

# Wyton on the Hill Parish Council

Parish Clerk (Relief): Mrs Carol Bilverstone. Kilimanjaro, 9 Meadow Road, Upwood, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE26 2QJ  
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A meeting of Wyton on the Hill Parish Council was held on Tuesday 13 March at 7.00pm at Wyton on the Hill County Primary School.

**Present:** Councillors S. Brown, G. Cunnick, District Councillor R. Howe.

**In Attendance:** Mrs C. Bilverstone, Clerk; Mr A. Savage, Estate Caretaker; Ms S. Hillman, Community Development Officer, RAF Wyton; and three members of the public.

## Minutes

District Councillor Robin Howe opened the meeting and explained that as this parish council is no longer quorate, Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Representation of the People Act 1883 has authorised Huntingdonshire District Council to appoint him to serve on this parish council until other councillors are co-opted or elected and take up office. He will assume this position until four days after the election on 03 May by which time it is hoped that a fully functioning council will have been re-established.

**128-03/18 To receive the resignation of Councillor Brown as chairman and to appoint a new chairman.**

Mrs Bilverstone presented the resignation of Councillor Brown. Nominations for the position of chairman were invited. Councillor Cunnick proposed that Councillor Howe be appointed, Councillor Brown seconded the proposal. There were no further nominations. Councillor Howe accepted and it was **resolved** to appoint him as chairman of the council. Councillor Howe signed the declaration of office.

**129-03/18 To receive and approve apologies for absence.** There were no apologies for absence.

**130-03/18 To receive declarations of interest.**

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011. There were no declarations of interest.

**131-03/18 Parish Clerk/RFO Services**

131-03/18.1 To consider a recommendation from Councillor Howe (District Councillor) and Ian Dewar (CEO, CAPALC) to engage the services of Mrs Carol Bilverstone, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council, on a short-term consultancy basis for a maximum of 40 hours per month + retrospective payment for 51 hours in February until such time as a permanent clerk/RFO is appointed.

Councillor Brown proposed that the council accepts this recommendation. Councillor Cunnick seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

131-03/18.2 To consider an offer from Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council to facilitate payroll for this arrangement based on an hourly rate of £17.951 (JNC Spine Point 39) + the associated 5% Employers Pension Contribution. Councillor Brown proposed that the council accepts this offer. Councillor Cunnick seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

*Clerk's note: since the meeting, it has become apparent that the work involved in the short term will exceed 40 hours per month. All councillors agreed to authorise the clerk to accomplish the tasks required to re-establish this council on a firm footing.*

131-03/18.3 To consider reimbursement of travel costs at £0.45 per mile and out of pocket expenses for items such as stationery and postage.

Councillor Brown proposed that the council accepts these terms. Councillor Cunnick seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so.

*For the benefit of members of the public, the chairman and clerk agreed to move the following item forward on the agenda.*

**136-03/18 Public participation.** To allow up to 10 minutes (2 minutes per person) for any members of the public and councillors declaring the existence and nature of a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to the business on this agenda.

Ms. Hillman, Community Development Officer, RAF Wyton asked for reassurance that the funding agreed for the youth club will continue. The clerk explained that she has a copy of a Service Level Agreement dated 2017/2018 between Wyton on the Hill Parish Council and Airplay for Youth Support Services at RAF Wyton Youth Club but that this document is unsigned; there is no evidence of a signed copy in the parish council's files; and no tangible evidence of the formal decision making process in the agendas or minutes. The clerk and the chairman confirmed that this parish council has been in breach of governance and that it cannot achieve full compliance and transparency overnight. They agreed that the parish council's apparently informal agreement of financial support amounting to £4,700 for 100 hours of sessional youth work will remain in place (the first quarterly payment of £1175 is due in April 2018). The clerk will liaise with Ms. Hillman either to source a signed agreement or to present a copy of the agreement for formal approval and signing at the next meeting.

Ms. Hillman also asked if the parish council would be prepared to offer support to the Easter Street Party which is scheduled to take place on 05 April. The chairman confirmed again that although the parish council had not followed procedures, retrospective approval would be given this year in line with the support offered in previous years. Ms. Hillman confirmed that the cost of the "teacup ride" would be in the region of £450 and the chairman confirmed that if an invoice is forwarded to the clerk, payment would be approved at the next meeting.

*Clerk's note: the parish council does not have a "power" to support the cost of a youth worker or to contribute to the cost of the Easter Street Party. However, Section 137 ("the power of well-being") of the Local Government Act, 1972 makes provision for the council to spend a limited amount on activities for which it has no specific power, but which it considers will directly promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the fabric of the parish or its parishioners. The S137 Expenditure limit for 2017/2018 is £7.57 per person on the electoral roll on 01 April 2017 (which would equate to approximately £7,500). The figures for 2018/2019 are yet to be confirmed.*

Mr Martin Curtis, Associate Director, Curtin & Co. informed the council that plans are soon to be validated for the alternative temporary use (initially five years) of the hard standing at Wyton Airfield. The proposal has evolved as a revenue source whilst plans for the new housing development are on hold owing to infrastructure constraints. Mr Curtis outlined the following key elements of the proposal:

The planning application will be for storage of 7,500 cars (single storey). The site would be managed as a dark site so although there may be car movements at night, there would be no permanent night lighting. Access would be via the existing crash gate and changes would be made to the A141 to accommodate the turning of car transporters at a volume of 5 transporters in and out of the site per hour. The proposed hours of operation will be from 6:00am to 8:00pm with transporters approaching the site from the main coastal ports via the A1/A14 at Spittals Interchange. They will not be routed through St. Ives and the vehicles will be tracked by GPS to ensure compliance by drivers. The developers will undertake to make improvements to the visual impact of the site and to enhance biodiversity with planting and landscaping. A formal planning application is likely to be presented at the next meeting.

Mr Savage, Estate Caretaker updated the council on his recent work. The new waste bin has been installed. The parish council now owns six full-sized bins and one small one. All agreed that the estate management is in good hands and Mr Savage was thanked for his continued commitment. In future, the estate caretaker's report will be listed as a separate agenda item.

A parishioner expressed concerns that several driving schools appear to be using the estate as a practice route. The chairman suggested that further information should be sought and that this matter should be addressed at the next meeting.

**132-03-18 It is hereby resolved in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted at the next agenda item the chairman asks that in the public interest, the public and press are temporarily excluded from this meeting and are herewith instructed to withdraw.**

To receive an update on the governance and financial management of Wyton on the Hill Parish Council from Mrs Carol Bilverstone, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council.

Mrs Bilverstone presented the following observations and recommendations:

**Governance:**

- The Standing Orders published on the parish website are not dated and there is no record in the minutes of their adoption. These are the foundations of governance for the parish council. It is recommended that the current version be adopted to ensure legal compliance.
- The parish council adopted Huntingdonshire District Council's Code of Conduct in 2014. Although there was no evidence of this in the files the district council has provided a copy of the signed document.
- The parish council is not in compliance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (2014). Uploading documents to the parish website has been problematic to date.
- There is no evidence of an internal audit ever taking place (no report, no payment etc.) yet an "internal auditor" has signed the Annual Governance Statement each year.
- There is no evidence of an asset register yet figures relating to an asset register have been entered on the Annual Return.
- Previous Annual Returns have been incorrectly completed in several areas. The Annual Return is due for completion on 31 March 2018. Councillors were advised that questions will be answered honestly and correctly this year and this will not reflect well on the council's previous practice.
- There are several policies on the parish council's website and most are dated 2017. There is no evidence in the minutes that the parish council have actually adopted these policies. It is recommended that all policies and procedures are reviewed and formally adopted when a permanent clerk is in post.

**Finance:**

- The financial regulations posted on the website have been adapted from the model regulations but vast amounts of the content have been deleted. The clerk recommended the adoption of the model financial regulations based on the practices of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council. These are rigorous and ensure transparency. They also offer protection both to council funds and also to councillors and staff. The parameters set in this document may be reviewed over time and adjusted if necessary.
- VAT has never been re-claimed. Documentation has now been prepared to recover the VAT spent by the council in the last two financial years (The maximum period allowed is three years but there are no financial records available for 2015/2016). VAT should be recovered on an annual basis in future. There are a significant number of invoices made out to another organisation but they have been paid by Wyton on the Hill Parish Council. There are also several delivery notes which aren't accompanied by VAT invoices so a significant amount of VAT has been "lost".
- There was no evidence of a cash book (a list of receipts and payments) and no evidence of bank reconciliations. A cash book has now been created for 2017/2018 and a bank reconciliation achieved. There is no evidence to show that the bank account with Co Op was closed and the clerk believes that £24 remains in this account. Statements have been requested.
- The parish council's banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC do not offer the security and particular needs of a local council. The use of personal log in details does not offer protection to the individual or to the council and it is crucial that all payments or alterations to standing orders or direct debits are made transparently at parish council meetings following publication on the agenda. The clerk recommended Unity Trust Bank which offers triple authority online banking through a sector specific account (Unity Trust Bank although relatively unknown to the general public is recommended by many local councils).
- Although payroll has been processed through HMRC's "Basic Tools, Real Time Information" software, tax and national insurance payments have been irregular and inconsistent with online submissions. This has resulted in several fines over the years for overdue payment. Tax and National Insurance payments will be made on a monthly basis in line with online submissions from now on.
- A large number of payments have been made without supporting documentation.
- £78 in cash is missing.
- Concerns regarding the Service Level Agreement dated 2017/2018 between Wyton on the Hill Parish Council and Airplay for Youth Support Services at RAF Wyton Youth Club amounting to £4,700 were addressed in item 136-03/18.

**Personnel:**

- The parish council is now compliant with its declaration to the Pensions Regulator but there is no evidence that employees were offered the opportunity to join a pension scheme. This is a legal requirement and needs to be addressed. If employees wish to join a pension scheme, the parish council has three months in which to provide one.

- A webmaster was recently “employed” but this was accomplished without evaluating the need, producing a job/person specification or a job description and without advertising the position. An announcement was made in the minutes but the decision making process was not evident or transparent. Salary payments had been set up by standing order but the “employee” had not been registered with HMRC; the payment had not been processed through payroll; and no pension provision had been made. One month’s “salary” has been paid. As this is such a new initiative, the clerk has made arrangements for this arrangement be terminated with immediate effect. On a personal level the clerk offered sincere apologies to the individual concerned but on a professional level she felt that termination would limit further damage to the parish council’s reputation.
- The clerk recommended that a working party be appointed to evaluate the Clerk/RFO/Webmaster position(s) and suggested that this could be most effectively accomplished by a single appointment. She recommended that a working party be formed to prepare a job description and person specification; evaluate the hours required; and determine the salary to be offered so that this is ready to advertise after the election.
- A position for Clerk/RFO for this council had recently, inadvertently been advertised on the CAPALC website but this was prior to evaluation of the post. The parish council has received applications and these have been acknowledged and the council’s position explained. It is hoped that these applicants will be prepared to wait for proper processes to be followed.

#### **General Management:**

- A contract for the maintenance of the estate entrance exists but this is effective from 04 August 2015 for six months with an extension of twelve months upon completion of the initial period dependent on compliance with the contract and the schedule. This effectively expired in February 2017. The company is paid £110 by monthly standing order. There is no evidence of tendering for this work and no evidence of a current contract.
- 25 reams of paper, 10 lever arch files and 2 packs of document wallets were purchased during 2017/2018 at a cost of £104. A few reams of paper were given to councillors and a few files have been accounted for.

Mrs Bilverstone confirmed that she is working closely with the independent auditor who was engaged to work with this council in February, and also with CAPALC. She offered reassurance to councillors that she has worked with two other local councils, both of whom have been through similar challenging times. Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council now holds the prestigious “Quality Award” so although it will take some time and effort, she is confident that this council can recover and thrive.

#### **The chairman re-convened the meeting.**

#### **133-03/18 Further to item 132-03/18 to consider the following recommendations:**

- 133-03/18.1 To review membership of Wyton on the Hill Parish Council and to consider advertising vacancies for the co-option of five parish councillors.

The chairman asked that councillors make a concerted effort to recruit councillors in the coming weeks. If the parish council cannot be self-sustaining, the district council will take over its management and ultimately the estate could lose its autonomy and be subsumed into another parish. The chairman offered to attend the Easter Street Party. Councillor Brown offered to prepare fliers for distribution to every household and to promote the opportunity via the parish council’s Facebook page and through contacts at RAF Wyton. Councillors will attempt to locate display boards which were bought some years ago. The chairman suggested that approaching individual members of the community is often the best approach. Prospective members of the council need to live within three miles of the parish or work within the parish. The chairman proposed that co-option notices be posted to advertise the five vacancies on the council. Councillor Cunnick seconded the proposal and it was **resolved** to do so.

*Clerk’s note: Huntingdonshire District Council has confirmed that regardless of the number of councillors co-opted at the next meeting, Councillor Howe may remain as chairman until four days after the election.*

The chairman proposed that the following four items be grouped together:

- 133-03/18.2 To consider re-adoption of Model Standing Orders (NALC 2013)
- 133-03/18.3 To consider re-adoption of Model Financial Regulations (NALC 2016)
- 133-03/18.4 To consider transfer of the parish council’s banking arrangements from Barclays Bank PLC to a sector specific account with Unity Trust Bank PLC
- 133-03/18.5 To consider registration with the Information Commissioners Office for Data Protection at a cost of £35.00 for the year 2018/2019.

The chairman proposed that all items 18.2/3/4/5 be approved and adopted. Councillor Brown seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. The clerk will make the necessary arrangements to publish the policy documents, to confirm registration with the Information Commissioner's Office and to prepare documentation for the transfer of banking arrangements from Barclays to Unity Trust.

133-03/18.6 To consider the formation of a working party to coordinate the evaluation, advertising and appointment of a Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Webmaster.

All agreed that this should be a single appointment. Councillor Howe, Councillor Brown and the clerk offered to form the working party. All were in favour and it was **resolved** that this would be accomplished to enable an advertisement to be placed after the election.

**134-03/18 To receive and approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 13 February 2018.**

The draft minutes of the meeting of Wyton on the Hill Parish Council held on 13 February 2018 had been circulated in advance following their informal approval by the chairman. Councillor Brown proposed acceptance of the minutes. Councillor Cunnick seconded the proposal. They were the only councillors present who had been present at the meeting so it was **resolved** to do so. Councillor Brown (chairman of that meeting) signed the minutes.

**135-03/18 Matters arising or carried forward from the previous meeting.**

All items will be carried forward to the next meeting.

**137-03/18 Notification of planning items.** There were no planning applications.

**138-03/18 Finance**

138-03/18.1 To approve accounts for payment: 13 March 2018.

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
12.03.18	SO	Mr A. Savage	Salary: Estate Caretaker (February 2018)	240.00
13.03.18	100020	HMRC	PAYE & NI (month 11)	469.51
			PAYE (overdue from months 8 & 9)	0.47
12.03.18	SO	Enviroplantcare	Maintenance of estate entrance (February 2018)	110.00
13.03.18	100021	Information Commissioner's Office	Data Protection Registration 2018-2019	35.00
13.03.18	100022	Canalbs Ltd.	Investigation of parish council documents. 2 Visits	760.50
13.03.18	100023	Came and Company	Renewal of annual insurance premium	299.25
13.03.18	100024	Glasdon UK Limited	Waste Bin	217.32
13.03.18	100025	Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council	Parish Clerk/RFO Services. 51 hours, February 2018	961.28
13.03.18	100026	Mrs C. Silverstone	Travel Expenses	6.75

138-03/18.2 To note income received: 13 March 2018:

Date	Ref. No.	Payee	Description	Amount
19.02.18	BACS	Cambridgeshire County Council	Compensation for the removal of a play area.	1000.00
02.03.18	BACS	Came and Company	Refund for overpayment of insurance premium (April 2017)	14.87*

*\*this was incorrectly recorded as £14.97 on the agenda.*

138-03/18.3 To acknowledge submission of a VAT return covering the period 01 March 2015 - 28 February 2018.

A claim for VAT spent during the financial years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, totalling £1181.61 will be sent to HMRC at the end of March. Financial documentation covering the financial year 2015/2016 is missing and therefore any VAT incurred during this time is unrecoverable.

138-03/18.4 To consider quotations for the printing of fliers to advertise the forthcoming parish council election.

Councillor Brown confirmed that she had approached Huntingdonshire District Council and an independent company in St. Ives regarding the printing of fliers. She has secured an offer to produce 600 fliers for £48 and

proposed that the council supports this initiative. The chairman seconded the proposal. All were in favour and it was **resolved** to do so. Councillor Brown will make the necessary arrangements and forward an invoice to the clerk for payment at the next meeting.

- 138-03/18.5 To consider the purchase of a power lead and mouse for the parish council's laptop. The clerk suggested that there was no need for a mouse at this time but that the power lead was critical. All agreed to the purchase. Since the meeting however, the clerk has been provided with a power lead at no cost by Councillor Michael Tew of Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council.

**139-03/18 Correspondence and Communications**

Various items of correspondence had been shared via email with councillors. All relevant items have been addressed in other agenda items.

**140-03/18 To receive verbal reports from Parish Councillors on matters arising from their portfolio responsibilities.**

*No decisions can be made under this item.*

There were no further reports.

**141-03/18 Matters for future consideration. *No decisions can be made under this item.***

There were no further matters for consideration.

**142-03/18 Date of next meeting: 10 April 2018.**

Please note that owing to the Easter bank holiday weekend and the clerk's personal commitments the agenda for this meeting will be published two working days earlier than usual on Thursday 29 March.

**Close of meeting: 9:15pm**