

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 19th January 2021 ~ 7.00pm

Via Zoom Video/Audio Conference

Present

Cllr. Kathryn Jones (Chair)
Cllr. Pat Edworthy
Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. John Skinner

Cllr. Keith Bennett
Cllr. David Findley
Cllr. Stephen Mayhew

Cllr. Nick Crocker
Cllr. Guy Foscett
Cllr. David Pearce

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll

Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter

One member of the public

1. To receive Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Ashley O'Malley (work load). These were noted.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items and any applications for dispensation:

There were no declarations of interest and therefore, no applications for dispensation.

3. Public Session:

a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):

- Hill Farm, High Street, Ufford – The new owner/developer of this site displayed plans for amendments to the design of the seven bungalows and the layout of the development. A couple of questions were asked and the Council confirmed that they looked forward to reviewing the plans, once submitted to ESC.

b) Reports or comment from ESC and SCC Councillors:

- **Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll** – Cllr. Nicoll reported on the following items:
 - Quite Lanes – Very positive to see Byng Hall Lane had been earmarked as suitable, more work was required on the hedging along the lane
 - Sizewell C – More freight will now be moved by Rail and Sea (if the scheme is approved) but this may in turn bring issues for residents living alongside the East Suffolk line with night trains and a greater volume of trains during the day, a facility will need to be built to allow ships to dock at the site and unload
 - Development at Pettistree – Chair of Pettistree PC (Mr Jeff Hallett) had written a very strong letter to the Head of ESC Planning, Mr Philip Ridley, regarding the process by which development is considered by ESC. [The Clerk confirmed she had not been copied in and Cllr. Nicoll agreed to seek permission to forward the letter]

Chair's initials.....

- Q. Did SCC respond to the latest Sizewell consultation? Yes, however these were just amendments to the plan and our full response had been sent after earlier consultations. It is reported that EDF were surprised not to have SCC's full backing for their plans and to be challenged on so many items.
- **Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter** – Cllr. Poulter reported on the following items:
 - Sizewell C – Fully support Cllr. Nicoll's comments, ESC has been working alongside Parish and Town Councils and MPs
 - Coronavirus Vaccination distribution – Cllr Poulter sought feedback about the vaccination programme so far – there were differing views, some people praise the process but others have had problems, it is apparent that booking online is easier than using the telephone service [comments gathered from Councillors who had received the vaccination and aware of other Ufford residents who have higher priority but have not been called yet].
 - Funding from Community Partnership – Still funds available and it would be great to spend some in Ufford...

4. To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:

- a) **DC/20/4876/CLP - Certificate of Lawful Use (Proposed) - Hungarian Lodge was converted to two cottages approximately 7 years ago. We wish to return the lodges to one property. This would be done by simply knocking through between the cottages, where the previous door was. - Hungarian Lodge, High Street, Ufford -** Councillors made the following comments:
 - The Chair explained that technically the Parish Council were not consulted on CLP applications but that it might be nice to comment on this occasion
 - No objections to this work being carried out
 - **Conclusion: No objection.**

Action: Clerk

5. To acknowledge previous months list of SCDC Planning decisions and to discuss any other planning matters or reports:

The planning decisions taken by ESC in December had been circulated and were available from the Clerk. The following further planning matters, on applications outside Ufford, were noted.

- DC/20/3361/FUL and DC/20/3264/FUL - Land Between High Street And Chapel Lane, Pettistree – It was reported that this application was to be heard by the ESC Planning Committee (South) on Tuesday 26th January; with an officer's recommendation for approval, with conditions.

The Chair asked if the Clerk could enquire as to whether or not UPC could be represented and speak at the Planning Committee meeting, for both this and the application below. Further comment was made regarding possible boundary changes and the impact on CIL payments of the development being in Pettistree, as opposed to Wickham Market.

It was also commented that perhaps the villages should work more closely together on major planning applications and share best practice for 'raising support' with residents, at appropriate times. It was also suggested that Ufford should set criteria for when it felt it necessary to become involved in developments in neighbouring villages, as too much campaigning could dilute residents' enthusiasm. The Clerk further suggested she would monitor applications for all villages surrounding Ufford (only Melton was currently monitored).

- DC/20/1521/FUL | Care Village comprising an 80 bedroom care home together with 75 assisted care bungalows, cafe/club house, bowling green, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure and access | Land Off Yarmouth Road, Melton, – It was reported that this application was to be heard by the ESC Planning Committee (South) on Tuesday 23rd February; officer's recommendation as yet unknown.

Action: Clerk

6. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 15th December 2020:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 15th December 2020 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Skinner, seconded by Cllr. Findley and all Councillors were in agreement that they be signed.

The Clerk agreed to publish the minutes on the website.

Action: Clerk

7. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive accounts for December 2020 and inspect the Bank Statements:

The Accounts to 31st December 2020 had been sent to all and there were no questions.

- b) To discuss inspection process of Bank Statements and possibility of moving this to an online process:

Cllr. Pearce had questioned if this method of examining the bank statements was still appropriate, given that the banking was now all online. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would download a PDF of the previous month's transactions at the start of the month and would send to all Councillors, asking one of the payment authorisers to log on to verify the figures, and report back to all.

It was agreed to trial this process for six months.

Chair's initials.....

c) To receive an update on the amendments to the Bank Mandate:

The Clerk confirmed that the online access was now as required by the Council; with herself having 'Create only' access and the four Councillors having 'Create and Authorise' access. This could be viewed by any of the Councillors with online access, at any time.

The amended Financial Regulations were on the agenda later to be approved.

d) To discuss and agree budget for 2021/22:

The Clerk displayed the draft budget which had been amended from the December meeting discussions. Comments from Councillors included:

- Line 35 – To be amended to £1,099 to bring the funds held in the reserve account to an even number; odd £37.25 to be added on to Stationary/Admin
- Line 36 – To include a note about reprinting of Footpaths leaflets

In conclusion (and following discussion on the Precept request at item e)) Cllr. Hawthorne proposed the budget be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk agreed to finalise the document and publish once the year start figures were known.

e) To discuss and agree Precept Request for 2021/22:

The Clerk advised Council that the 'Zero Change Tax Base' figure, provided by ESC, was £20,985, and that, if the Parish Council elected to request this amount for the Precept, Council Tax bills for Ufford residents would show a 'nil change' for the Parish Council element of the bill. She also explained that this would bring in £519 extra for the Parish Council, which represented a 2.5% increase on last year's Precept amount of £20,466. This anomaly was brought about by more houses in the village paying Council Tax.

Councillors debated merits of reducing the Precept request (due to sufficient reserves now held), increasing the Precept request (due to possible high inflation in forthcoming years and uncertainty around available grants) and keeping the request at a 'zero change' (to assist residents who had been affected by the impact of the Coronavirus). In conclusion Cllr. Jones proposed that UPC request £20,985 as a Precept for 2021/22 (i.e. the Zero change figure). This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all Councillors were in agreement.

f) To review all Internal Financial Controls and the effectiveness of the Internal Auditor:

The Clerk had previously circulated a note on both the Internal Financial Controls and the suitability of the Internal Auditor. It was agreed that both were adequate and needed no amendment.

g) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i. J Hallett (Salary + Office & mileage expenses)	£714.97
ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's pension)	£212.59
iii. J Hawthorne (Admin and Woodlands Lights Spectacular)	£130.07
iv. Matthew Allen (Work to 4 trees in Woodland)	£540.00

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Skinner, seconded by Cllr. Jones and all Councillors were in agreement that they be paid. The Clerk agreed to set up the payments, send electronic copies of the invoices to the authorisers and request authorisations.

h) To note Payments made since last meeting:

i. HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk's PAYE)	£56.45
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i) To note Payments received since last meeting:

i. None

j) Additional Matter - To discuss request received for grant to be considered for purchase of Laptops for Melton Primary School children to use during Covid-19 lockdown: - A letter from an Ufford resident had been circulated and the following comments were made:

- This is a very difficult situation as to give a grant would be against our policy and we could not guarantee the equipment would be used by an Ufford child. However, these are exceptional circumstances and perhaps we should break with convention on this occasion.
- We have no school in the village now and undoubtedly many Ufford children would go to Melton Primary, however, we probably can't specify that the equipment goes only to them.
- The cost is remarkably low [suggested due to bulk buy and software being owned by the school] and they would be owned by the School for future use by other children.
- We should firstly contact Ufford residents (via the PUNCHLine) to see if there is a child in Ufford who is in need of a computer.
- This above comment is valid but there will be complications as the machine would then need to go directly to the child and not via a school where the cost would be cheaper
- Ufford Community Hall meet tomorrow night and it is their intention to make a substantial donation to fund the remaining laptops for Melton school.
- Both the District and County Councillors have been asked to assist with funding.

In conclusion it was agreed that the Clerk would take the following action:

- i. Contact Mr Thomas or Melton School to establish that firstly Ufford children do attend the school and that secondly the need for additional computers was still there.

Chair's initials.....

- ii. Attend the meeting of the Ufford Community Hall Committee (in her capacity as their new Secretary and Booking Secretary) the following evening and report back to the Parish Council as to whether a donation for the remaining computers had been made.
- iii. If the UCH Committee had decided not to fund all or part of the required machines, UPC would fund up to two devices.

8. To receive update on the Broadband Project from Cllr. Mayhew and to discuss and agree any expenditure on promotion of the project:

Cllr. Mayhew gave an update on the project and displayed the proposed flyer that would be inserted in to the February PUNCH. After a couple of suggested amendments and confirmation that the total cost would be £105 (which included the VAT) Cllr. Mayhew proposed the flyers be produced. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all were in agreement.

Cllr. Mayhew further reported that the proposed Zoom meeting with Openreach would be advertised on the PUNCHLine and that further targeted advertising would be explored after the flyer had been distributed.

Action: Cllr. Mayhew

9. Clerk's Update on Previous Minutes and Actions:

- a) Speed Indicator Device – Mr Barkley had reported that the repaired device was now configured correctly and in place. He also had a second resident to assist with the battery changing (during winter months) and monitoring. However Councillors reported that the device was displaying the speed of vehicles too late for it to be effective and the Clerk was asked to go back to Mr Barkley.
- b) RoSPA Training – Cllr. O'Malley was booked on to this course, which had been moved back to April due to Covid restrictions.
- c) Licence for Community Hall – The Clerk reported that the suggested amendments to the Community Hall licence were not required as this original licence was superseded by a Lease (issued in March 2018), which was still current and in place.
- d) Quiet Lanes – Byng Hall Road has been approved as a QL and the project can now proceed to the Public Consultation stage. This item will be on the February agenda for discussion. It was also noted that Old Church Road (Melton), which continues into Lower Road in Ufford, had also been earmarked as 'proceed' and the Clerk agreed to write a letter of support to Melton PC and the QLS team.

Action: Clerk

10. Recreation Ground and Parklands Woods:

- a) To receive update on WWII Information Board and to discuss final design(s) – Cllr.

Hawthorne's full report had been circulated. The Clerk had also circulated three different designs for the board. The Chair explained that Lottery funds to a total of £2,000 were currently held in reserve for this project and therefore its completion was a requirement or the funds would need to be returned. It was also a Parish Council project that they must now take ownership of.

It was agreed that the board should concentrate on the WWII history of the woods and not the original house Ufford Place; this could be covered by a third board in the future at the Ufford Place gates or a QR code that linked to information on the website. It was further noted that much work had already been carried out by the production company and that any major alterations may take the project over budget.

Cllr. Hawthorne gave further history of the project and proposed:

- That the board be sited next to the original board (close to the Children's Play Area) in order that it could easily be kept clean and would be read by more visitors and
- That a small subcommittee (Cllrs. Hawthorne, Edworthy, Crocker, Findley and Bennett; along with the Clerk) be set up in order to finalise the design.

It was further suggested that Mrs Findley be consulted as she had experience with matters such as these. These suggestions were agreed.

On other matters, Cllr. Hawthorne reported that the Winter Wonderland had been a great success, raising over £200 for EACH. It was suggested that other matters regarding the Woodland working group should be specific items on the agenda and would be moved to the February meeting.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to conclude the meeting

Cllr. Jones briefly lost connection to the meeting at 9.00pm and re-joined via Audio only

Cllr. Foskett left the meeting at 9.00pm

- b) To discuss making improvements to the MUGA fencing to prevent balls from entering the Tennis Court – The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for the netting along the MUGA to be extended.

Action: Clerk

- 11. Highways - To discuss placing benches around the village:** Cllr. Hawthorne suggested that people taking exercise around the village may benefit from having more places to sit and rest. She agreed to investigate possible options and report back to the February meeting. The Chair also suggested she could enquire of the Community Partnership as to whether funds would be available.

Action: Cllrs. Hawthorne and Jones

Chair's initials.....

12. Documentation – To receive and adopt the following documentation:

- a) Financial Regulations (Jan 2021) – Cllr. Mayhew proposed this document be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to finalise and publish.

Action: Clerk

13. To receive reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Council:

Councillors had attended (and reported on) the following meetings:

- Cllr. Findley – Anti Social Behaviour / Police Liaison Meeting – report had been circulated.

14. To discuss moving the December 2021 meeting forward by one week to 14th December:

It was agreed that it would be sensible to move the December meeting forward to 14th December. It was also suggested that, if it clashed with the White Lion Annual Christmas Quiz, the meeting start time could be moved forward to 6.00pm.

15. To receive agenda items for the next meeting and to discuss next meeting:

- Items moved forward from this meeting
- Broadband Project
- Quiet Lanes

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **16th February 2021 at 7.00pm**, via Zoom.

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair: Dr. Kathryn M Jones

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair's initials.....