Upwell Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Upwell Parish Council, Monday 5th October 2026, 7.08pm

Committee Members: Cllr Aston, Cllr Gooch, Cllr A Harrison, Cllr Shorting, Cllr Pope, Cllr K Harrison, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Carr, Cllr Judd, Cllr Spikings, Cllr Fairbrother, Cllr Hartley, Cllr Rose.

Those Present: Cllr A Harrison, Cllr Aston, Cllr Fairbrother, Cllr Hartley Cllr Shorting, Cllr Pope, Cllr K Harrison, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Carr, Cllr Judd, Cllr Spikings, Cllr Rose, M Hilton Clerk.

Public: one

Apologies: CCllr Kiddell.

MINUTES

1. **Welcome and opening remarks:** Cllr Spikings welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **To consider and approve apologies for absence:** apologies were approved.

3. **To disclose any conflicts or financial interests related to items on this month's agenda:** Councillor Spikings has declared an interest in all planning applications. Cllr Shorting declared an interest in Upwell Playing Field.

4. **To approve the minutes of the previous meetings**: these were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. **Public Forum (15 minutes):**

A Well Creek Trust representative informed the Council about grass cutting along the riverbanks. The Middle Level Commissioners have agreed to cut the banks in August, although their responsibility is limited to navigation. The Trust asked the Parish Council to arrange four cuts a year—in March, May, June and September—approximately every five to six weeks. The Clerk asked whether this schedule would comply with Environment Agency requirements and the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The representative said neighbouring councils cut their banks at these times of year. He offered a Well Creek Trust contribution towards the cutting costs.

The Chair brought forward item **12.v, To receive an update on Well Creek bank cutting**, for discussion. Cllr A. Harrison referred to previous meetings with the MLC and said the work could proceed provided it did not contravene the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The verge belongs to Highways, which no longer cuts verges in 30 mph areas.

Cllr Hartley estimated that cutting the verge with a tractor-mounted 1.2 m cutter would take about two hours. He agreed to carry out the first cut and report back to the Council. Cllr Pope said the cost should be considered when setting the 2027–28 budget.

6. **To discuss and consider the Action Log from previous meetings:** No items on the action log.

7. **To note and discuss any correspondence:** none received.

8. **To note meeting dates for 2027.** The dates were noted, and it was agreed that the June meeting would be held in Three Holes Village Hall, subject to venue availability.

9. **To acknowledge donations made through Paragon Charity:** The Clerk reported that the charity had supported two projects: one in Outwell and Upwell Luncheon Club, which received £546 towards its recent rent bill. The Chair asked that the charity be thanked for its generous support.

10. To review Council protocols and communications concerning Dodds Stile (Isle Footpath 1): The Clerk circulated a report outlining the protocol for Dodds Stile. The report stated:
At the last meeting, the Chair learned of a meeting between a Cllr and the CCllr.
Members are reminded:

- Dodds Stile is subject to ongoing legal proceedings with NCC and must not be discussed until concluded. This is to avoid potential Parish Council liability.
- The Clerk will report NCC's decision but will not seek an update.

Unauthorised Meetings

To ensure transparency and avoid perceived bias, Councillors who privately discuss active matters with external authorities should:

- Ask the Clerk to add the discussion to the next public agenda. Produce a report. This will then be recorded in the public minutes.

Councillor Guide: Communications and External Meetings

Follow Council protocols for lawful, professional communications and external meetings.
They protect the council and members.

- **Collective Decisions:** The Council acts collectively by majority vote at properly convened public meetings.
- **No Individual Authority:** Councillors cannot act or commit the council without approval.
- **Use the Clerk:** Arrange external meetings through the Clerk.
- **Unauthorised Meetings:** These may weaken negotiations, create conflicts, or misrepresent policy.
- **Official Contact:** The Clerk handles all official correspondence.
- **Copy the Clerk and the Chair:** Copy routine correspondence to maintain records and consistency.
- **Protect Integrity:** Unauthorised discussions may imply bias, predetermination, or misconduct.
- **Personal Liability:** Protection covers authorised actions only; unauthorised commitments may incur personal liability.

11. To consider the implications of Upwell Parish Council becoming the sole or custodian trustee of Upwell Playing Field. Cllr Shorting left the room. The accounts requested at the previous meeting were circulated at 17.08pm that evening. As they arrived too late for consideration, a full year's accounts and bank statements will be required before further discussion. It was hoped that closer cooperation between the Playing Field and Village Hall would help address parking difficulties experienced by Village Hall hirers at the Playing Field. A separate charity, Parish Room Funds, owns MG Charibonds, with interest paid into the Playing Field bank account twice yearly. The bonds are held in trust by Cllr Pope and P Lunn. It remains unclear whether BCllr Crofts is also a trustee: paperwork signed by him states that he resigned several years ago, but Cllr Pope told the Council that he remains a member and that they had spoken about the matter that day. Cllr Aston explained that Upwell Playing Field charity is unincorporated, which could expose the Parish Council and its councillors to claims for unpaid monies or uninsured liabilities.
Cllr Shorting returned to the meeting.

12. Reports from individual Councillors, Council Groups and Clerk

i. To consider Planning applications: *Cllr Harrison*

- Planning Application Consultation 26/01347/F. Replacement dwelling (self-build) at 3 Green Road Upwell PE14 9HS. The Upwell Parish Council Planning Group supports this application. The design sits well with the new street scene being created by new developments replacing the former derelict bungalows.

- Planning Application Consultation 26/01404/O. Outline: Residential Development - Construction of 1 self-build dwelling at land to the rear 141 School Road Upwell PE14 9ES. The Upwell Parish Council Planning Group supports the application. As rightly stated in the application, although the site is out of the development boundary it would fit in as infill without being detrimental to the street scene. Also as mentioned, a garage next door was built then converted into an annex (currently under investigation after we received an email a few months ago informing of an address change for it). There aren't as far as we are aware any flooding issues in the area & there is an IDB drain close by. We would however at RM stage say that the dwelling should be a bungalow to be in keeping with the built environment on that side of the road.

The Council approved the decisions made by the planning working group.

❖ To consider outline planning application 26/00580/OM for up to 15 dwellings at WJ Brighty & Son, St Peters Road, Upwell: Cllr A Harrison reported that several concerns raised on the planning portal, including off-street parking, had been addressed. The Council unanimously supported the application.

It was noted that Cllr Gooch had not responded to any planning applications for two years. It was agreed to review the responsibility matrix after the May 2027 elections.

ii. To receive an update on Upwell Cemetery: Cllr Rose thanked Cllr A Harrison for providing information about the allotments. Written confirmation had been received that the allotments are temporary, so the Secretary of State does not need to be notified. The transfer remains with the solicitors; once completed, the solicitor will register the land with HM Land Registry. Cllr Rose will then submit the change-of-use planning application.

iii. To discuss tree works and tarmacking at Upwell Cemetery: A site meeting was held at the cemetery at 6.45 pm that evening, attended by the Clerk and Cllrs Robinson, Shorting, Aston, Spikings, Rose and Judd. Each tree was recorded for trimming, felling or pollarding. Cllrs Robinson and Judd agreed to carry out the work. Cllr Shorting is seeking updated quotes for the tarmacking work.

iv. To discuss Upwell village Christmas lights and tractor run: Cllrs Robinson and Judd timed the tractor run route, which will be published. Cllr Spikings suggested decorating the river landing stages and has sought advice from the Well Creek Trust. The church Christingle service will finish at 4.45 pm, with Father Christmas waiting outside on his sleigh. The tractor run will then travel through Upwell, Outwell, Emneth, Elm and Friday Bridge. Cllr Robinson encouraged more Upwell residents along the route to decorate their homes. A leaflet will be produced and delivered to selected properties to encourage participation. Members also supported awarding a trophy for the best-decorated vehicle, with Cllr Spikings judging in her capacity as Chair of Upwell Parish Council.

v. To receive an update on Well Creek bank cutting: *see public forum*

vi. To discuss replacing the allotment gate and the police response to its theft: Cllr Harrison reported that the allotment gate had been stolen. The police were unable to assist because there was no CCTV footage or other supporting evidence. The gate cost £149 last year. Cllr Aston proposed purchasing a replacement, seconded by Cllr Shorting, and the proposal was approved unanimously.

13. To note any Health and Safety issues: The traffic mirror at Lakes End was reported missing. The SAM2 operator had removed it some time ago to install the SAM2 camera. Cllr Judd will ask him to replace the mirror and, as the SAM2 is not currently operating, to return it to the Parish Council.

14. Finance

- **To note payments made since last meeting.**

Payments for October 2026 Authorisation

Payee	Goods/Services	VAT	TOTAL	DD/EP electronic payment /direct debit	Supplier/Service
Melanie Hilton expenses	226.37	40.07	**266.44**	EP	HMRC allowance for home working, lamppost poppies, tree tags
Salaries	3208.20	0.00	**3208.20**		
Melanie Hilton				EP	107 Hours Clerk 10 hours village hall
Charlotte Hilton				EP	35 village hall cleaning hours
HMRC	1192.94	0.00	**1192.94**	EP	Month 6
Nest Pension Scheme	160.47	0.00	**160.47**	DD	Clerks pension
Tim Dewdney				EP	35 Groundsman Hours
Kelvin Judd				EP	9 hours garden cemetery
ASB	30.00	0.00	**30.00**	EP	Bust stops cleaned
Upwell Village Hall	30.00	0.00	**30.00**	EP	Meeting Room Hire 14/9/26
CAN	50.00	0.00	**50.00**	EP	Subscription fee
Liam Ferra	75.00	0.00	**75.00**	EP	allotment refund plot 16
EFS	23.56	4.71	**28.27**	EP	Bin Bags
Upwell Relief in Need Charity	3044.40	0.00	**3044.40**	EP	Second yearly rent for 2025 and 2026
HHA	400.00	80.00	**480.00**	EP	Grass cutting cemetery Sept 26
NPTS	60.00	12.00	**72.00**	EP	Paul Hartley Understanding Planning Training
WAVE	94.28	0.00	**94.28**	DD	Water for Cemetery
Cozens	108.00	21.60	**129.60**	SO	Street Light Maintenance
Veolia	200.00	40.00	**240.00**	DD	Waste disposal
SSE	288.55	14.43	**302.98**	DD	Street Light Energy
TOTAL	**9,191.77**	**212.81**	**9,404.58**		

- **To note income and expenditure balances reconciled from the previous month.** This was noted
- **To note income and expenditure balances reconciled for the Village Hall account.** This was noted
- **To note the signing of the month-end bank statements:** Cllrs A. Harrison and K. Harrison signed them as accurate.
- **To review Upwell Cemetery burial and cremation fees:** The fees had remained unchanged during the cemetery's eight years of operation by the Parish Council. The Clerk circulated the current charges and proposed increases. Cllr Spikings proposed to approve the increases, seconded by Cllr A. Harrison, and they were approved unanimously.
- **To note the increase in agricultural drainage rates.** As drainage rates had not increased since 2014, Cllr Hartley proposed passing the increase on to tenants. Cllr Judd seconded the proposal, and the Council approved it unanimously.

15. For agenda item proposals: kindly notify the Clerk no later than one week prior to the upcoming meeting date.

- Christmas get together
- Neglected properties in the conservation area

Cllr Spikings informed the Council that Remembrance Sunday is held on 8th November and encouraged greater Council attendance. Cllrs Spikings and A. Harrison will lay wreaths, while Cllr Fairbrother will read the Roll of Honour.

16. To note the date of the Full Council Meeting – 9th November 2026 at 7pm at Upwell Village Hall.

17. Close: the meeting closed at 8.46pm

Signed by the Chair ……. Date ……