

Upper Heyford Parish Council

 Location: UH Village Hall
 Date: 22nd May 2025
 Time: 7:15pm – 8.40pm

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Present: Chair: Paul Weaver, Councillors: Chris O'Malley, Bryony Johnson, George Stephenson (arrived during the meeting)

Apologies: Councillors: Derk Burrows, Mark Hiles Clerk: Sarah Burrows

Code of Conduct: The Chair reminded Councillors of the code of conduct requirements under the Localism Act of 2011

Opening Remarks: Cllr Weaver welcomed members of the Parish to the meeting

Chairman's Report: The Chair detailed various projects that had been carried out by the PC over the year, thanking all the volunteers and councillors that helped complete the various projects. See attached chairs report for further information.

County & District reports: No County or District reports received

Finance Report: Report of finances over the year, consisted of incoming revenue of £21,114.81 and outgoings of £23,650.23. The deficit is due to the large amount of playground repair works undertaken this year.

Heat Upper Heyford: Andy Meaney reported on the progress of Heat Upper Heyford. Progress has been made and funders, Social Investment Business (SIB) are pushing forward with direct funding for progression of the plans and designs, to a point where further planning applications can be made to Cherwell District Council (CDC). We do not have a timescale at present but SIB are funding several projects across the country of a similar nature, of which we are part of the wider group of schemes.

Draught-busters: Charlie Henry has pushed this forward and has conducted several reviews and workshops where simple draught excluding products have been demonstrated and handed out. This is a direct impact scheme, fully funded by CDC, and Upper Heyford is the pilot for CDC to determine whether to roll out further. A grant of £3,000 has been received by Upper Heyford PC to fund this project, of which only £499 has been spent to date.

The PC thanked the members of HUH for taking these important sustainability projects forward.

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Community Fund Update: Simon van Zwanenberg (not present) reported on the Community Fund position

Barclays/Community Fund - balance @ 04.25: £11,518

Ring-fenced funds:

- Healthy Heyford/Stay Active - £3,500 (approx)
- Flower Show: £1,112
- Cream Teas: £1,000
- Fireworks: £527 (needs verification)
- ** Quiz Night: £275
- ** Warreners (VLS) transfer: £2850
- ** Football Club (ILS) transfer : £950

Remainder (not ring-fenced): £1,333 (approx) - note: desired 'float' is £1.5K

Any Other Business: Veronica Lough-Scott reported that the Warreners had disbanded some years ago and that the monies in the community fund could be used for any new groups that wished to start up, focused on the over 55's.

It was also reported that, after 90 years in existence, the Heyfords Women's Institute had also closed down – with only 11 members across multiple villages there was not enough membership to warrant continuing. Any monies that were held by Heyfords WI will be held for 3 years (in District HQ) in order that a new group could be started again – after 3 years the funds are absorbed into the district coffers.

Ian Lough-Scott reported that the Church is suffering due to lack of congregation and funds. Each year they have to contribute £10,000 to the Church of England, however only manage to raise around £1,000 in congregation collections throughout the year. The church is in need of repainting inside, at an estimate of £15,000, which is clearly unreachable given the monies raised currently.

The parishioners present and the PC members discussed ways to engage further with the community to try and build our support and gain more volunteers to enhance life in our beautiful village and church.

Sarah Burrows, Clerk to the Council
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work with Chris O’Malley to get this finished, we believe before winter sets in! Thank you to both Chris’ for keeping this moving

Tree Planting Project: The council secured funding last year from Cllr Ian Corkin’s Discretionary fund to remove and replace the trees along Somerton Road with new native trees. Many of the old trees were dead or dying and becoming weak. These were removed and used as firewood for Bonfire night.

Chris O’Malley and Jo Allen led the project and we now have new trees planted and being tended for by Jo and Chris – Thank you for both for working on this project.

Play Area Equipment Repaired: Some much-needed maintenance was completed on both play areas in the village. We have struggled in previous years to find contractors willing to perform this maintenance, but we now have that contact and can continue to maintain the equipment. We also performed some tree surgery in order to keep the area safe, removing a rotten tree trunk that was integrated into the play equipment. Thank you to Mark Hiles, Chris Scarrott, Jo Allen, Derek Burrows and George Stephenson for the work on these projects.

Spring Water Returned! Many will know that the spring that has fed the allotments and Fountain on High Street and the Cemetery for hundreds of years dried up last year after SSEN works appeared to have cut off the supply. Investigations were undertaken and further investigations were on the verge of being commissioned, when suddenly the tank started to fill up again! We now have full service back to all the taps and have installed small notices at each tap to note that this is not drinking water – after testing by Thames Water, they were clear that this was not treated water!

Allens Lane Notice Board: After a generous donation from a village resident, we have been able to order a new recycled plastic noticeboard to replace the ageing one on Allens Lane. This is the first thing that visitors see when entering the village from the canal and was in great need of replacement. The board only arrived last week so we need to find a good date to get this in place – the board will not be locked, just like the old one, so will be available to all to place advertisements or notices inside.

Spring Clean: The yearly litter pick, organised by Sarah Morgan-Harris was completed in April again this year. It has been noted that this year, although a smaller number of volunteers turned out, Sarah Burrows, Clerk to the Council
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Chairs Report

This year has seen stability in the council members, with our newest member George Stephenson filling the empty position we had last year. The latest change within council has been that Sarah Morgan-Harris chose to step down as clerk due to personal and work commitments not allowing enough time to carry out the role to her exacting standards! We thank Sarah for the last 6 years of clerkship. We have successfully recruited Sarah Burrows as the new clerk, who took over last week – so please bear with Sarah as she gets up to speed with everything council related!

MCNP: The Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan had to revise the plan and go out to another consultation at the instruction of Cherwell District Council. That consultation is still underway and is running parallel to the CDC consultation on their local plan that runs until 2041. Upper Heyford has been designated as a category B village in the new local plan, meaning that we are eligible for small scale development within the village. This recategorisation is due to our proximity to Heyford Park, which is designated as a service centre. The Council have challenged this new categorization as part of the consultation response. There is one parcel of land, off Mill Lane, that has been identified by a call for sites – this land is owned by Oxfordshire County Council and they have confirmed that they would be interesting in allocating this land for development. The Council agreed that this land could be suitable for a small development of around 10 dwellings – but are very keen to hear from residents on their concerns for this, and would encourage everyone to feedback to the clerk, and the MCNP consultation with this feedback. In context, the local plan allocated 100 dwellings across the MCNP area, and we have not been able to reach this number – again due to recategorisation of other villages that were looking to develop, but are not longer allowed to. If the local authority does not agree with our assessments of development allocations, the whole MCNP area may be subject to speculative development that we will have no control over.

Also on this parcel of land is a large Oak Tree that we have successfully applied, and been provisionally granted a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on. This should safeguard the tree from any development plans to remove it. If any villagers know of additional trees that could benefit from a TPO, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk.

SSEN Resilience Project: I was hoping that we could crack open the champagne on this project this year, however there are still ongoing works to be completed – we are continually chasing SSEN to keep this project moving and Chris Coe, although no longer resident in the village, continues to

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there was noticeably less litter to be collected! Thank you to Sarah Morgan-Harris for organising this yearly event and all the volunteers that turn out to look after our village.

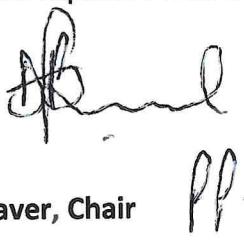
Fireworks Night: Another fantastic evening on the playing field. Thank you to Duncan Smith and his team for organising this fun evening for all the family. Chris Scarrott and Jo Allen again constructed a fantastic bonfire and made sure that the area remained safe long into the wee small hours! Also thanks to the team of volunteers that were stationed in the 'Soup Kitchen' in the village hall.

Village Amenities: Our football pitch was well utilised last year, and we gained some much needed revenue from this. The year ahead already has some bookings being secured with local teams. The PC are applying for grant funding to improve parking facilities so that the field does not get churned up when cars are parked in wet weather. We are also hoping to improve the pavilion facilities with new showers and a general refresh of the rooms. Thanks to Mark Hiles and Chris O'Malley for working on this.

It should be noted that the PC are looking at ways to increase usage of both the Village Hall and Reading Room. Both are fantastic facilities and should be used more regularly. If you have any ideas on how this could work, please get in touch with the parish clerk.

Much needed Reading Room repairs to the Windows and patio doors were carried out by Graham Wilson – many thanks to Graham for taking this work on voluntarily – the windows look great and should last a few more years now, before requiring replacement. The false door on the side of the RR was also replaced with a bespoke replacement.

Signed



Paul Weaver, Chair



Sarah Burrows, Parish Clerk

Sarah Burrows, Clerk to the Council
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