

Uffculme Parish Council
Minutes of meeting held
Thursday 1 October 2020 on Google Meet

Chairman: E Hagelstein

Present: P Blackman R Kingdom J Gardner M Pollard P Cornish D Wells
I Duncan S Kidd T Verona

20.10.01 Apologies for Absence

J Nash – Family P Mackian – Holiday T Pointing – Holiday
R Chesterton – MDDC Meeting B Evans – MDDC Meeting

20.10.02 To Approve the Minutes of the meeting held 3 September 2020

The minutes were approved as an official Council record.

20.10.03 County Councillors Report

Councillor Radford had submitted an e mail to the Clerk prior to the meeting, which had been circulated to the Councillors, no queries were raised in respect of the report and it was agreed to attach that to the minutes.

20.10.04 District Councillors Report

Councillor Warren advised the meeting that the Cabinet of MDDC had seen a reshuffle recently, due to a vote of no confidence in the leader. The change of Cabinet Members meant that Councillors Evans and Chesterton were both part of the Cabinet.

MDDC is revising its budget to take into account the lack of car park and leisure income due to Covid closures. Some funds had been received from central government, along with a promise to refund 75% of lost funds from central government.

The Cabinet had recently approved a new programme of works to deal with climate change in the district.

Councillor Warren applauded the Parish Council's involvement with the rubbish posters.

MDDC currently has over 200 live planning enforcement cases and in an attempt to try and close some of these, Councillors would become involved.

The MDDC Housing Walkabout would take place in October and Councillor Warren agreed to forward details.

20.10.05 Finance

20.10.05.01 To Approve the September Financial Statement

The September financial statement was approved as official Council minutes.

The Clerk raised Councillors attention to the £10,000 grant received from MDDC in respect of the cemetery and Covid.

20.10.05.02 Coldharbour Mill

The Clerk updated the meeting that the Mill were hoping to have details of the containers which the Council had committed to purchasing for the November meeting, and that funding in respect of the tracking/path for wheelchair access around the Splash Project would likely come in the Spring of 2021.

Verity Aldridge
Clerk to Uffculme Parish Council
26 October 2020

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20.10.05.03 Uffculme Village Hall

Councillor Cornish advised that there was still no progress with regards to gaining quotes for the proposed works at the hall, and therefore this item was carried forward.

20.10.05.04 Uffculme Mens Club

Councillor Kingdom updated the meeting that the Committee were now beginning to run low on funds following the extensive renovations that have been carried out by the Committee and members, over the last few months. At the time of meeting, no survey had been carried out on the building and no information was available on this. Councillor Kingdom advised that she would contact the Mens Club to make clear that if they wished to approach the Council for any further funding, we would need a detailed account of what has been spent to date, and what is planned.

20.10.05.05 Skatepark

The Clerk advised that the third-party funding of £7,543.50 for Viridor was due to be paid, and the Clerk raised with the Council how they wished to fund this. The Clerk had secured £1,500 from Councillor Radford's Locality budget, a promise of stone from Aggregate Industries (no value applied to this), and that there was a fund of £10,626 available as S.106 monies within MDDC for Uffculme. The meeting considered that out of a total spend of £100,000 there would be a shortfall of £17,022 after the grant from Viridor and the 10% third party funding. The meeting agreed to put in a claim of all the S.106 monies from MDDC to help make up significant proportion.

20.10.05.06 Bus Stop

The Clerk shared with the meeting new designs from Coldharbour Mill and the Green Team for the bus stop renovations. The meeting agreed that the designs were a significant improvement and would be an asset to the village. The total cost of the renovated bus stop would be £2,500 and Coldharbour Mill were looking for the Council to make a contribution towards this cost, provided that any contribution towards the bus stop would not forfeit previously allocated funds to Coldharbour Mill.

Councillor Kingdom proposed a contribution of £1,000. This was seconded by Councillor Cornish and the meeting agreed.

20.10.05.07 Defibrillators

The Clerk advised the meeting that she had purchased new pads and batteries for the defibrillators.

20.10.06 Business Arising

20.10.06.01 Mid Devon Local Plan

The meeting discussed that the local plan had been approved and that the Clerk would request a hard copy of the plan from MDDC.

20.10.06.02 Hillhead / Broadpath

Councillor Hagelstein advised that there was no report on activities. A meeting was trying to be arranged in November.

20.10.06.03 ABN Feed Mill

Councillor Hagelstein that there were no updates to report, and that no meeting would take place due to Covid.

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20.10.06.04 Uffculme Mens Club

Councillor Kingdom advised of the funding issues as minuted above, and that a meeting had been planned for Tuesday 29th September however, no minutes have been provided. The Committee planned to reopen in December 2020.

20.10.06.05 Uffculme Bowling Club

Councillor Hagelstein advised that there were no updates from the Bowling Club.

20.10.06.06 Green Team

Councillor Kingdom advised that the previous idea for a wildflower meadow area had been postponed in the interim. During the litter pick, over 150kgs of litter had been collected. The new posters arranged by the Council were now being displayed and the Green Team were looking for their Green Champion to award.

20.10.06.07 Allotments

Councillor Duncan advised that the allotments were getting ready for winter, and that the last pieces of produce were being harvested in preparation.

The Committee had received resignation from roles and as yet they have not had anyone come forward as replacements.

20.10.06.08 BMX Track/Skatepark

The Clerk had received notification that the build would commence on 12th October 2020 and the recent consultation with residents on the project had been cleared up, and again the response from the public was vastly positive.

20.10.06.09 Parish Maintenance Update, Commercial Road

Councillor Pollard advised that Jess and Phil had cleared the footpath along Commercial Road, and following a Facebook post by Councillor Verona, the project had received great feedback from the Community. It had prompted questions raised over other areas in the village which the Clerk had been able to respond to.

A new gate at Magelake footpath entrance had been previously agreed however, an adaptation to include a 'sluice gate' as the previous had gone missing, seemed like a better plan. The Clerk and Councillor Pollard were liaising to obtain quotes for the works.

20.10.06.10 Uffculme Pond Lease

Following approval at the September 2020 meeting, the Clerk had instructed Dunn & Baker in respect of this matter. The meeting discussed the need to ensure the fence could be fixed on in inception of the lease, to ensure the area is safe. It would be anticipated works on the greater refurbishment would recommence in the New Year.

20.10.06.11 Re-opening of Public Toilet

The meeting discussed whether the public toilet should reopen, at a cost of £24/wk for 2 cleans. The meeting agreed that the toilet would remain closed.

20.10.06.12 Future Meeting format

The meeting discussed current Covid guidance and agreed that the November meeting should take place online.

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20.10.06.13 Social Media

Councillor Verona updated the meeting that Facebook now had almost 300 followers with engaging posts on The Square, Parish maintenance, Skatepark and general MDDC and DCC posts.

The meeting discussed including the Police reports that Councillor Evans has previously referred, and the meeting agreed that these would be shared through Facebook, if appropriate, rather than through the website.

The meeting agreed that whilst social media was a good tool, the write-ups that have been published in the Spotlight have also been well received and should continue.

20.10.06.14 Traffic and speeding issues/Community Speedwatch

The meeting discussed whether the speeding issues were a small minority, or whether it is a wider area. Councillors discussed needing to ensure that we represented the Parish as a whole, as it was felt the issue was not localised to one area.

20.10.07 Police Report

Councillor Pointing was on holiday however, the Clerk was able to advise that Councillors had reported two items within the last month directly to the Police for investigation.

20.10.08 Clerks Report

20.10.08.01 Water Fountain

Due to Covid-19 there has never been an unveiling of the water fountain. Unfortunately, this remains the case for the time being.

20.10.08.02 DCC & MDDC Grass Cutting

Following the previous decision by the Parish council, some areas that were previously under MDDC and DCC responsibility, were now being borne by the Parish council.

20.09.08.03 Removal of tree in The Square

The Clerk had sought a quote for both the pruning or removal of the Silver Birch tree in The Square. Pruning the tree was at a cost of £120, whilst removal was £220. The meeting agreed that, in the long run, the removal of the tree would be beneficial for both safety reasons and maintaining public funds.

20.10.08.04 Long Shrubbery footpath issues

Following previous complaints regarding debris and flooding, the Clerk had discussed with Stuart of DCC Footpaths, who had agreed for the footpath to be added to a works list with priority flagging due to the flooding issues.

Whilst also discussing the footpath, Stuart was able to advise the Clerk that Sandy Lane had also received approval for works to be carried out by a JCB contractor, to ensure the gates are at the horse-standard approved height.

20.10.08.05 Council Committees

The previously circulated list of Committees for Councillors was agreed.

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20.10.08.06 Footpath Maintenance

Following the clearing of Commercial Road, issues had been reported by Parishioners of the footpath from Highland Terrace to the Secondary school, and also Russet Close to Culm Valley Way. Both of these areas were reported as being overgrown, making it difficult to pass. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Jess regarding scheduled maintenance of the Secondary school footpath and would write to home owners bordering the Russet Close to Culm Valley Way footpath, as much of the overgrown foliage was from residential dwellings.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 5th November via Google Meet.

From: Councillor Ray Radford <ray.radford@devon.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 October 2020 13:28
To: 'Verity Aldridge'
Subject: Oct Report.

Dear Verity.

I have a Devon County Full Council this afternoon, not sure what time that will finish. Also there is a MDDC Cabinet meeting at 6pm, I want to go to that, again not sure when I will be able to leave that, so I might be a bit late, will see how it all pans out.

I am not aware of any burning issues around Uffculme, but please let me know if something springs up. Not much to report this month, Aug/Sept is always a quiet month, if you have any issues, by all means let me know.

I have met with Phil Morgan over the doing what matters, he has now put together a plan of your three most needed roads for attention, this now will be considered by the asset management team, because there will not be enough funds available to complete all the schemes of every Parish in this next year.

There is a Government white paper due out later this month concerning changes to the structure of local government and a move to unitary council system. County Council Network have produced a document analysing the possible savings in expenditure on a yearly basis of each County being allowed to become a unitary council on existing boundaries. There is a document been produced on this, it is 70 pages long, but I have not read it yet.

The document talks about unitaries being between 300K to 600K+ electorate, this will have to be taken into consideration if change is made in Devon because of Plymouth and Torbay, being relatively small unitaries. One of the criteria, is that all unitaries must have whole district areas, such as the whole of Mid Devon being part of a unitary. It would look like Devon would have two unitaries at least because of the numbers. I think the white paper is heavy on creating unitary councils as opposed to two tier councils. A number of Counties have already been having early conversations with Government with a request to change to unitaries. Most Counties have had counter proposals being put forward by Districts, grouping themselves into smaller units by claiming to be reflecting to be better needs of the residents. We will have to watch this space. I think this is what has brought about GESP, which has been rejected by East Devon and now Mid Devon. Although now I have heard that the Minister dealing with this, has now resigned, so any white paper will be delayed.

As for Uffculme and the surrounding area, I will be keeping a close eye on any development that might be proposed, because the Government is looking to more than double Mid Devon's housing needs, from 383 to 641 per year for the next 20 years, we need to be aware of that we only get what is proportionate for our area, even if any. This is a Mid Devon District issue, that your three District Councillors will be keeping a close watch on.

As the schools are now back from their lockdown and holidays, it is noticeable that this is causing social distancing issues around school entrances, this could be a potential danger to children, and parents. Across the whole County, there has been well over 90% return to school by pupils.

In March the Government announced a new Pothole Fund to be awarded each year to highway authorities from 20/21 until 24/25 with Devon's share of this funding for 20/21 being £28.869m inclusive of the last year of the Pothole Action Fund at £1.92m. This increased capital funding adds an additional £26.949m to the capital programme approved in May this year, the largest capital programme ever at £81.843m.

Under the circumstances of COVID and the extra costs this has caused County, the finances are holding quite steady, there are no shocks that we cannot manage.

Coronavirus is still a very real threat to us all, and getting bigger. You may have heard England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van Tam, describing the latest "big change" in coronavirus infections across the UK as a "great concern" and that he believes we are in for a "bumpy ride over the next few months" if people did not adhere more stringently to the social distancing rules.

Things alter quite quickly, my report can soon get out of date, If any member, or members of the public have any concerns about anything relating to County, please don't hesitate to give me a call or email.

Regards,
Ray

Ray Radford
Devon County Councillor
Willand & Uffculme Division
Email: ray.radford@devon.gov.uk