

Friends of Upper Saxondale Conservation Area Group

Meeting held on Monday 23rd January 2023
At 6:00pm in the village hall



Credit: Rushcliffe Borough Council

Attendees: Steve Ball, Fay Harrison (note taker), Phil Marshall, Glyn Miles, Georgia Moore & Iris Morgan (to represent USRA Committee), Kate O'Callaghan, Debbie Soloman, Jane Rogers, Mich Stevenson & Chris Terry

Apologies: Rebecca Bulmer, Rebecca Forster, Tamasine Green, Lizzy Hunt, Louise Potts

Meeting discussions:

- Georgia and Iris confirmed the good news that Upper Saxondale has now been confirmed by the Secretary of State as an independent parish, separate from Radcliffe on Trent and Cropwell Butler. This will come into effect on 1st April 2023. The parish council will come into existence following the May 2023 local elections. The Friends group can now work towards collaborating with the future parish council, to be known as Upper Saxondale Parish Council (USPC).
- DWH and their contractors have completed most of the agreed works, including planting new trees on the parkland and cutting the hedges on Saxondale Drive. The exception is the tree behind Venezia which will be felled, and the paving lifted and replaced. USRA will get advice and quotes for any potential work that falls outside the agreed DWH list.
- Money to fund land projects and assets will be met from USRA budgets, which will eventually be transferred to USPC; from DWH money as part of the handover agreement; and from the parish precept payable via RBC council tax.
- Georgia and Iris responded to each action point raised by the group at the previous meeting on 14th November 2022:

USRA Land Activities	
2.1	USRA Land – Wood Area (Nature walk) discussions took place whether some trees should be removed as too close together, but other thinking is to leave as they are. Only to trim / cut branches close to path. USRA response: worthwhile getting expert advice to ensure any work adheres to the principles of the woodland area,

	<p>such as providing habitat for wildlife as well as being an amenity for the community. Mich Stevenson agreed to contact Woodland Trust for advice. Chris Terry is already working with FarmEco, a community farm based in Screveton, who can also advise on woodland maintenance and conservation.</p>
2.2	<p>Wood Area (Nature walk) - Coppicing of Hazels to be considered USRA response: this can be addressed by the volunteer group at the right time of year to carry out coppicing.</p>
2.3	<p>Wood Area (Nature walk) - Brambles – work required to reduce density – time of the year that this would be best to do to be considered. USRA response: this can be addressed by the volunteer group at the right time of year to carry out pruning.</p>
2.4	<p>Fruit Tree / Orchard area - Brambles – work required to reduce density – time of the year that this would be best to do to be considered. USRA response: this can be addressed by the volunteer group at the right time of year to carry out pruning. Noted that DoE volunteers are working with Chris Terry pruning trees and shrubs in the orchard.</p>
2.5	<p>Poplar Trees – are these the responsibility of USRA? Should we get an assessment completed on these trees – H&S. USRA to advise. USRA response: The majority of these are on land owned by USRA but will be eventually transferred to USPC. Poplar trees have a life expectancy of 60-80 years; these specimens were planted about 80-years ago so need to be surveyed as a priority by specialists as any damage / rot can happen from the inside out and not always visible when inspected externally. USRA will progress this.</p>
2.6	<p>Hedges – behind at the back of the village hall / backing onto the bowling green. Bowling club have cut / trimmed their side – could we get this side done? Needs pricing? Do we have budget for this? USRA response: Agreed the hedge needs to be cut back. Should this action be considered a priority to ensure our neighbours, the Bowls Club, are not impacted upon?</p>
Non USRA Land – (currently David Wilson Homes)	
Trees	
2.7	<p>Following the review of the trees, where a number of trees have been removed. USRA to advise when the new replanting exercise is currently to take place? Can we see the plan? USRA response: DWH have now completed the replacement tree planting. The plans would be part of the original planning application submitted to and agreed with RBC.</p>
2.8	<p>Following the review of the trees – can USRA advise if there is any plan to remove dead wood / dead branches from existing healthy trees. Are there any plans to lift the trees before handover from</p>

	<p>DWH? Lots of very large healthy trees on the park land that could do with 'lifting' before handover.</p> <p>USRA response: DWH have completed the agreed tree work on the parkland, so any additional work deemed necessary will need to be addressed by USPC.</p>
2.9	<p>Safety Review – Is a safety review to be undertaken before the trees are handed over from DWH – concerns raised on severely slanting trees. One opposite the village hall towards the park.</p> <p>USRA response: Georgia will take photos of this tree and seek advice about its safety.</p>
2.10	<p>Poplars – Are these currently USRA or due to be handed over? Can an assessment be carried out before handover and actions completed before handover? Concerns over H&S. Public Liability raised.</p> <p>USRA response: See 2.5</p>
Parkland	
2.11	<p>Discussions took place on whether we could put some type of barrier / barriers / bollards / posts / fencing sections around the open edges of the park. Concerns raised on vehicles / vans / lorries – cars accessing to the back of properties and causing damage to the park. Ruts / trip hazards when matting isn't used. Damage to soil and grass. USRA to advise.</p> <p>USRA response: Once the DWH owned land is handed over to USPC, then the parish council will be involved in the planning application process. Any concerns / stipulations regarding potential damage to the parkland and other landscaped areas, can be set out at that time.</p>
Gazebos / Band stands	
2.12	<p>Discussions took place on the sad state of the gazebos. No maintenance from DWH since 1999. Can USRA advise / confirm that DWH will put these into a good state of repair prior to handover from DWH. Is there a plan of work for these to include, guttering, roof work, painting etc. when this work be completed? Could we get any further grants / funding for future to maintain these? Concerns raised that if these are not maintained prior to handover would cost USRA a lot more to carry out the work. H&S issue to handover in current state. USRA to advise.</p> <p>USRA response: DWH have agreed to refurbish the gazebos and meet all the costs of that work. However, a bat survey needs to be undertaken by specialists to establish if there are bat colonies roosting in the buildings. Nocturnal surveys would take place mid-May onwards. If no bat activity is detected, then refurbishment work can commence June onwards. If bat activity is detected, then special licences would be needed ahead of refurbishment work.</p>
Service Road	

2.13	<p>Concerns raised on the current state of the service road. Can repairs / resurfacing be carried out ahead of handover from DWH. Huge holes in the road surface. H&S issue of these being handed over in current state. Maintenance of the speed bumps required to reduce the speeds of vehicles. USRA to advise.</p> <p>USRA response: DWH will be doing a temporary fix to the largest pothole on the back road before the end of February. A few months later they will completely resurface the road from Westminster Drive end to the village hall entrance.</p>
2.14	<p>Bollards – Concerns raised about the evening / after dark anti-social behaviour on the service road. Can we get timed bollards installed at each end? Bollards to be up at certain times. Signage to state the times these will be in place. USRA to advise what is being discussed on this.</p> <p>USRA response: A bollard was installed on the Westminster Drive end in 2021 but only lasted 48-hours before it was damaged beyond repair and had to be removed. There have not been any recent reports of anti-social behaviour, so no immediate action is required but will be monitored.</p>
Grass Land	
2.15	<p>Land – questions raised whether the land will be transferred to USRA / Council maintenance with existing contracts or will new be negotiated? Will we keep the current lawn mowing contracts? Or do we need to purchase equipment / have storage facilities / employ staff for equipment for mowing and maintenance. USRA to advise.</p> <p>USRA response: Ongoing land maintenance, such as grass mowing, will continue when the land transfers to USPC but the contract will need to go out to competitive tender. The contractor will be responsible for providing and storing their own equipment.</p>
2.16	<p>Ideas raised - Could we have wildlife meadow areas / lines / rows of wildlife flowers to reduce mowing requirement?</p> <p>USRA response: The Friends group can help USPC decide which areas of grass should be mowed, such as areas for children to play games on, and which should be left long for wildlife and wildflowers to flourish.</p>
Millennium Way	
2.17	<p>The millennium way needs some attention – who currently maintains this? Is it DWH? Looks very untidy - Need to fill in shrubs. Ilex to be used rather than Box / Buxus? Elaeagnus? USRA advice.</p> <p>USRA response: Advice has been to remove the box edging but not be replaced as the mature trees cast too much shadow for shrubs to flourish. Instead, the area may be set to grass or left for wildflowers. The Flowering Cherry trees could be pruned where branches are impacting on</p>

	properties. Advice would be sought on this by USRA / USPC.
	Conservation
4.2	Idea to have compost bins for leaves – community use and collection. Do we have budget? USRA response: USRA can provide the budget now. Steve Ball given the go ahead with purchase and installation.
4.3	Idea to have water collection – community use – do we have budget? USRA response: See 4.2
	Engagement of the Community
5.1	It was discussed and noted that we need to try to engage all the people that live at Upper Saxondale – retired, working young adults, families – all to think of ideas for this. Anyone with expertise on this area? USRA is anyone looking at this? USRA response: At various points in the year, USRA have promoted the land tidy events and requests for volunteers for all aspects of USRA activities including caring for the village hall. This is done via Committee meeting notes sent to USRA members, village website and Facebook page and physical noticeboards. Community response has been limited. USPC meetings will always include a 15-mins slot for parishioners’ questions / requests / suggestions so volunteering could be raised and championed by others at these opportunities.
5.2	D of E – Volunteering sessions discussed – would need to be weekly 1 hour activity. USRA response: See also 2.4. Georgia is also currently working with a student who is helping computerise information as part of a local history project.

Actions & next steps

- **Everyone** to consider order of priority for activities in points 2.1 to 2.6. However, the Poplar trees survey will be top priority due to H&S concerns.
- **Mich Stevenson** to contact the Woodland Trust for advice on cutting back trees in the woodland.
- **Chris Terry** continues to seek advice from FarmEco on conservation practices that can be applied to the orchard and woodland.
- **USRA** to progress Poplar trees survey.
- **Georgia Moore** to take photos of the sloping tree on the parkland and seek advice about its safety.
- **Steve Ball** to go ahead with purchase and installation of compost bins for leaf collections, and water butts for harvesting water from the village hall guttering. Costs to be met from USRA budget.