



**MINUTES OF UPCHURCH ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 27 APRIL 2023 AT 19:30PM IN UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr P Denny, Cllr Lewin Cllr G Rosewell, Cllr A Horton, Cllr N Sheppard  
Officer: Clerk, Nina Henley  
External Attendees: Cllr Palmer  
Apologies: Cllr E Bernsten , Cllr T Ripley, Cllr J Bodycomb, Cllr H Boakes  
External Apologies: Cllr Baldock

**1-APM/04/23 To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr Boakes, Cllr Bernsten, Cllr Ripley, Cllr Bodycomb

**2-APM/04/23 Welcome to the meeting by Cllr Alan Horton**

Cllr Horton welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were 12 members of the public including representatives from Upchurch Active Retirement Association, Upchurch Players, Upchurch Choral Society and Upchurch Horticultural Society.

i.

**3-APM/04/23 Minutes**

To receive as correct and approval of the minutes of the Annual parish Meeting held on 28 April 2022. Minutes were signed by Cllr Horton as a true representation.

**4-APM/04/23 Upchurch Parish Council Annual Report**

Cllr Horton gave verbal report – appendix 1

**5-APM/04/23 External Reports**

Borough Cllr Palmer gave verbal report from Swale Borough Council. Appendix 2

Borough Cllr Horton gave verbal report from Swale Borough Council. Appendix 3

**6-APM/04/23 Local Community Groups**

- I. Verbal report received from Upchurch Choral Society. Appendix 4
- II. Verbal report received from Upchurch Active Retirement Association. Appendix 5
- III. Verbal report received from Upchurch Horticultural Society. Appendix 6
- IV. Verbal report received from Upchurch Players. Appendix 7

**7-APM/04/23 Open Forum**

- I. A resident queried the new ashes plot layout in the Burial Ground and the plan crossing a pathway. Clerk reported that the plan had been amended accordingly.

- II. A resident reported problems with the junction of Holywell Lane and Forge Lane where turning right on the blind bend is dangerous with foliage obscuring view. Clerk to add to agenda of next UPC meeting.
- III. A resident asked for update on traffic calming measures on Wallbridge Lane. Cllr Horton reported that it is a condition of the planning for the new houses that a footpath be placed around the wall and a traffic calming solution be implemented, with priority given to vehicles leaving the village with a stop sign and give way sign. Cllr Horton confirmed this action is progressing.
- IV. A resident asked for any updates on junction of Chaffes Lane and Oak Lane and the planning development on the orchard. Resident was asking if UPC has information on replanting as an orchard or any further housing development. Another resident reported that no plans were in place to replant as an orchard.
- V. A resident reported on the state of the roads and particularly pot holes. Cllr Horton reported this was a KCC issue but informed residents to report all pot holes on the KCC website.  
<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KHSFaultsGIS.Web.Sites.Public/ReportAFault.aspx>

**8-APM/04/23 Defibrillator Demonstration.**

Borough Cllr Palmer gave demonstration on how to use the AED (defibrillators) in the village.

**9-APM/04/23 KALC Community Award.**

Cllr Horton presented this year KALC Community Award to Hon. Alderman Gerald Lewin.

To acknowledge and give recognition to the significant contribution and dedication to the community, Upchurch Parish Council and Swale Borough Council as well as many other local community organisations.

**10-APM/04/23** Meeting closed 9.15pm

Appendix 1

Good evening,

As you have heard the Parish Council Chairman – Tyrone Ripley cannot be with us tonight and the Deputy Chair Cllr Pam Denny has notified that she may be late, so this responsibility has been designated to me.

I will follow the traditional format of our annual report, with a focus on the different aspects of Parish life that are within our responsibility.

**PADDOCK and RECREATION GROUND:**

Thanks go to Cllr Pam Denny for her constant supervision of the Paddock and Recreation Ground ensuring it is always well maintained.

Residents will have noticed that the Recreation ground has been marked out into two mini football pitches, after the council recently granted permission for that use to support our youngest residents, the training facilities and the hard work that goes into arranging everything from the marking of the pitches to supervising the sessions is all done by an army of volunteers working with the Upchurch Colts Football Club for the benefit of others.

Last year The Chair reported that the Council had secured funding from the Swale Western Area Committee and the Queenborough Fishery Trust for an exciting woodland trail in The Paddock; Cllr Denny has worked tirelessly on this and it shows, the results look amazing, we are eagerly awaiting the addition of 'bug hotels' from the children at Holywell to go alongside the bird boxes already installed, and the bat boxes soon to be installed as part of the project, we are grateful to Phil Newbery for his help with those.

So much for our youngest villagers, we have not forgotten our older children and young adults and have designed and are applying for funding for an exciting 'adventure area' with £27,000 worth of appropriate equipment for them to enjoy the Paddock just as much as our younger children do now.

## STREET LIGHTING

Cllr Ernie Berntsen is our wiz on the lighting literally keeping the lights on! We are sadly still trying to get the electricity price reduction that goes with LEDs makes, this is the result of a complex and archaic calculation of our electricity use, which is still based on data from years ago, in fact I wouldn't be surprised if it's lifted from the time, we had gas lamps its that out of date. Some good news though, our new lights are better for the environment and our local wildlife and faults and difficulties on the lighting are now fixed usually within 24 to 48 hours, helping to keep us, I don't think any of us will miss lights out and even worse constantly flashing or on during the day for weeks on end!

## VILLAGE APPEARANCE

We have not yet had a village 'litter pick' this year, although through our Clerk we have had good service from Swale Borough Council when needed and of course the centre of the village is kept clean by our caretaker. Our thanks go to Terry Honeyman who did the job earlier in the year and then to David Kew who took over to provide continuity and finally to our new caretaker Lynne Balcombe who started her duties a couple of months ago. Finally, we have all seen those few tireless villagers who give of their own time, picking up litter as they take their regular walks, that role benefits us all and we are very grateful for it. Can I also remind you that the Parish Council has a supply of litter picking equipment which is available for residents to borrow if they would like to litter pick their local area.

Every summer the village enjoys the beautiful blooms in the cascade planter in the heart of the village and the barrier baskets along the fence line at the Recreation Ground by Oak Lane and by Chaffes Lane. This year those displays will be in red, white, and blue in celebration of the Coronation of King Charles the Third in just over a week's time, I hope the weather holds for us all, in particular those who have street parties planned.

The Parish Council's support for the Coronation has been to provide funding to Holywell School to give every child at the school a commemoration mug, I have seen the designs and hopefully they will be something the children (or their parents) will treasure for years to come.

#### PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

Thank you to Planning Committee members and particularly Cllr Gary Rosewell the Chair of the planning committee, he has continued to attend Swale Planning meetings representing Upchurch Parish Council on behalf of the village.

#### BURIAL GROUND:

Thank you to Cllr Helen Boakes and Cllr Denny for their constant supervision of the Burial Ground, we have a new plan for burial and ash plots which may interest some of you, but hopefully not anytime soon! David Kew gets his second mention in dispatches for the great work he does keeping the burial ground rubbish under control helping to maintain a clean and respectful aspect in this important part of our parish life and history.

#### CHRISTMAS 2022:

Our thanks once again go to Mr Bob Friend for his kind and generous donation of the Christmas tree, something he has done every year since it was instigated by the Parish Council.

I am sure residents will agree with me the tree and lights are a wonderful centre piece to the village in the Festive season, kindly spare a thought for those who brave the winter conditions to install that every year. Upchurch has a superb winter Fayre early in December at which Father Christmas and a couple of Elves made a visit for selfies, as sign of the times! Father Christmas, and lots of villagers said they loved it, one villager in particular told me she thought it was the best ever and that her children were mesmerised by the experience. The good news is I know Father Christmas is intending to visit again this year and if the Elves have behaved, he will be bringing them too.

#### LADIES THAT KNIT:

A note of thanks for the time and effort given by the ladies that knit who have continued to put on the amazing displays we have seen in the village, this wonderful act of creativity lifted us all during the pandemic and continues to do so, and the silhouette display of Remembrance in the Church Grounds last November was particularly poignant, well done!

#### Talking of Remembrance Day

The Council had a wreath laid at the service in Upchurch and in Ferques, thanks go to Cllr Gerry Lewin for again organising this important event. The village made its thanks and remembrance of those who died so that we may live in Freedom obvious with a show of support for the British Legion and the work they do with giant poppies on just about every post we could find.

The Parish Council made a very significant change last year, we said goodbye and thank you to our clerk Wendy Licence and welcomed our new clerk, Nina Henley. We took that opportunity to update all our policies, working practices, recording systems, banking stuff and get ourselves into the digital age, all that behind the scenes stuff has taken Nina hours of painstaking and detailed work, which will benefit every one of us going forward as our systems are slicker and more refined, seemingly simple tasks that in truth have taken days and weeks in the past are now much easier, the best example so far is the dramatic difference this year experienced by those who rent allotments from us.

The Parish Council supported the excellent work done by the Village Hall Committee through the experience and contribution of Cllr Gerry Lewin. The Committee have done a stunning job so far and I know they have detailed plans to continue improving this vital community space.

Finally, I have reported on the work of the Parish Council, nine volunteers from within the community, who give their time for the benefit of residents.

Next week heralds the start of a new four-year term, five council members have been elected in an uncontested election so there will be four opportunities to co-opt members of the community to the Parish Council, Details of that process will be publicised after the elections next week.

Parish councils like ours do a fantastic job, but they are sadly in decline, three Parish Councils in Swale did not get enough applicants to be quorate and will be re-advertised... when you read some of the criticism on social media levelled at people trying to help it is no surprise.

After those somewhat sobering thoughts, I will finish on a high note.

Parish Councils across Swale were invited to nominate someone from our community to be considered as the Borough's guest at the Kings invitation to a Royal Garden Party. Upchurch nominated Sue Rossiter for this honour, and I am delighted to report that she was then chosen as our Borough representative, Congratulations Sue, we all hope you have a superb day in glorious sunshine.

On behalf of your Parish Council may I thank all of you for your on-going support and can I ask you to show your thanks for the work they and the Clerk have completed on your behalf in the past year.

Councillor Alan Horton

Appendix 2

### **Swale Borough Councillors Report – Cllr Richard Palmer**

Over the past four years, we have seen some fundamental changes at Swale Council.

When elected in 2019, we had campaigned against excessive housing numbers forced upon the council by Central Government. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Housing, has proposed handing back control of housing numbers to local councils.

We changed the Council from a Cabinet system to a committee system. In a cabinet system, only a handful of councillors made decisions that affected all Borough residents, often with minimal input

from other councillors or consultation with the public. In the Committee system, all councillors are involved and have more significant input into decisions. This leads to a more democratic process for the Council and our residents.

The Pandemic struck during my first year in office, and the council was able to provide support to people in the community. I volunteered, like many, to help deliver medicines and food to vulnerable people via the central assistance run by Swale Council. What became very clear was that to get through this pandemic, we all needed to step up to the plate and help those who were housebound either because of age or illness or because of the quarantine rules. In Upchurch village, people organised a local support network, which is still helping people today via food banks and other assistance. I was very pleased that I was able to be involved and give my support to this and many other groups.

During the pandemic, the Council acted as the Government broker passing on Government funding to businesses, village halls, and community organisations; everything took a back seat at the council so that people could be supported as best we could, but without people looking after and supporting neighbours and friends the pandemic would have been far worse.

There were times during the pandemic that I had to battle to get some vulnerable and housebound residents the care and support they needed and on occasion even the vaccine as they were unable to get to a vaccination centre.

During a time of long queues in shops, shortages of essential supplies, and missing out on long-awaited hospital appointments, haircuts and social activities, we all found a renewed appreciation for our lives as we knew them, whilst we are grateful that many of us survived and made full recoveries, it is important to remember that some lost their lives and many are still on the road to recovery. We got through owing to the ordinary person in the street and with the spirit of good old Tommy Atkins.

As the pandemic subsided and normality started to return, with a few ups and downs along the way, people started to venture out and meet family and friends. Then we could even go on holiday (and then, some of us even had to stay in a holiday Inn on our return).

Like us, the council's business started to return to normal, whatever that is now. Zoom meetings and such.

The council also set up area committees. Swale has four area committees, and we are part of the western area committee, which comprises mainly rural villages from the west of Sittingbourne. The area committee has provided funding to Upchurch for some local projects.

I have helped obtain grants to support village groups and activities in Upchurch = £6,780 for the village hall plus advice on Government COVID grants administered by Swale Council.

Some of these grants have:

- Supported the purchase of a defibrillator
- Jubilee celebration Grants (£500 to Upchurch PC)
- £10,000 towards Upchurch cricket club for new nets post COVID

I have given, via my member's grants, support to many village groups, such as

- Guide & Brownies
- Upchurch Choral Society
- Upchurch Cricket Club
- Upchurch Village Hall
- Unchurch Colts Football Club
- Upchurch Support Network
- Upchurch Parish Council

Other groups

- Autism Apprentice
- Child Vision
- Ukrainian Refugees support group
- Citizens Advice Sittingbourne
- Local Food Banks
- Sittingbourne Christmas Lights
- Warm Banks

The Swale area Committee has supported Upchurch with grants towards:

- Paddock Fencing
- Woodland Trail
- Youth Provision outreach workers in the Western area, including Upchurch
- Improved walking and cycling routes (this work is ongoing)

I have supported schemes to support local heritage and improve conservation areas.

We are working to help those affected by the cost-of-living crisis, impacting all community sectors. Still, as with COVID, people like you, looking after and helping those in need, will see us through these challenging times.

It has been a challenging time for all; I have enjoyed meeting many different people and groups and helping those who have come up against a wall of red tape and bureaucracy. There are many activities and groups in Upchurch that support people and give people the opportunity to enjoy village life.

### Appendix 3 Swale Borough Councillor – Alan Horton

Going second usually means someone else has already said much of what you intended and today is no exception.

This is an annual Parish Meeting, so I intend to focus on working together, together with our residents and communities, together with each other, together with our two County Councillors over the four-year period and

together with our Swale Borough Council officers, staff, and Councillors,

This is about our similarities, there is far more we agree upon, especially at the ward level than we disagree on. Election season we have you believe we are at war, that is not the case, this is about what most people do not see, the day-to-day productive relationship where we work together for the benefit of our residents and politics are not involved, let alone get in the way.

As one of your local Councillors, I have been lucky enough to have money to give away to support those things we wish in the community, although sadly the current financial climate means that has been significantly cut for next year, the simple outcome is there is less to go around.

My personal mission has been to spend the money I had access to in the ward supporting some key themes or in the wider Community where they were likely to be a benefit to members of our community as well.

#### My key themes

Local clubs and Associations that generate community cohesion, especially those for the young and more vulnerable in our community.

Road Safety

Support for the more vulnerable in our community

In the Parish these have included:

- Guide & Brownies
- Upchurch Choral Society
- Upchurch Cricket Club

- Upchurch Horticultural Society
- Upchurch Church Community Hub - seating
- Unchurch Colts Football Club
- Upchurch Support Network
- Speed Surveys
- Painting Road signs
- Tix Pax – Dog mess dispensers and waste bags
- Christmas Dinner and parcels for vulnerable residents

#### Beyond the Parish

- Hartlip singing at Christmas.
- Rotary 10k run.
- Hartlip Village Hall
- Newington Village Hall
- Newington Pavilion

#### Beyond the Ward

- Autism Apprentice
- Sittingbourne Christmas Lights and Santa Sleigh
- SEN Children @ Christmas

The Swale Area Committee has supported Upchurch with grants towards:

- Paddock Fencing
- Woodland Trail
- Youth Provision outreach workers in the Western area, including Upchurch
- Improved walking and cycling routes (this work is ongoing)

Richard and I have worked together to resolve issues for residents, sharing our efforts on the more complex issues and I believe we have supported the community side by side on those controversial planning applications that destroy our communities and those that we see a benefit in for our communities.

I can not think of a single issue within the ward where Richard and I have disagreed with the thing that needs doing, or where we have worked against each other or where we have not supported equally the three communities we represent. Thank you.

Appendix 4

### **UPCHURCH CHORAL SOCIETY** **Notes for address to APM 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Upchurch Choral Society was formed over 50 years ago to augment St Mary's church choir for a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. It still augments the church choir at services such as Remembrance Sunday, the Christmas Eve carol service and recently for the act of worship on Good Friday, as well as performing two concerts every year.

It is a thriving choral society, with over 40 members. We sing a wide selection of works in four-part harmony under the baton of our young, very talented conductor Marius. Our next concert will be in the church on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July and we will be singing a variety of well-known opera choruses amongst other things.

Last year we had to cancel our concert in May at the last minute, due to 2 soloists contracting Covid. It was so disappointing as it had been planned with our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in mind. It resulted in a massive loss in our finances. But we were able to recoup some of these losses with the aid of one or two grants to assist us in putting on our subsequent concert at the end of November. One of these grants was from Upchurch Parish Council and we were most grateful for that help.

New members are always welcome, especially men for the bass and tenor sections, there is no audition, just come along and join in! Don't worry if you can't read music, lots of people don't but are surprised by how much they learn during rehearsals. We practise in the church on most Friday nights at 7.45pm.

## Appendix 5

UpARA

Hi Everyone

*We have reached that time of the year once again and we are putting together our thoughts from over the last year of our holidays, and all our activities and getting reports for the AGM.*

*The next massive event is the Coronation of King Charles; several of us are of a certain age to remember his Mother's Coronation and all the pomp that went along with the event. I can remember some of people in our Close without Television joined in with us to watch the event, the first to have been Televised.*

*The next afternoon we all gathered in our Village Hall for the Pageant put on by us School Children, our prize was our own Coronation Mugs.*

*The Hall was decked out as a Street Party and a great time was had by all.*

*As the end of our year has been reached, we have raised in excess of £5,000 for charity; some of which went to Ukraine DEC, The Turkey Earthquake appeal, poppy appeal & Malawi relief. Next month we will be handing over money that we have raised for the Bell Tower Charity.*

*Enjoy the Coronation Celebrations, looking forward to seeing some of you on the Potters Week.*

## May Calendar

**Mondays May 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, - 10am Short Tennis**

**Monday May 1st, 2pm – Kurling**

**Tuesday May 2nd, – 9.30 Coffee Morning and Art**

**Tuesday May 2nd, - 2pm Table Tennis**

**\*\*Wed's May 3rd, 17th, 24th, 31st - 10.15am – Line Dancing**

**Friday May 5th, Village Walk, 1am**

**Mon-Fri May 8th – 12th, Potters**

**Tuesday May 9th, 10 Pin Bowling, Hollywood Bowl, 10am**

**Tuesday May 16th, 2pm – Petanque -Please note new Summer Times**

**Friday May 19th, Village Walk, 10am**

**\*Friday May 19th, 2pm – Monthly Meeting, Wilf Lower, 'Behind the scenes of TV's Golden Years'. AGM to follow 3.30-4pm**

**Friday May 19th, Party night with entertainment by Nick Boswell, 7pm**

**Tuesday May 23rd, – 9.30 Coffee Morning and Art**

**Tuesday May 23rd, - 2pm Table Tennis**

**Wednesday May 31st, – Lunch Club @The Rivers Valley Golf Club**

**\*Please note our monthly meeting is on the 3rd Friday this month**

**\*\*No line dancing on May 10th**

## Appendix 6

Notes below from parish council meeting in Upchurch

Upchurch horticulture society

Chris Spree is current chairman

The society Has been an important part of Upchurch village for over 70 years.

We are sponsored by Upchurch golf club. Thank you to council for donation grant for marquee repair. Thanks to everyone who supported and attended the plant sale.

The society has a New membership secretary Tracy Wells who lives in Upchurch and she has brought the society into the digital world in regards to a website, Facebook and Instagram pages and local marketing using social media platforms has increased awareness

of the society and a surge in membership by 300%.

There has been a welcomed influx of new members as growing your own fruit, vegetables, flowers and wanting to gain more knowledge around gardening and growing has become popular as people are increasingly wanting to find ways to save money and become Self sufficient along with achieving a healthier lifestyle. Age groups range from 12 years old upwards and a wealth of knowledge within the society.

We have shows throughout the year see dates below, and monthly meetings every first Wednesday of each month at the barn behind 97 Chaffes lane, we have great events and trips all Listed below and new members are always welcome.

The members are working with Upchurch cricket club and supporting them in designing and planting to bring them some colour and sustainability within the grounds.

The society will be happy to launch best kept garden and will send out more information in due course.

It's great fun for all, If you want to have some fun and join us contact Tracy via email [upchurchsociety@gmail.com](mailto:upchurchsociety@gmail.com) or message us on our Facebook page.

### UHS MEETINGS AND EVENTS 2023

Meetings start at 7.30pm, Event times TBC.

April 22nd Saturday -Plant Sale in The Paddocks – UPCHURCH.

May 3rd May Meeting

May 21st. Sunday Trip: Doddington Place Gardens & tea room

June 21st BBQ at Upchurch cricket club & Planning for July show –

July 1st Saturday -July Show

July 5th Meeting at Upchurch Allotments Oak Lane, ME9 7AY – Refreshments

August 2nd August Meeting

August 10th Farm Visit TBC

September 6th Talk: “How artists and garden designers lead us up the garden path”  
(Plus planning for September show and Hyde Hall trip-confirmation)

September 16th Saturday – September Show

October 1st Sunday Trip to RHS Hyde Hall

October 4th 7.30pm – Planning for October Show & Demonstration (floral arts)

Candlestick arrangement

October 14th Saturday - October show

November 1st Role re-election & talk A Gardener's Response to Climate Change –  
Caroline

Halfpenny

December 1<sup>st</sup> Friday evening Christmas Social Upchurch Golf Club

Membership is £10 per year.

## Appendix 7

### Upchurch Players

For those that don't know me my name is Alison Lewin and I have been a member of the Upchurch Players since 1996 when I started in the chorus of "Sinbad the Sailor".

We have had a great year at The Upchurch Players presenting our 31<sup>st</sup> village pantomime.

This year saw an influx of new members along with the return of many existing and past cast and crew.

We enjoyed a great rehearsal period and fabulous run here at the Hall, selling a record-breaking number of tickets– with only 8 seats left unsold across the four performances! It was wonderful not only to perform to an almost sell out audience, but to perform to such a supportive and engaged one as well!

I personally loved being involved again. As well as it being the first year I made costumes from scratch for the Dame it was the first time I got a custard pie in the face! For anyone who missed it the photos are available on Facebook and our website ([www.upchurchplayers.co.uk](http://www.upchurchplayers.co.uk)) and I'm the one dressed as a fox!

We would like to thank all those who supported us in bringing "Pinocchio" to life by providing their expertise, contributing their time and coming to watch us perform. We thoroughly enjoyed bringing a bit of joy to the Upchurch Community.

We must thank The Upchurch Village Hall and its other regular hirers for their co-operation in letting us turn the village's community space into a theatre for a week. Not forgetting The Crown for their hospitality for many a meeting and fundraising event.

We look forward to another great year as part of the Upchurch Community and we will endeavour to bring more laughter, fun and frolics for this year's Festive Season when we present to you our pantomime for 2023 "The Gingerbread Man". Once again an original script written by one of our many talented cast and crew.

Our launch night for this years show will be here in the hall on May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm for anyone wanting to find out more about how to get involved. We'd love to see you there.