

Upwell Parish Council

Minutes of Upwell Parish Assembly, Monday 9th March 2026, 6.30pm

Those Present: Cllr Pope, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Shorting, Cllr K. Harrison, Cllr A. Harrison, Cllr Fairbrother, Cllr Judd, Cllr Spikings, Cllr Carr, CCllr Dawson (arrived 18.50pm), Cllr Hartley arrived (18.59pm), Clerk M Hilton.

Public: nine

Apologies: Cllr Aston C BClr Rose.

- Cllr Singh has resigned

MINUTES

- 1. Welcome and to consider apologies.** Apologies were approved.
- 2. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:** Cllr Spikings has declared an interest in all planning applications.
- 3. Agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2025:** these were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 4. To receive a report from the Chair of the Parish Council:**

2025 to 2026 in Upwell has seen many challenges, but also many success stories. Ongoing maintenance of the cemetery is progressing, Working back through the year, the Christmas light celebration tractor run was a success and will hopefully improve year on year. Huge appreciation to Cllr Robinson and his team. In November the Remembrance Service is always well attended and demonstrates a strong community spirit. The Globe pub reopened, which in 2026 is unheard of that a pub opens and not closes, we should try and support this business

A new youth club for 8- to 15-year-olds has proved successful with over 60 children on roll and a regular attendance of 25, it demonstrates that the village needs facilities like this. The Wisbech to Upwell Tram Project has proved a success and is another example of a brilliant community project.

The community magazine is going from strength to strength.

On behalf of the parish, I extend sincere thanks to the Parish Clerk for her diligent administration, ensuring smooth operations and compliance throughout the year. To the Councillors, your dedication to representing residents and making informed decisions has been invaluable. Special appreciation goes to volunteers, including those from the Well Creek Trust, the new youth club and other community groups, whose efforts brought events like the Artisan Fayre and heritage projects to life. Finally, thank you to the residents of Upwell for your ongoing support and participation—your involvement makes our parish thrive.

- 5. To receive a report from our Borough Councillors:**

BClr Rose... BCKLWN Budget report for 2026/2027 for Parishes in Upwell and Delph ward
The following article has been approved for public information and may be used in Parish mags.

The spending plans were agreed at Full Council on the 26th of February including a last minute additional National funding grant of about £4.4m due to an incorrect national Gov, assessment earlier.

The BC 's part of the Council Tax bill will be £157.44 for an average Band D property, this is an increase of 2.99%. The Council has managed to remain as one of the lowest in the country whilst retaining key services which is quite an achievement in challenging times. This has taken some difficult decisions but reliant on full transparency and enquiries about peoples needs and will maintain finances as a sustainable part of the Councils' Medium - Term Financial Strategy for 2025 – 2030 reflecting:

 - Changes to government funding through the 'Fair Funding' system
 - A full reset of business rates from April 2026
 - Inflationary pressures and LGR uncertainty beyond 2027/28

Council Tax Support will remain at 100% for those vulnerable residents most in need.

Clerk to the Council; Melanie Hilton. Mobile; 07368 420237 Email; clerk@upwell-pc.gov.uk 10th March 2026

There is a new £500k community fund in addition to the Councillors' continued annual £1k. This represents Cllr. led financial projects in their wards up to £75k. *I have requested clarification on this regarding exactly how this is to be arranged for elected members.* The Council tax premium on 2nd homes will remain to support people who are at risk of being homeless and supporting the council to deliver more 'affordable homes' for local people along with provision being made to ensure continued support for major capital projects such as its housing programme including a significant number at affordable rents and regenerating heritage assets such as the Guildhall and Ferry.

The council will make planned /controlled use of reserves to maintain reserves above the minimum level required.

Council tax is a core part of the Council's income which is collected on behalf of various organisations. For every £1 collected around 93p goes to Norfolk County Council, the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner and Parish councils. For every 7p in the £1 allocated to the BC, 3p goes to pay a levy for IDBs (Internal Drainage Boards). This means a loss of £3.9m of income. Although the BC supports the work of these important bodies it is felt that this should not be a burden on West Norfolk council taxpayers as areas without IDBs have no such levy, hence the BC is lobbying for this to be a central government responsibility. Uncertainty about local gov. reorganisation and dealing with the outcome of the Government's funding review caused last minute pressures to be accommodated. Fortunately, due to prudent planning and thanks to the work of officers and elected members a further £2.78m of savings has enabled us to present a balanced budget. Which will support the funding initiatives mentioned above. And let us not forget that the CIL remains but is increased to £100k and not match funded to the extent previous - this takes off in March for July decisions.

With regards to Local Gov. Reform (LGR) we await confirmation and further details, elections for NCC will take place this year.

BCllr Spikings... It has been a strange year with the focus on Officers to engage with the other Councils re Devolution and the Local Government review. Hopefully more information as to the way forward should come anytime now with the Government informing Councils as to whether there will be a Norfolk Suffolk arrangement or 3 Councils.

New rules are coming soon this year regarding consultation on Planning reforms.

This will mean that Members will have compulsory training with an exam to sit before they can attend and deliberate. Numbers will also go down from presently 15 to between 8 and 11.

There will be no Member "call in" on ward applications and that all minor applications will be dealt with under Officer delegation.

Planning Members will only deal with majors with the likelihood of only 1 item being dealt with by Planning Members.

Parish Councils will still be consulted as usual, but the local Councillor can still make a comment but cannot make a decision for or against with their local knowledge as we do now.

Our 4-year period is up next year, and we have to see if it will be held or put back a year with supposedly a transition put in place.

I watch with interest.

I would like to thank you and your residents and will continue to help all I can.

6. To receive the Chair's report for Upwell Village Hall:

Upwell Village Hall saw the completion of a major refurbishment in 2025; with the windowed wall being stripped out to install new piping, insulation and general repair.

Whilst being mindful of costs, we now have plans to completely redecorate the opposite wall and reception area. In addition, and when funds allow, we shall look to box in the pipes and update the dark wood panels to match.

We have just agreed to replace the flooring in the entrance hall, make some cosmetic changes to the gentlemen's toilets and repair the wall above the windows in the committee room.

In the last 12 months the hall has continued to be supported by our regularly weekly hirers, by local groups for their monthly meetings and for private parties and celebrations.

The committee strive to bring events to the hall and we are pleased to confirm another taster evening hosted by Fen Spirits and another evening with Spiritualist Sue Hinds. Both these events were well received and supported the last time. Also, watch this space as hopefully we are near to announce Line Dancing classes. None of the above would be possible without the hard work of Charlotte Hilton and Alan Gant, who administer all bookings and oversee the maintenance of the hall.

Oona Robinson for managing the bar and of course the committee members whose commitments are vital. We look forward to another successful 12 months.

7. To receive a report from Upwell Playing Field:

As last year we are still looking to improve the area of the old skatepark – we are still trying for funding from various sources. This will hopefully have netball, basketball, tennis and football pitches marked out with nets but open sided. Norfolk Netball, Football and Basketball have been approached regarding funding.

Our first event of the year will be Easter Monday – with a car boot opening at 9.30am for sellers and buyers at 10am. We trialed this last August and it was a success – no point of having one on a Saturday or Sunday as there are already too many. Regular weekly car boots open Thursday April 9th at 7.30am for sellers and for buyers at 8.00am. There are toilets and refreshments on site with flat disabled access from carpark.

As ever we are self-funding so therefore looking for sponsorship – we can offer you a fence space for a banner advertising your business for £75 per year, you will see we already have two banners plus our UTYFC Wildcats football banner.

This summer will see a change from the regular “Bike and Trike” show – to a “Festival of Wheels” on Sunday July 12th anything with wheels, vintage, classic, modern, agricultural, welcome, with a live band and various stalls.

Our Youth Football club is still progressing from strength to strength so much so we have purchased a trophy cabinet to display all their trophies from last season and as from next season 26/27 the U10 will be playing on a Sunday.

If you would like to sponsor dog shows, horse shows, our summer event or make a donation this would be gratefully received. Please contact me for the BACS details.

Rosettes for dog shows, rosettes and trophies for horse and pony shows, Band etc. for Festival of Wheels event.

A set of rosettes for Dog show is £10 – we have 15 classes that require sponsorship.

Horse shows sponsorship per class is £13 rosette tails printed.

In hand and Ridden championship and Reserve championship rosettes.

Supreme and Reserve Supreme rosettes printed tails with trophies.

Would **you** consider sponsoring Upwell Playing Field Committee for the year and have your name is advertised at any of our events, thus helping us to hold events and giving **you** advertising for **your** business?

All proceeds from any event are for the maintenance, and upkeep of equipment and hopefully some set aside for new things!

ADVERT

Car boots open Bank Holiday Easter Monday April 6th sellers 9.30am, buyers 10.00am,

Weekly car boots open Thursday April 9th 7.30am sellers, buyers 8am,

Dog Show April 12th gates open 11.00am, first class 11.30am.

Horse Show Sunday April 26th first class 9.30am, ridden 1pm approximately.

In hand and ridden showing shows May 24th, June 21st July 26th

September 20th

Festival of wheels, vintage, classic, agricultural machinery anything with wheels July 12th live music with “BarSix”, BBQ and bar plus stalls.

Upwell Parish Council

If you would like to volunteer for any event for the local community, for maybe an hour or two any help would be gratefully received – please contact any committee member or email upfc@talktalk.net.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Our committee: Ros. Shorting, John Spikings, Mark Elliott, Pat Moat, Alex Parnell UTYFC, Jay Best Rob Norris.

8. Open Forum – public opportunity for questions to Councillors or issues about matters in the Parish:

The majority of attendees were present to address a recent planning application concerning Blunts Orchard. Councillor Spiking exited the room during this discussion. All members of the public have formally submitted complaints regarding the application. Concerns were raised about drainage vacuum pumps on the estate, with the belief that the installation of two additional houses may exacerbate existing issues.

Councillors Harrison and Fairbrother clarified that the Planning Working Group has not yet convened to review the application due to Councillor Aston's absence until next week. The Group is required to respond to the application by 19th March.

A representative from The Well Creek Trust reported being approached by Councillor Gooch to mark nests along the creek via boat for bank maintenance. The Council noted that Councillor Gooch acted prior to obtaining or approving quotes as required by Council procedure.

A separate representative requested the Council to email a resident experiencing ongoing concerns at Upwell cemetery. Councillor Fairbrother stated that following a 45-minute telephone conversation with the resident's nephew, he considered the issue resolved. The Clerk will proceed to email both the resident and her nephew.

Additionally, another parishioner reported repeated incidents of unusual items being left on her husband's grave over the past 18 months, causing significant distress. Similar items have only appeared on her husband's grave and one other within the cemetery. The Clerk had previously contacted the Council to monitor for suspicious activity at the site. It was agreed that the installation of CCTV cameras may be beneficial.

The meeting closed at 7.03pm.

Signed by the Chair **Date**