



Up Holland Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of Up Holland Parish Council held on **Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 7.30pm** in the Up Holland Methodist Church, Alma Hill, WN8 ONR.

Present: Cllr Jenny Whiting (Chairman), Cllr Christopher Mackrell (Vice-Chairman), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Gill Sinnott (arrived 8.06pm), Cllr Neil Smith, Cllr Richard Taylor.

7.15pm to 7.30pm public participation: No items raised.

MINUTES

1. To record apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Stoddart, Cllr Owen, Cllr Jones & Cllr Grant. It was acknowledged that Cllr Sinnott would be late, attending another meeting first.

2. To receive declarations of interest

None declared.

3. To ratify as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held 14th May 2024

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

4. To receive representation from Greenfield Renewable Energy Project Developer for Tontine area

The draft proposal was circulated but discussion deferred as the representative from Greenfield Renewable Energy was not in attendance.

5. To record any police issues

No issues raised.

The meeting noted that the Clerk had not reported the graffiti on the new equipment at Mill Lane Play Area so as not to overburden police as little could be achieved by doing so.

6. Ward Reports:

Ward Reports: Included discussion on new projects to enhance the parish.

Roby Mill Ward: St Teresa's children wrote a lovely letter thanking the parish council for improvements at Mill Lane Play Area. Unfortunately, the new equipment had graffiti added within six hours of the contractor leaving the site. It was agreed that the King's Portrait would be given to St Thomas' Primary School for display there.

Hall Green Ward: The play provision at Mill Lane is great but couldn't something be added on the other side of the main road, maybe consider play equipment at the bowling green?

There is concern that the bowling green is underused and perhaps opening the area to more public use and installing play equipment could be considered. However, the site is not seen from the road; is near vulnerable residents and alongside an empty WLBC building, so is not ideal from the point of view of anti-social behaviour. Ideas for promoting and expanding crown green bowling might be preferable as these greens are now few and far between.

It is understood that WLBC Rangers are improving pathways through Dean Wood but there is also Footpath FP08-21-012 (running along Back School Lane towards the Wigan Borough boundary) that requires attention.

Under the LCC Public Rights of Way local delivery scheme £500 is available for maintenance of PROW and £300 for wilding projects, such as bee hives, bird boxes, bat boxes, wildflower seeds etc. It was agreed that Up Holland Parish Council continues to be part of this scheme.

Liaison with WLBC (ideally the Clean and Green Team) is needed to explore ideas around wildflowers on our steep banked roadside verges, where cutting only happens twice yearly due to difficulties of equipment working on a slope. There is also concern that self-seeding sycamores are taking hold in the wrong places and a Tree Plan ought to be considered.

Each December, Parish Councils are invited to bid for funding or up to approximately £5,000 from WLBC in the form of a Capital Grant – to support the purchase of capital items. It was agreed that Councillors will submit by email three ideas for use of this funding, so that these can be discussed in meeting and an idea be ready when the funding application window opens.

It was acknowledged that large projects for the near future include:

- Feasibility study for allotments at the field behind Delamere Way/Morris Road.
- Enhancement & promotion of bowling green, including small building there.

Also, that maintenance of parish assets must be ensured before taking on new projects.

Chequer Lane Ward: A permission path has appeared just off Tower Hill Road, where the parish council had asked Ibstock to consider creating one.

Tontine Ward: Allotment holders reported that the parish council contractor used weed killer very close to their plots and are concerned as to whether their crops will be affected. The matter can be discussed at the Allotment Holders Annual Meeting next week.

Crawford Ward: An emailed report was read out, noting that the WLBC public waste bin is now installed at Crawford Village Hut & Playing Fields and the Crawford Village Summer Fair will take place on Saturday 13th July from noon.

7. Financial Matters:

- **Accounts for ratification and payment**

Yates Playgrounds	260524	New equipment	0993	£23,796.00*
Methodist Church	110624	Room hire 11 th & 18 th June	0994	£32.00
L Davis	110624	Grounds work May 2024	0995	£1,800.00
E A Broad	110624	Salary & expenses June	0996	£1,581.60
Eurooffice	110624	Ink cartridges – 2 full sets	0997	£146.16*
Sandra Jones	110624	Internal Audit of accounts	0998	£320.00
NEST (Employer pays 3%; clerk pays £160.74 to pension scheme)	140524	Pension scheme	d.d.	£218.43
Handelsbanken	110624	Bank charges	d.d.	£28.20
Work to be completed:				
UKHost4U	140624	domain name renewal (uphollandpc.uk)	d.d.	£6.99
B Keyworth	110624	Instal benches Chip Shop	0999	£635.00
(quote £520 to dispose of old benches, take delivery and install new benches and £115 for refurb of commemorative bench)				

*Contains VAT

The accounts were ratified and authorised for payment.

- **Completion of Annual Governance & Accounting Documentation**

The following internal audit report was received, with the recommendations accepted.

TO: Chairman and Councillors

UPHOLLAND PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023-24

An internal audit was undertaken following examination of the accounts and minutes as presented by Mrs Elizabeth Broad, Clerk to the Council.

Sample checks of income, expenditure and bank statements were carried out and the audit trail was generally found to be in order. The cashbook is maintained and balanced on a regular basis. In addition, financial regulations, standing orders and the risk assessment in the form of a business continuity plan have been reviewed during the year. The publication requirements have been met in full during the year. However, there were a few instances, which I bring to the Council's attention:

1. **Expenditure – Supporting Documentation**

Invoices were found to be in order except those relating to Methodist Church regarding room hire and Nest Pension Scheme regarding the monthly pension contributions. There is an agreement in place stating that hire of the hall is £16 each time it is booked, but £32 was found to have been paid for some months, with no paperwork to support the extra payment. There was also no paperwork to support the monthly payments made to Nest in relation to the Clerk's pension.

It is recommended that invoices/receipts are provided for all expenditure to ensure that the correct payment has been made and VAT appropriately accounted for. A list of meeting dates should be kept to provide confirmation of the monthly room hire charge due for the Methodist Church and a copy of the page detailing each month's pension payment should be printed from the Nest pension website.

2. **Salary Payments**

Although there was evidence of a contract in place and a calculation each month of the salary payment due, there was no official letter or email from the Parish Council to confirm which point of the salary scale should be paid.

It is recommended that an appraisal process should be put into place each year to consider all aspects of the Clerk's employment including salary. Any recommendations from the appraisal should be considered for approval at a Parish Council meeting under the "Exclusion of press and public" section and followed up by a letter or email detailing the salary scale, number of hours and any other allowances due such as the Parish Council pension contribution and home working expenses. (**clerk's note for clarification: an annual appraisal mechanism is in place and will be noted in future in the second, closed, section of meetings*)

Sandra Jones, CiLCA

6 June 2024

The AGAR forms were accepted as a correct record of the financial transactions through 2023/2024, the governance questions were answered and signed by the

Chairman and the Clerk for submission to PKF Littlejohn and display on the website and main noticeboard.

- **Setting dates for public rights to view accounts notice**

Accounts will be available for view, by arrangement, between Wednesday 12th June to Tuesday 23rd July 2024.

8. Policy Documents presented for renewal:

- **Complaints Policy**
- **Freedom of Information request form**
- **Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy**
- **Document Retention Scheme**

Following revision, these documents were accepted for use.

9. Note date of Allotment Holders Meeting as 18th June 2024 at 6:30pm onsite, 7pm at Alma Hill Methodist Church Hall.

The meeting date was noted and agenda issued.

10. Update on Ravenhead Quarry restoration Plans

No further update on plans for the restoration of the Quarry. However, it was noted that permissive footpath signs had been erected.

A resident contacted the clerk to complain that the footpath, resurfaced last year, is being encroached upon and needs strimming. The Parish Council has a £500 budget towards maintenance of the public rights of way and it was agreed to seek a contractor to do this work.

11. Issues at the walled garden outside The Good Catch Fish & Chip Shop, including wall damage and new seating

Project to replace old benches and repaint the dedicated bench is underway. No update from LCC about the wall repairs after a driver drove into the wall on Saturday 27th April 2024, but it was understood that the matter was in the hands of insurance.

12. Update from LALC (Lancashire Association of Local Councils)

No update.

13. Any Update from Borough or County Councillors

- **WLBC Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy**

Councillors were encouraged to respond to this consultation as individuals. The link for a group response from the Parish Council login reads; "You do not have access to this page."

14. To consider any planning issues or applications

Ref. No: 2024/0375/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a fence at the front of the property between number 12 and 10 Devon Avenue, Up Holland to the gate to the rear garden.

Location: 12 Devon Avenue Up Holland Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 0DQ

Parish Council Response: Up Holland Parish Council objects to this proposal, as the fence does not fit in with the design of the estate and would alter the street scene.

Ref. No: 2024/0473/FUL

Proposal: Proposed single storey infill extension to front elevation and garage conversion.

Location: 1 Priory Road Up Holland Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 0LR

Parish Council Response: Up Holland Parish Council has no objection to this proposal.

The meeting noted the decision of the Planning Committee Meeting on Thursday 23rd May 2023 to grant the following application:

Ref. No: 2023/0296/FUL

Proposal: 13 dwelling houses

Location: between 126 and 160 Ormskirk Road.

The Parish Clerk and a local resident spoke at the committee meeting against approval of this proposal on the grounds of loss of greenspace habitat, concerns over flooding, the Coal Board report alerting a dangerous mine shaft and that the layout of internal road does not meet LCC standards (but doesn't have to as it is intended to be unadopted and remain within residents' responsibility). The permission was granted as the Planning Officer recommended approval, which was proposed and seconded, and all other Members of the committee abstained. There were, therefore, no objections. The list of conditions runs to several pages, including prior approval from the Coal Board.

15. Resolution for the Exclusion of Press and Public

It is recommended that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and as, in all circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Section 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Agreed.

16. Provision of Goods and Services

Chairman:

- (a) Conclude discussion on Greenfield proposal for easement over Janet Lally field – deferred, in absence of Greenfield representative.
- (b) Consider information board for Miyawaki Woodland project – delegated to the clerk to liaise with Ian Wright, LCC Treescapes.
- (c) Update on play equipment provision – Wickstead to commence work on 12th June with work expected to take around a week at Mill Lane Play Area.
- (d) Update on Hall Green House and bowling green – no further contact following the on-site meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

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Cllr Jenny Whiting
Chairman

9th July 2024