

UPPER CLATFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Council Meeting** at 7.00pm 11th June 2025

King Edward VII Memorial Hall Upper Clatford Hampshire

Council Members Present

Cllr Peter Heslop, Chair, (PH)
Karin Bennett Clerk & RFO (KB)
(Apologies)
Cllr Richard Bennett (RB)
Cllr Gerry Dawson (GD)
Cllr Charles Eyre (CE) (Apologies)
Cllr Nigel Freemantle (NF)
Cllr Robert Hawkins (RHk)
Cllr Richard Hydes (RH)
Cllr Patrick Littlehales (PL) (Apologies)
Cllr Cynthia Williams (CW)

TVBC & HCC

Cllr Maureen Flood TVBC (MF)
Cllr Susanne Hasselmann TVBC (SH) (Apologies)
Cllr David Drew HCC (DD)

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence - Cllr PH** welcomed everyone to the PC Meeting and received apologies for absence in respect of Cllr CE, Cllr PL, KB and Cllr SH
Cllr RHk to minute meeting in Clerk's absence.
2. **Public Participation** – No participation from members of public present.
3. **Borough Councillor's Update:** Cllr MF reported on more success prosecuting fly-tippers. A new TVBC Mayor Gordon Bailey. Cllr Flood also reported on 10th June TVBC meeting regarding updated Local Plan Draft. Housing allocation of potential 20 houses on land in Red Rice Road. Local Plan to be debated next week followed by 10-week consultation. Cllr PH commented that PC will look at details when available.
4. **County Councillor's Update** Cllr DD reported on following items. HCC asking residents to have their say on proposals to help nature recover across Hampshire on the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Public Consultation open until 23rd June. Cllr Mark Cooper new Chair of HCC. Local Gov restructure ongoing. Weekly Food Collection service to commence 13th Oct 25. Cllr RB commented that the PC had hosted a useful visit to the Chalk Pit by Cllr Phil North, Andy Ferrier and Cllr Stewart MacDonald at the Chalk Pit, Anna Valley to discuss development project.
5. **Approved Minutes from Parish Council Meeting held on 14th May 2025**
Proposed Cllr RH
Seconded Cllr NF
In favour Cllrs RB,CW,RHk,GD and PH.
6. **Clerks update** - Annex A, Councillors noted content
7. **Planning Applications** – Cllr RH reported application 25/00828/FULLN Sam Whites Hill REFUSED. Ecological Balance and Grade 2 listed building status among factors.
8. **Finance –**
8.1 Cllrs had received internal audit documents with the other meeting papers and 'noted' the auditor's comments and the Clerk's response. Cllr PH recommendation to note auditor's comments and address observations as recommended by Clerk. Ultimately all aspects had been signed off as approved by the auditor. Cllr GD concerned and requested research to clarify legal position regarding auditor's comments on Chalk Pit funding, suggesting using HALC to obtain legal advice. Cllr RB stated the need to make it clear that Chalk Pit funding for the proposed development

was derived from specific grants into an earmarked fund and not from precept income. Cllr PH recommended Audit comments to be noted and any matters requiring rectification to be addressed by Clerk – **Action Clerk. Action - Cllrs to feedback any comments on audit to Clerk promptly.**

8.2 – Approve Annual Governance Statement (AGAR)

Cllr PH to sign AGAR

Proposed Cllr RB

Seconded Cllr RH

In favour Cllr CW, NF & RHk

Abstained Cllr GD

8.3 – Approve Accounting Statements – (AGAR)

Cllr PH to sign AGAR

Proposed Cllr RB

Seconded Cllr NF

In favour Cllr CW, RH, RHk

Abstained Cllr GD

Following approval of the governance and accounting statements the clerk will commence the exercise of public rights.

9. Playing Fields (equipment and grounds maintenance) – Cllr CW updated on RoSPA annual report, play parks noted issues Low Risk.

Anna Valley climbing frame wooden border broken, **Action - Cllr RB offered to repair.**

Balksbury Bridge Park – Hedge to be cut as part of new GM contract. **Action - Cllr PL to liaise**

Picnic bench seat slats too far apart causing hazardous gap and river warning sign damaged – **ACTION – to be put back to July Meeting.**

Pavillion and sports field.

Clarification and agreement regarding payment for interim grass cut - **item to be put back to July meeting.**

Grounds maintenance – no update.

Cllr RHk to speak with UCYFC regarding Parish Council storage in Pavillion.

10. Play Park Proposal – Cllr RH and Cllr RHk presented information regarding possible types of replacement play equipment they had been researching. Cllr RHk showed examples of projects carried out for other Public Areas and Schools using natural materials. Cllrs agreed that Anna Valley Play Park would be a good location to focus on owing to its proximity to young families and opportunity to update tired environment. Cllr RHk offered to approach suppliers for design ideas and quotes. Cllr RH offered to commence funding applications for the project.

- 11. Highways** – Cllr RH provided updates on highways issues. Emails sent to HCC regarding Church Lane potholes and Red Rice Road footpath.
Cllr MF offered to approach Virgin Media regarding long standing broken manhole cover in Foundry Road.
- 12. Trees** – Cllr NF updated on request for work on Lime trees in Brook Way, Cllr planning to meet and request advice from local arborist. Cllr NF also monitored tree cutting at Roseberry Farm in Red Rice Road and took advice from TVBC, no action.
- 13. Footpaths** – Cllr RB reported on a joint venture between HCC, TVBC and Upper Clatford Conservation Group (funded by TVBC) which has installed a new handrail between Anna Valley footpath (3) and Bury Hill Meadows. Cllr RB also informed that volunteers from the UC Conservation Group will be tending to village footpath 2 this coming Saturday (14th June).
- 14. Chalk Pit** – Cllr RB provided updated on the Chalk Pit development,
- a. An additional concept design is being drawn to examine an alternative site layout option to reposition buildings further away from the chalk face.
 - b. Funding – ongoing. Key takeaway from TVBC SLT site visit is recommendation to focus on community aspects of the project as this will open more doors to funding options. The protective fencing surrounding the demolition has now been removed.
- 15. Resilience** – Cllr GD no longer covering this portfolio owing to Item 16. Cllr GD has though spoken to the Village Hall Committee (VHC) who confirmed they would be interested in being involved depending on requirements.
- 16. Cllr Gerry Dawson.** Cllr GD provided feedback on recent training on the councillor's role. As a result of this training Cllr GD said he would like to examine the work of this Parish Council and to report on any perceived failings, saying he felt the HALC training had highlighted some conflicts and he felt it was his responsibility to look into these matters. Cllr GD said he would like to investigate the agenda items, proposals and actions of the PC to make sure all Policies and Procedures are being adhered to, adding that this would not allow him sufficient time to perform his Resilience portfolio.

Cllr RB reminded Cllr GD that it was the Clerk and RFO who was responsible for maintaining the Parish Council's adherence to procedure and Cllr GD's proposed actions were not required. Cllr RB highlighted that an audit process is already in place and there was no requirement for another parallel audit process.

Cllr NF suggested that Cllr GD work on the Resilience portfolio he had previously taken on and carry out his investigation on that as a project to learn if procedure was being followed. Cllr GD dismissed this suggestion.

Cllr PH reminded Cllr GD that the Parish Councillors were volunteers and that there was a need to work collaboratively, or the council could fall apart.

Cllr GD reiterated his intent to look into the council's operation which he would like to be a collaborative exercise.

The proposed focus on looking at the council's operation was not supported by other Cllrs present.

Cllr PH closed discussion.

Annex A - Clerks Update – June Council Meeting

1. Please note that the priority for this meeting is to finalise the end of year accounts for **the AGAR**. The form has been attached to your meeting pack for ref together with a summary of the accounts . The account will be published on the website as normal together with the exercise of public notice. The AGAR will include the internal auditor's certificate which was passed last week. As a result of this and due to my absence as well as the finance lead's absence the decision was made with the Chair to reduce the business of this meeting to focus on the essential AGAR business which is time critical.
2. HCC have issued and we've paid the latest **street lighting charge** – see accounts. I have finally managed to get in contact and update the address and email details for this council. Invoices were still going to White Oak Way. I have tried to ask about the light bulbs for the lamps and the maintenance regime but HCC still to respond.
3. **Reserves** – thank you to those who have fed in comments on the reserve strategy. Some minor tweaks needed following comments but otherwise the policy will be drafted and produced for the next meeting (July) for your approval.
4. **Internal Audit** – the internal audit was held, report produced and signed off for AGAR purposes. I have produced a note on the report remarks with suggested council response for your approval. **The suggested course of action for minutes purposes is to state that the report is 'noted'**.
 A more detailed response can sit alongside the report and be published on the website. There were some areas for improvement but the majority were already in action, completed or out of scope/not applicable.
 Invoice submitted and due to be paid, £320.
 A further action arising out the audit is to ensure we have a clear audit trail regarding bank investment changes and that they are fully minuted. This will be addressed in the July meeting when the financial statements for May and June are presented.
5. **Gas meter box** for Pavillion received and waiting to be fitted .
6. **Archive Docs** – Clerk has started to go through the plethora of documents which have built up (and are stored in various locations) with a view to rationalising them, introducing an improved storage solution and recording them. The first tranche of documents that have been reviewed are a selection of historical maps coming up to fairly recent including showing where all the street lights are. Clerk will produce a register of what maps we hold which will be available to all cllrs. Clerk has also reviewed all the land search documents held, and copies of transfer agreements held – again the record and description of each document will be produced and be available to all councillors. Clerk will continue to work through all the documents held to rationalise, file and record so all documents can be made use of and support research and be a permanent archive of the council's documents. The intent as discussed in previous meetings is for the documents to be stored in the Pavillion – this still needs to be agreed with UCYFC as a matter of courtesy – please can you agree this with the club RHk?
7. **Job advert** – job posted on website. Would you like the job to be advertised on the NALC site? Coverage mainly existing clerks – cost would be £100 + VAT – this can be discussed in the July meeting. Will also look to put ad in the Clatford magazine.
8. **Cllr Hydes and Dawson attended courses this month with HALC.**

9. **The accounting package is still being trialled** - they have extended the free trial period.