, still Destine and myself selling the majority of the tickets.

- **Finance report: Clerk M Hilton**

Income

Hall rentals were down from last year by £8,385, this in turn meant bar takings were also down by £5,503.

Book sales brought in £80.

Bank interest was a whopping £609 and there was a refund of VAT of £3,946

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Expenditure

The electricity for the hall went up by £447.

The water meter was not being read so water went up a whopping £616.

Salaries came down a bit as the Hall Manager was made redundant.

Most repairs/refurbishment have come from the CIL grant so not much of hall funds used this year.

Waste disposal went up because we have now paid a full year of recycling waste last year only started in August.

The current total as of 20th February 2024 in the bank across three accounts is £34,127.

8. Receive other reports from community representatives and organisations.

Upwell Playing Field: Cllr Shorting said ...Wet, wet, wet, leaving with us with a very soggy field! Unable to get the field vertidraind after our season of car boots, horse shows etc. we are suffering but not the only playing field suffering. Even too wet for the littles to practice their football. Certainly too wet for the adults.

Upwell Town Youth have purchased a pump now to pump out the water from our dyke- unfortunately, it seems to be the dyke to nowhere!

On the events side we have had another first, our Valentines Charity Tractor Run organised by committee members Liz and Steph Thorpe ably assisted by Adrian Thorpe, all the planning of routes, advertising, collecting raffle prizes etc. some 33 tractors attended on Sunday 21st February, leaving the field at 10.30am, we even had a low loader at the ready should anyone break down. Free bacon rolls and a drink were the attraction for all entries and the BBQ on their return. A pitstop at Christchurch Community Centre was well received before their return to field where the raffle was held for over forty prizes all generously donated. A total of £924.63 was raised on the day and then anonymous donation of £75.37 made the total £1000 split between MIND and East Anglian Air Ambulance, a brilliant total for two worthy causes.

Not much happens at the field during the winter months, apart from the normal football, and as I have said previously due to the inclement weather it has been too wet some Saturdays, with several of the home games for the first team being played at the Emneth ground.

For the future- we are putting together an application for funding for outdoor equipment, for those that do not play football, hopefully this will include safety surface for tennis, roller skating, netball and basketball and remote car control enthusiasts. It was suggested we had play equipment for teenagers. When some teenagers were asked, they could not think of anything, so the above was suggested. A MUGA was also suggested but an increase in our insurance premium and the outlay was excessive.

Daffodils are flowering nicely in some areas of the field; please remember they are there for everyone's enjoyment.

Future events-car boot Thursday 11th April, 8am sellers (NO EARLIER THAN 7.30am) buyers 9am, pitch £5, refreshments on site.

Horseshows start Sunday 21st April 9.30am, first class with in-hand judge Sarah Prior and ridden judge Andrea Lorking. May 26th June 16th, July 21st, August 11th and 18th and September 15th.

We are hoping to hold a fun dog show 14th April.

Last years was the first Bike and Trike Show but this year we are adding vintage classic vehicles, the date is Saturday June 22nd, stalls welcome, live music, refreshments etc.

Summer Fair and Party in the Park will be Saturday July 6th, gates open for Fair 11am to 4pm. Evening event 5.30pm, stalls, bands welcome, if you require any information regarding the event please email upfc@talktalk.net

All details for the above organised events have been sent through to EPESG, we just have to keep them informed of preparations for Summer Fair and the Bike and Trike Show etc. Our AGM will coming up in April, new members are welcome , be prepared for some early starts on event days, new ideas for fund raising and be prepared to organise an event.

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9. Open Forum – public opportunity for questions to Councillors or issues about matters in the Parish:

Two ladies wished to speak regarding a Government Scheme for Warmer homes. They have identified that in the Parish of Upwell over one thousand homes could be eligible for this grant. Jacob Medlock at Kings Lynn Borough Council oversees energy efficiency, parishioners will need to contact him regarding the grant application process. The ladies asked the Council if they would advertise the grant scheme on notice boards, website and the Community Magazine. They will send posters to the Clerk and information over to Cllr Lester for the Magazine.

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.

Signed by the Chair **Date**