

Minutes of Meeting of Upton Parish Council

Held on 12 September 2023 at 6.30 pm

Upton Village Hall

Present: Councillor Fran A'Brook (in the Chair), Councillor David Williams, Councillor Libby Warden, Councillor Howard Shaw, Councillor/Parish Clerk Val Thompstone, District Councillor Steven Pugsley.

1 Apologies for Absence

Received from Councillor Innes Davies and Councillor Karen Telling,

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman

4 Planning Matters

No planning matters to discuss

5 Highways

New signage has been placed to the east side of the village. Discussions are ongoing regarding moving the Upton sign closer to the houses on the west side of the village.

Cllr. Warden expressed concern that the new sign to the east was very close to the entrance/exit to her farm and could be a potential distraction when exiting Moorhouse Farm lane. This could be resolved by moving the sign further to the west along the road (towards Copper Beeches).

The exit from the village hall car park is considered dangerous as there is very limited visibility for drivers exiting the hall. The owner of the caravan park has been asked to cut back the hedge to improve this situation. A reminder to be given.

It is felt that the success of the newly refurbished Bittescombe Arms might be a persuasive argument for reducing the speed limit from the current 40mph. Failing this, it would be a good argument for extending the current 40mph through the village, up to and beyond the pub and the difficult junction opposite the pub. Cllr. Davies to be asked to discuss these options with Kate Brown.

Speed Indication Devices are to be ordered, as minuted previously.

Village Gates: it is felt that we have sufficient talented local craftspeople in Upton to be able to design and construct bespoke gates at both end of the should it be decided to go ahead with this idea.

Cllr. Williams tabled a concern regarding water egressing the fields and crossing the main road opposite his house and stated that he had reported this via the portal, and after eight days rang to see what was happening. He was then told that no action was being taken. Cllr. Pugsley will take this up with the relevant parties upon his return to the office.

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6 Village Fete 2024

The Chairman, Cllr. A'Brook has had various discussions with interested parties. It is felt that the village could hold a one-off event during 2024 which would include various activities, including a dog show, gun dog scurry, Morris dancing, live music, tractor show, face painting, BBQ, produce competition, etc. This would be on a larger scale than recent previous fetes, and the Bittescombe Inn would be asked if they would like to be involved. Depending on the success of the event in 2024, decisions could then be taken as to whether to hold a similar event annually, or biennially.

7 Village Hall

- 7.1 A Harvest Tea (as opposed to the usual Harvest Supper) is being arranged and organised by the Parochial Church Committee and the Village Hall. This to take place on Sunday 22 October. The Church service is planned for 3.00 pm with the tea being available from 3.30 pm for all villagers. Advert to be placed in Brendon Beacon (deadline for advert 20/09/23).
- 7.2 The November Coffee Morning (21 November) will include Christmas Crafts for sale. To be advertised in Exmoor News (deadline 6/10/23) and Brendon Beacon (deadline 20/09/23).

8 Finances

- 8.1 Annual Audit – Internal Auditor's Report
Andrew Smith of Huish Champflower had carried out the Internal Audit on the Parish Council's finances for 2022/2023 and signed as correct.
- 8.2 Annual Audit – Certificate of Exemption
Reviewed, discussed and signed by Chairman
- 8.3 Annual Audit – Annual Governance Statement
Reviewed, discussed and signed by Chairman
- 8.4 Annual Audit – Accounting Statements 2022/2023
Reviewed, discussed and signed by Chairman
- 8.5 The following invoices were presented with SO16 and cheques signed for payment
 - 8.5.1 £10 for hire of Upton Village Hall
 - 8.5.2 £20 for Exmoor Society annual membership
 - 8.5.3 £90 for SALC Clerk training sessions x 3

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9 Code of Conduct

The revised Code of Conduct, as recommended by the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were no issues raised and the Code of Conduct was therefore formally adopted by Upton Parish Council. The Code of Conduct is available on the Upton Parish Council website.

10 Haddon Hill Car Park

The proposal to impose car parking charges at Haddon Hill Car Park was discussed. The original plans had been revised, following consultation with local communities, and taking into account comments raised, including those raised by the Chairman, and other Council members. The revised plans can be viewed on the Parish Council website or by clicking [here](#).

There was general agreement that the revised plans went some way towards addressing the major concerns regarding car parking charges, meaning that local people would not be charged before 10.00 am, nor after 6 pm. People on certain Government benefits will be charged 50% of the normal rate for an annual pass (£30).

11 Update from District Councillor Steven Pugsley.

11.1 Planning matters

A Government consultation is currently being undertaken on proposed planning changes. This covers additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets and open prisons; and a call for evidence on nature-based solutions, farm efficient projects and diversification. The link to the Government website can be found [here](#)

11.2 Highways Winter Maintenance

Gritting schedule and map of bin locations can be found [here](#)

New operative (Ollie Miller) has been employed to take responsibility for the auditing and checking of the Grit/Salt bins in Upton (and all other parishes under the LCN banner). He will check locations and contents and refill if necessary.

Bins will be refilled when and if severe weather is forecast. Any requirement to refill at other times should be logged via the Defects Portal.

12 Any other business

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 19.30 hrs.

13 Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 6.30 in Village Hall

Signed as Approved:  (Fran A'Brook) on 28th November 2023