

Upton Magna Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on

Thursday 12th of February, 2026 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall

26/016 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE and APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Councillors Michael Dawson (chair), Gareth Thomas, Jeana Bennion, David Carter, Bob Newton, Andy Pillow.

Apologies: Councillor Ann Fowler.

Parish Clerk: Karen Smith-Wells.

Attending: Shropshire Councillor Brendan Mallon, Sundorne Castle Estate Manager Huw Williams, Head of St. Lucia's Primary School Miss Coleman, one member of the public.

26/017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None.

26/018 PUBLIC SESSION – Miss Coleman gave an update of the proposed provision of a car park at the school. She appreciates that the current situation caused by inconsiderate parking at drop off and collection times is untenable, and, as well as being concerned for the safety of pupils and children, understands the inconvenience to residents in the area. Plans for a car park on land south of the school are being formulated between the school and the Sundorne Castle Estate. Mr. Williams confirmed that the area has good access (with regard to visibility) and there would be a route through to the rear of the school. In the meantime, the village hall field can still be used by parents, weather permitting.

26/019 MINUTES – It was proposed (DC), seconded (JB) and resolved that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th of January, 2026, as a true and correct record of that meeting.

26/020 REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MALLON (SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL) – report received and viewed by Councillors. **ACTION:** Clerk to place on the website.

26/021 REPORTS:

- a) **West Mercia Police** – Councillor Carter had spoken to PCSO Roberts about road speed surveillance. PCSO Roberts confirmed they are continuing to carry out monitoring exercises, with the last one (a fortnight ago) resulting in two speeding motorists receiving licence points and a fine. It was also reported that there had been an antisocial behaviour offence committed in the church garden.
- b) **SALC** – Nothing to report.
- c) **Footpaths** – Councillor Newton reported that all paths and bridleways in the Parish are waterlogged. It was noted that the dog waste by the kissing gate on footpath 0437/24/1 had been removed. Mr. Williams suggested that warning signage would be more suitable than a trail cam.
- d) **Village Hall** – Nothing to report.

26/022 PROGRESS REPORTS:

- a) **Street Lights** – Councillor Carter advised that the faulty timer and lantern had been removed from the offending light at the end of January, and the old mechanism temporarily reinstalled. Unfortunately, the company that made the timer has since folded. Councillor Carter had also been advised that the power enclosure on this streetlight needs replacing. **ACTION:** Councillor Carter to

continue to liaise with the electrical company. It was noted that the light close to the Grange is obscured by the owner's hedge. **ACTION:** Clerk to write to them to ask that it is cut back.

- b) **Traffic and Parking Issues** – Parking at the school – see 26/18, Public Session. Councillors further discussed speeding and agreed to investigate the cost of VAS devices (vehicle-activated speed signs). **ACTION:** Clerk to ask for information from other Parish Councils who have them. The Clerk also reported that her police contact had given details of Community Speed Watch and Citizens in Policing – ways for the Parish Council to carry out its own speed monitoring exercise. **ACTION:** Clerk to investigate these further.
- c) **Shropshire Council Energy Scheme** – **ACTION:** Councillor Carter to forward details to the Clerk.
- d) **Village Assets and Grant Funding (“Beyond the Precept”)** – **ACTION:** Clerk to ask Salc if Shropshire Council maintains a “Grants Newsletter”. It was agreed that a grant for speed devices and road signs should be sought from the next round of Police and Crime Commissioner Funding.
- e) **War Memorial** – Councillor Carter advised that Shropshire Council Planning Officers have confirmed that the cost of the planning application would be £149.00 (50% of full amount), and this, together with the cost of providing a plaque, should be the only cost to the Parish. It was agreed that the roots of the large yew tree in the graveyard should be avoided during installation, (by digging by hand rather than mechanically) and the advice given by a tree specialist was, for normal, deep excavations (i.e. build foundations), the suggested distance should be at least 8.2 metres. However, with shallow excavations (as with a 300mm concrete base for a stone), the distance can be less, as long as no main roots are disturbed. Councillor Carter further advised that a local builder recommends that the Parish Council consults a structural engineer to ensure that the installation is secure. It was agreed that the Parish Council should, out of courtesy, give details of what is planned to the PCC. **ACTION:** Clerk to write to the PCC accordingly. It was proposed (GT), seconded (MD) and resolved that the planning application should be submitted after the date of the next meeting.
- f) **Asset Register** – The review of the Asset Register is complete. **ACTION:** Clerk to upload it to the website, and to forward the Asset Inspection Checklist to Councillor Carter.

26/023 SMARTWATER – it was proposed (JB), seconded (DC) and resolved that no further action be taken.

26/024 HAUGHMOND HILL PARKING – Councillors discussed the ongoing issue of dangerous parking on the side of the road outside Haughmond Hill car park, and in the layby close to the Criftins. Mr. Williams advised Councillors that the Sundorne Castle Estate is working with the Forestry Commission to find a solution to the problem e reiterated that the estate is happy for people visiting Haughmond Hill to park at Haughmond Lodge and use the permissive path that leads directly onto the hill from there. The estate is also looking for ways to stop the parking in the layby. Shropshire Council has previously suggested they will paint double yellow lines there but this has not been done, to date. Councillor Thomas has emailed the Cabinet Member for Highways for an update.

26/025 DEFIBRILLATORS – It was agreed that the locations of the defibrillators in the village should be added to the website, along with operating instructions. **ACTION:** Clerk to add to website. It was also agreed that, once this has been carried out, similar information should be included in the Community News and on the Parish WhatsApp group.

26/026 FINANCE:

- a) **Authorisation of payments and bank reconciliation** - It was proposed (MD), seconded (AP) and resolved that the following February payments be approved:

AMOUNT	PAYMENT DETAILS
£11.99	Hugofox – website
£317.40	Clerk’s January salary and expenses
£71.60	HMRC – PAYE
£6.00	Unity Bank charges
£54.10	Streetlight electricity
£1160.63	Shropshire Council election costs
£120.00	Salc training

Income - £42.00 overpayment in 2025 reimbursed by NALC.

- b) **Unity Bank Access** – The Clerk confirmed she now has access to the Parish Council’s account.
- c) **Unity Reserve Account** – The Clerk gave her estimation of the total amount of essential expenditure the Parish Council should hold in reserve. After a discussion, it was proposed (DC), seconded (RJ) and resolved that the amount to transfer to the already agreed reserve account, be reduced to £2000.00.
ACTION: Clerk to open reserve account.

26/027 PLANNING:

- a) **25/01638/FUL Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** – No further documents or comments had been added to Shropshire Council’s Planning Register, since the last meeting. Shropshire Councillor Mallon had enquired about the position of the planning officers on the NESO policy change and had been advised that they do not consider it a material planning consideration. He had impressed upon them that, if they approve the scheme, they will be approving one that can “only proceed if it is commenced within the three-year window, and then left as an eyesore for at least six years before it has a hope of being connected to the Grid”. Shropshire Councillor Mallon’s opinion is that the new NESO (National Energy System Operator) policy will still make the business case for the Upton Magna site very difficult.
- b) **Other planning applications** – no new applications had been received since the last meeting.

26/028 REVIEW OF POLICIES:

- a) **Communications Policy** – Now complete. **ACTION:** Clerk to upload to the website.
- b) **Risk Assessment** – Councillor Carter agreed to review this policy. **ACTION:** Councillor Carter to review.

26/029 GENERAL PARISH & HIGHWAY MATTERS:

Please note: Most highway and general repair matters are best reported using fixmystreet.com as this will usually get the quickest results.

- a) Councillors were sad to learn that Mr. John Roberts had passed away. Mr. Roberts maintained the grass areas of the Parish for many years.
- b) Councillor Pillow reported that he and Mr. Andy Lomas have serviced all of the mowers. Councillors expressed their thanks.

26/030 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a) *NB: Councillor Bennion declared a personal interest in this item and refrained from taking part in discussions.* A second email had been received from Mr. Bennion, concerning the RBL silhouettes – Mr. Bennion wishes to have the silhouettes displayed all year round but Councillors agreed to stand by its decision to display them from mid-October to the end of the year. Mr. Bennion also asked for details of the proposed war memorial. **ACTION:** Clerk to respond to Mr. Bennion.
- b) A second email had been received from Mr. Sims regarding his comments made at the November Parish Council meeting. **ACTION:** Clerk to respond to Mr. Sims.

26/031 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA – Dedicated email addresses.

The meeting closed at 21.28.

Date of next meeting: 12th March, 2026 at 7.30pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

K.M Smith-Wells – Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Upton Magna Parish Council
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