



MINUTES OF UPCHURCH ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 10 APRIL 2025 AT 19:30PM IN UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr Denny Cllr Lewin Cllr Rosewell Cllr Horton
Officer: Clerk, Nina Henley
External Attendees: Cllr C Palmer Cllr R Palmer Cllr Baldock PC Clemens PC Radford
Apologies: Cllr Ripley Cllr Bernsten Cllr Boakes Cllr Bodycomb Cllr Sheppard
External Apologies:

1-APM/04/25 Welcome to the meeting by Cllr Pam Denny

Cllr Denny welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were over 30 members of the public including representatives from Upchurch Active Retirement Association, Upchurch Players, Upchurch Choral Society, Upchurch Horticultural Society, Upchurch Running Group, The Rainbow Café, St Mary's church, Friends of St Mary's, WI and the Rapid Relief Team of Plymouth Brethren.

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2-APM/04/25 Minutes

To receive as correct and approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 April 2024. Minutes were signed by Cllr Denny as a true representation.

3-APM/04/25 Upchurch Parish Council Annual Report

Cllr Denny gave verbal report – attached appendix 1

4-APM/04/25 Borough Council

Borough Council Councillors Chris and Richard Palmer gave verbal report.

5-APM/04/25 County Council

Borough Cllr Baldock Kent County Council gave verbal report.

6-APM/04/25 Local Community Groups

- I. Verbal report from PC Clemens Kent Police.
- II. Verbal report received from Upchurch Active Retirement Association (UpARA).
- III. Verbal report from Upchurch WI.
- IV. Verbal report received from Upchurch Horticultural Society.
- V. Verbal report received from Rapid Relief Team of Plymouth Brethren.
- VI. Verbal report received from Upchurch Players.
- VII. Verbal report received from Upchurch Running Group.
- VIII. Verbal report received from Upchurch Choral Society.

- IX. Verbal report received from St Mary's Church.
- X. Verbal report from Friends of St Mary's.
- XI. Verbal report from The Food Bank and Rainbow Café.

7-APM/04/25 Open Forum

- I. Resident reported concerns with the potential planning application in Forge Lane.
- II. A resident reported concerns with the junction of Forge lane and Holywell Lane.

8-APM/04/25 UPC Community Award.

Cllr Lewin presented this year UPC Community Award. Councillor Lewin announced that two deserving residents had been nominated for recognition. After careful consideration, the UPC members agreed that both nominees demonstrated equal merit, and as a result, it was decided to award both individuals with the Certificate of Recognition for their outstanding contributions to the community.

Gill Gay – for her dedication to the Upchurch Food Bank
Elspeth Baecke – for her dedication to the Church Tower restoration.

9-APM/04/25 Meeting closed 8.45pm

APM Chairman's Report 2024/25

Welcome

With regards to Parish life, projects and achievements.

Allotments

I would like to thank Cllr John Bodycomb for his commitment with allotment issues.

The Council continues to be committed to improving the standard of our allotments and has worked with plot holders to improve the allotment site.

In response to feedback from allotment tenants, we have revised the tenancy agreements to better align with the growing season. Tenancies will now run from October to October, allowing for a full year of planting and harvesting. To facilitate this transition, all tenants will have an 18-month tenancy this year. Additionally, a small fee increase of 3% has been applied. To further improve the allotment area, we have arranged for the delivery of four bags of aggregate to maintain the paths and entrance.

Paddock and Recreation Ground

I would like to thank Cllr Pam Denny for her constant supervision of the Paddock and Recreation ground ensuring it is always well maintained. We have carried out tree works as and when required throughout the year.

Dog fouling is still, at times, a problem for the village causing a potential health hazard especially to young children as inconsiderate dog owners have allowed their dogs to foul in the Paddock. The Parish Council asks that dog owners ensure that they clean up after their dogs and put the waste in a litter bin or take it home. This is a constant battle for us unfortunately.

The Parish Council carried out Phase 2 of the Car Park resurfacing at the recreation ground which has received positive comments from the users.

The installation of new play equipment was a direct response to residents' requests for better facilities for older children. Thanks to generous grants from The National Lottery and the Swale Prosperity Fund, the entire project was fully funded through these sources. This addition has significantly enhanced the amenities at The Paddock, providing a fantastic new space for families. In addition to the new play equipment, we've also upgraded the grass lock flooring in the swing area, further improving the overall experience for visitors.

Christmas Tree

UPC has upheld the cherished tradition of the village Christmas tree by purchasing a tree for this year's celebrations. A special thanks goes to the dedicated team of councillors who helped with the tree's installation and the festive lighting, making this holiday season even more memorable for the community.

Village in bloom

Our regular Cascade planter in the heart of the village will continue, with further barrier baskets along the fence line at the Recreation ground to provide the springtime blooms throughout the village.

UPC enhanced the flower decorations by purchasing additional planters to give the best look to the village in the summer months.

Poppies

The Council had a wreath laid at the service in Upchurch and a wreath sent to Ferques once again, thanks to Cllr Gerry Lewin for again organising this important event. Thank you to the councillors who assist me every year with installing poppies on lamp posts through the heart of the village, we fortunately had reasonable weather this time.

Village Caretaker

Our thanks go to Lynne Balcombe who continues to work diligently to help make Upchurch a great place to live. She works closely with the Clerk and regularly reports issues to her.

Burial Ground

Our thanks to Cllr Helen Boakes and Cllr Pam Denny for their constant supervision of this area. With an additional note of thanks to David Kew for his constant role with regards to rubbish and bin duties ensuring order is kept within the burial ground.

The new cemetery software has been successfully installed and is now fully operational. While we are still in the process of uploading all records, the new system offers significant improvements, providing more efficient management and better organisation of records.

Thank you, Nina.

Street Lighting

Particular thanks to Cllr Ernie Berntsen who ensures the streetlights are in working order for the village. Promptly resolving issues should they arise.

Defibrillator

The Parish Council has replaced a number of Defibrillators in the Village, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Neil Sheppard for his constant role in ensuring they are all operating as they should. Hopefully they are not needed.

Planning

Thank you to Cllr Gary Rosewell who is the Chairman of the Planning Committee, he regularly attends Swale chambers representing UPC on behalf of the village.

Highways

Cllr Alan Horton has taken a keen lead in the Villages Highways Improvement Plan with close correspondence with KCC Highways, which is a challenge, raising issues within the Parish as and when they arise.

The Traffic Management Scheme near the junction of Oak Lane and Wallbridge Lane has had approval from Kent County Council (KCC). We are pleased to report that the traffic management system is now fully operational and in place. This system should help reduce speeding and improve overall road safety, making it a positive addition for the community

Church Clock

Another brief note of thanks to Cllr Alan Horton for ensuring the clock is maintained and in working order for the village.

VE Day Event

Cllr Gary Rosewell has kindly taken the lead role in arranging this event on Thursday 8th May 2025 at the recreation ground.

The VE Day celebrations this year will be similar to last year's event, offering a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together. The Scouts will be providing refreshments, including tea, coffee, with a pizza van, ice cream van and hot dogs, along with music to help commemorate the date. I believe the Crown Pub will be providing the Bar for the evening. Road closures will be in place for the beacon lighting ceremony, which will last for an hour. Bring your blankets, come and join in and help us mark this special day.

All this would not be possible without the help, support and commitment of the Parish Councillors. There are many things which go on behind the scenes to ensure the Parish Council effectively serves its community. Councillors give freely and tirelessly to maintain the facilities within the village and also by supporting residents with issues they may have.

So, my personal thanks to them all along with a huge thank you to our Clerk Nina.

Horticultural Society

The society has been around for 73 years and is one of the oldest and well established in the village, currently on the up regarding membership with over 50 members.

We hold 3 shows per year this year, they will be held on July 19th, September 6th, and October 18th. Additionally, we have a plant sale in the Paddock on April 26th. (All events publicised in the village.) Here we raise funds for the society with flowers and vegetables grown and donated by members and bought in from local nurseries. Tonight, a member of this audience praised me on some tomato plants he bought from me last year, he arrived late and there were only a few poor samples left which he bought and grew on at home, achieving a record crop of tomatoes and an 8-foot-high plants. Praise like this is appreciated.

We also enjoy having the WI alongside us in the paddock also selling their own cakes etc, an interesting side line and welcoming.

Holywell Primary School. We are supporting them in the education of children to grow their own entries into our shows this year. The Forest School at Holywell have benefitted from a donation of 7 compost bins from myself. It's important that we encourage children to get growing their own food for themselves and their future.

Annually we regular functions and events, this year we have planned trips to Wonky Parsnip Faversham, Restoration House Rochester, and Wisley Gardens Surrey which is free to members. Social gatherings at the Crown and Cricket Club. At the cricket club we have planted 17 Red Robin bushes to enhance the training net area and will be holding a BBQ in July.

All are welcomed to join us both adults and children.

Thank you for listening to me please seek me out afterwards if you have any questions.

Finally thanks to our parish clerk Nina for help in regards to the allotments.

Anyone interested in learning to grown vegetable or flowers or have little ones wanting to take part please contact us - upchurchsociety@gmail.com

Upchurch Players

Hello, my name is Francesca, I just wanted to say hello and thank you for allowing me to talk to you today, I come today in support of The Upchurch Players, I myself have been a member for only 3 years but I am very passionate about who we are and what we do.

I have been into amateur dramatics since I was 4 years old, I went to stage school for 15 years until I suffered a serious hip injury, since the age of 18 my health has declined, and I have become disabled with limited mobility. Joining the Upchurch Players, gave me a new lease of life, it gave me back an outlet to be creative, and to be involved in theatre again.

The Upchurch Players are a group of exceptionally talented individuals who donate their time, to entertain not only the Upchurch community but the wider community.

Everything the Upchurch Players has done, always has the community's best interests at heart, they are proactive asking how we can give back, how can we be inclusive and how can we incorporate the community. I know recently several members participated in a litter picking event!

The Upchurch Players provides entertainment for all ages, having formed back in 90's by Fran Higgins, Gary & Ann Greenslade and many others, some members who joined as children are now directing shows as adults. The first pantomime in 1990 was Cinderella and we are about to embark on our 34th pantomime, the wizard of Oz, but not as you know it, not to mention our first original play "From the Horse's Mouth" which we are all very excited for.

We are thankful to the community for continuing to support the work of the Upchurch Players and providing a space where we can create memories that we will cherish for years to come. If you are interested in finding out more about the Upchurch Players and what events we have in the coming year, you can find us on social media Facebook and Instagram. Thank you for your time.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1D9bLVQj8p/>

Upchurch WI Annual Parish Meeting

Hi everyone, my name is Helen Eldridge and I am the President of our local WI.

We continue to have a very active WI in the village. Our numbers have increased over the last 18 months from 42 to 57 and we are continuing to grow. We are fortunate to have a full and active committee which certainly helps. Our age range is 25 – 92. We have now been going continuously for 94 years.

We hold 11 meetings a year on the second Tuesday of the month. We have approx. 6 – 7 speakers a year with a wide range of topics including, midwifery, wives of Henry VIII, making flower arrangements in a tea cup and Bats in the Belfry, Badgers in the underpass. We are able to have good speakers due to the fund raising which we do and which is supported by the village. When we do not have speakers we have our Beetle drive, annual resolutions meeting, barbecue and games evening and our Christmas party with entertainment.

In August we do not have a meeting but have our annual Posh Tea in a member's garden and we invite ladies from our sister WI's in our Newington Group. Last year we had over 50 ladies, everyone dressed in their finery, and we even had a spitfire fly past.

We hold 2 fundraising quizzes a year, with our next one tomorrow night and last year we formed a successful joint venture with the Upchurch Horticultural Society to hold a cake and savouries stall at the Plant Sale in the Paddock. It was very successful, and we are doing this again on Saturday 26th April.

At the request of a member, last Saturday we did a village Litter pick, we had lots of helpers and collected over 30 sacks of rubbish.

We have been able to fund some lovely trips recently to Greenwich, Hever Castle and Faversham Police Museum. This year we are going to the Horniman Museum and gardens in London.

We have some active crafters in our numbers and so we have fabulous sales of lovely things on our trading stall generally but in particular at Christmas and Easter, especially last Tuesday where we had some amazing items for sale.

We knit squares and create blankets for the dementia patients at Medway hospital, and only just recently we provided 22 blankets.

We have a flower of the month competition and a yearly overall winner.

We have 2 very active book clubs running.

We have a monthly lunch on the last Friday or Saturday of the month, where we try to go somewhere different each time.

We run a Kurling evening in the Village Hall on the 3rd Thursday of the month which is open to anyone to come along and join in the fun although we do have a hotly contested monthly trophy.

We make donations to village organisations where we can and our yearly Chinese Raffle funds go to a local charity.

Any lady can come along to 3 meetings to see what we do before they would need to join. You would be made very welcome.

Thank you Upchurch WI

For information contact : helen.eldridge@icloud.com

Rapid Relief Team

RRT Delivers hope and relief to people across the globe. Whether it be fire, flood or humanitarian need, RRT expands their support services to meet the need at hand.

Mission: to serve people with care and compassion in their time of need.

Vision: For the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church to express Christian principles of care and compassion by the way of benevolent relief to people in need.

Values: Global Team / Community Care / Compassion / Consistency

Who we support – Emergency disaster relief / Health & Disability / Youth / Homelessness, Poverty & Hardship.