

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 27th January 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr S Sabin (in the chair), Cllr D Carter, Cllr B Follett, Cllr B Friar, Cllr R Munn, Cllr T Musa and Cllr J Sudbury

In attendance: WCC Cllr W Redford and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt

The Chairman of the working group on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, Mr Olly Aries, made a presentation followed by a discussion in Council, the total time engaged being 45 minutes. If the Plan is approved by public referendum, it could bring significant benefit to the Parish. The Planning Authority has to take cognizance of the NP when permission for development is being considered and the Parish will be entitled to 25% of any CIL money received from that development. A number of consultations and reviews have taken place since August 2019 and the working group now have prepared the final version for approval before it is put forward for a referendum.

To allow councillors two weeks to consider a final draft of the plan and approve it as the Qualifying Body under the Localism Act, we are working to a deadline of the 30th March 2020 parish council meeting.

Because of the end date of 30th March, the working party's final adjustment to the draft Plan must be by the 24th February 2020 for it to be revised and issued out to the Parish Councillors.

Once filed with WDC, the Plan will be open for a six week public consultation period after which, the Plan with any amendments will then be forwarded to the Government Inspector in Bristol who will review to approve or reject the Plan (most Plans have been approved).

Once the Inspector has approved the plan will be returned to the parish, any amendments by the Inspector must be included, after which there will be a referendum which is based on a simple yes/no vote for a simple majority of over 50%. If accepted, the plan is considered "made" and it becomes legally binding. The particular relevance of this is that developers seeking an opportunity within the Parish must work within the ambit of the Plan. It is likely that the referendum will take place in September/October 2020.

Therefore, Cllr Friar tabled the final draft of the NP for all members of the Council and the District Councillor to consider and make comment on/or before 10th February 2020. This date is fixed by reference to the need of the working group to have time to adjust the Plan between final receipt of the comments and the final preparation of the draft before 24th February 2020.

The Council thanked Mr Aries for his presentation and for taking the time to attend the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr A E Malin (another commitment), Cllr A T Hitchcox (holidays)

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th November 2019

The Minutes of the meeting on 25th November 2019 were approved, subject to two minor amendments; proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Carter. It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would make the appropriate amendments on the basis of the Minutes being signed off at this meeting.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th November 2019

1. The Chairman said the traffic management project and issues regarding CIL/Section 106 are ongoing.
2. The Clerk reported that the grit bin had been redirected from delivery to his front garden to WCC Highways Dept. He has checked that it is still there as WCC had been unable to install it in the street due to other utility works; the matter is in hand.
3. Further thought was given to the installation of CCTV system in the vicinity of the Village Shop which would also have the advantage of scanning the adjoining roadway. It was AGREED that the Chairman would secure the agreement of Mr Chand Aujla to have the CCTV camera outside the old post office now removed. The Chairman and the Clerk are to discuss this further with the neighbourhood Police Office, PC Ed King. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**
4. It was confirmed that Mr Whitehead has now transferred the notice board to its new site.
5. The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Sudbury had had a discussion with the new tenant/landlord at The White Lion; it appears that the tenant was unaware of any issue regarding the wall which, in the view of the Cllrs, is not in good condition. The Clerk advised that where there was an issue between the owners, Greene King Ltd, and the tenant the matter should be referred to them collectively and this Council should not get involved in the contractual relationship between Greene King Ltd and the tenant. He had already written to Greene King some time ago when they were dismissive of his note. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write again to Greene King to put them formally on notice that it was a matter for them and the tenant to resolve the position. **Action: Clerk**

5. Warwickshire County Council – update report

WCC Cllr Redford stated:

1. There is a significant backlog of work on the highways so currently the Dept is prepared to fill in pot holes as notified to them but they are not undertaking full repairs for two and a half months.
2. The next meeting of the Eastern Neighbourhood Community Forum is 11th February 2020; it is open to parish councils to put forward suggestions for Policing priorities which are then voted for by the general public. Cllr Redford commented that there did not appear to be a proposal from this Council. The Chairman informed him that this was not the case and in fact the forwarded proposal had been suggested by PCSO Ed King following a complaint of inconsiderate parking in School Lane. There are two particular items for discussion by the Forum: one is the celebrations of VE Day via WDC and the other is notice given by Severn Trent Water of grants that are available from them. They appear to have a surplus of funds of considerable proportions and types of grants of varied amounts available for various purposes. It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would look into this second aspect as there was not an immediate time limit for submission of requests for grants to Severn Trent. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**
3. PC Amy Paull, a police officer originating from Birmingham has been assigned to join PC Ed King on neighbourhood duties. She is expected to attend the Forum.
4. Reference was made to an email sent in by Mrs Judy Steele raising worries about the impact of HS2 on this Parish and also on the use of The Greenway adjacent to the canal. Cllr Redford read out his reply email to Mrs Steele to the effect that there were no immediate worries on either account; whilst HS2 is a serious issue for adjoining parishes, there is unlikely to be a direct impact upon this Parish; he said that the contractors vehicles have been directed to use the Fosse Way and not come on the A425 bringing them through the Parish.
5. He pointed out that there had been serious flooding issues in the County as the volume of rainwater has affected drainage issues in a wide area with a knock on effect on roads.
6. He said that Highways Dept had undertaken to do pot hole repairs at 24 hours notice after the need for them has been reported.

7. In answer to a question from Cllr Carter concerning the dysfunctional activities of utilities digging up and closing roads while they were doing so, he said there was a unit at WCC which has the function of overseeing utilities; he mentioned the names of the people operating the unit – Dr Shirley Rounds and Ms Nicole Van Hoven.
8. Cllr Redford also wished to draw attention of a Stroke Awareness campaign being run by the local NHS.

6. Warwick District Council – update report

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt gave a report, summarised:-

1. WDC is in the process of relating increases in Council Tax but the figures have not yet been released. Cllr Friar raised the point that when the Council Tax demand is issued it speaks in general terms of a rating from WCC and WDC. So far as this Parish is concerned, it gives the specific amount of the Precept; he thought this was inappropriate and that it highlights to the residents the amount of money which this Council is expecting to receive whilst leaving the amount of funds gathered by WDC and WCC (and the Police Authority) in vague terms. He thought the format should be redrawn. Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt agreed to feed this back to WDC Finance Dept. **Action: WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt**
2. She drew attention to the RUCIS grant system being still available - this is based on a matching grant system of 50:50.
3. She said she had been involved in worries by residents concerning HS2; the whole position was disconcerting because individual contractors were seeking to carry on works including digging up vegetation while the Government had still not made a firm decision to continue with the project. She has this in focus because of representations made to her in the parishes of Offchurch and Hunningham and information received from the parish of Cubbington.
4. She confirmed that formal information had been received that the planning application for 59 Lewis Road has been withdrawn.

7. Financial Matters

1. The bank balance on the investment account is £39,299.00 approximately and on the operating account is £9,646.00 approximately. It was AGREED that the Clerk would make a transfer from the first account to the second of £5,000 to preserve liquidity. **Action: Clerk**
2. The Clerk recounted the considerable delay at the hands of the bank since the summer months but had now received from them a fresh, comprehensive mandate form which required signing by the three new Cllrs. The document was circulated for their signatures.
3. A number of payments were approved by the Council as per the tabled list, in particular payment to the Clerk of his third quarter's pay of £1,307.81 and approval of a prior payment to HMRC in respect of the tax on that payment of £1113.20. Also, a refund of expenses of £52.35 was made to Mr Kam Rai for costs in setting up the Neighbourhood Watch scheme for Godfrey Close.
4. The Clerk confirmed that the application for the Precept had been filed with WDC in time. Written approval had been received from the majority of Cllrs to enable the Clerk to deal with this.
5. Cllr Friar tabled an interim balance sheet for the Council's finances for the year to date. 4

8. Correspondence (other than those items dealt with under other headings)

1. The Council agreed the Clerk should install on the noticeboard a poster for the Graham Fulford Prostate Cancer Trust advertising their next session on 20th February 2020, being held at the Nelson Club in Warwick. A session, supported by the Radford Social Club, will also be held on Saturday 6th June, in the club, between 10:30 and 12:30. **Action: Clerk**
2. On behalf of the Council, the Clerk had received a nice Christmas card from the Scouts and a report from the Scout Master as to their recent activities.
3. The Clerk had received an invitation from the Neighbourhood Watch working party at Whitnash Town Council offering assistance and advice; he had indicated that he would discuss with this Council before going back to them. Cllr Sudbury pointed out that the Neighbourhood Watch scheme for Godfrey Close has been prepared and is prepared to be opened by the Chairman of WDC on 8th February and there was therefore no need to seek assistance from Whitnash TC. **Action: Clerk**
4. The Clerk drew attention to the notice of road closure for the lower half of Lewis Road for a period from 3rd February 2020 for an indefinite period of months. A copy had gone on the noticeboard and the website.
5. Correspondence had been received by the Clerk and the Chairman at the instigation of the Police concerning a presentation on parking arrangements at the School; the issue is a priority to be applied by the Police to support School safety patrols in School Lane. In passing, PC King in his report about the matter had shown a photograph of a car parked negligently across a corner in School Lane presumably for the purpose of access to the School. The Chairman confirmed that he had responded to the Police enquiry and it was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would discuss it further with PC King at his forthcoming session on Friday 31st January. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**
6. The Chairman (in conjunction with WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt) raised again the issue of whether a footpath could be constructed between the end of Offchurch Lane and the canal bridge. The Clerk reminded the Council that this had been raised some years ago and although former councillor Henry Marriott had volunteered to give some of his land adjoining the road available for a footpath, there was a negative response from WCC. It was recognised that any works could be comparatively expensive as the retaining brick wall which had previously carried the railway track over a bridge would have to be removed and the earth bank behind it shored up. In addition, part of the earth bank would have to be cut away to make the footpath. It was felt that the need for a footpath was more pressing now because of the likely incidences of children and others exiting from the new Bovis estate on to Offchurch Lane and then making their way on foot to the canal. It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would review this with the object of raising the issue again with WCC. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**

9. Current Planning Matters

1. W/15/1635 – 56 Southam Road
The Clerk explained the current position on 56 Southam Road; negative response had been received from WCC and the Chairman and the Clerk were reviewing the question of how to respond. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**
2. 4 St Nicholas Terrace
In the absence of Cllr Mrs Malin, it was thought the issue raised by her as to floodlighting was no longer a live one and the item should be removed from the Agenda.
3. 9 Lythall Close
The Clerk reported that he had received a telephone call from WCC Footpaths Dept by way of information; the occupier and his advisors have been challenged to show cause as to his claims of legal entitlement to appropriate for himself use of the footpath. The legal discussion between them and WCC Legal Dept is ongoing.
4. W/19/1608 - 24 Southam Road
It was noted this planning application had been granted.

5. W/19/1772 - Land at The Valley
The Chairman wished to have it noted that the appeal period for the owner of the land at The Valley was six months from the date of refusal – 5th December 2019.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

6. W/19/1879 – 23 Hatherell Road
It was noted this planning application had been granted.
7. 41 Lewis Road
It was noted this planning application had been granted.
8. 12 Thornley Close
This application is awaiting a decision.
9. 59 Lewis Road
The planning application for 59 Lewis Road has been withdrawn.

10. Update on the draft Neighbourhood Plan

This has been dealt with above.

11. Review of Playing Field

1. Cllr Follett said that he and former councillor Marriott were in the process of replacing the struts supporting the overhead slide. As a temporary measure they would have the tension cable removed so that children cannot use it. Whilst he challenged the ROSPA opinion, he acknowledge that we had to go with it; they are concerned that the wooden struts are showing signs of becoming rotten so he will take steps to install new struts of alternative materials.
2. He tabled a report identifying a preference for a particular supplier of outdoor gym equipment; he said that by process of elimination his Committee had identified this particular supplier because they were able to supply the particular kind of equipment desired, other suppliers had not been able to do so. The Clerk expressed his concern that, from a best practice point of view, more than one tender (preferably three) should be obtained for this proposed work in view of the amount of the costs which the Council is contemplating. General principles on public authority contracts as well as the specific provisions of this Council's Standing Order 18, indicate that where the proposed contract sum is more than £10,000 then competitive tenders should be obtained. Cllr Follett explained that this would involve more work with a doubtful outcome. The Clerk reiterated his advice to the Council that, without obtaining competitive tenders, Cllrs could be on risk of being individually surcharged in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome and the matter being picked up by an auditor.
3. A debate followed; Cllr Musa pointed out that it should be possible to rewrite the request for a quotation already placed with the existing proposed supplier so as to write a specification to be issued to other potential suppliers – he pointed out that this is the usual practice in the business world. WCC Cllr Redford reiterated that it is standard procedure with public authorities.
4. Cllr Sudbury then raised the fundamental issue of whether there was in fact a need/demand for the equipment and questioned the quality of the survey which had been obtained originally; it was recalled that the survey was verbal/straw poll initiated by a former councillor to which approximately 250 residents responded. Cllr Sudbury said this data raised the serious question of whether the project should be pursued; the Clerk reminded the meeting that, whilst the great deal of work done by Cllr Follett had been much appreciated, it was originally commissioned as a prospective/pilot project and a final decision was not reached to go ahead with the scheme and spend money on it. The Clerk said this brought it back to the matter of competitive tenders.
5. It was AGREED that Cllr Follett would prepare a specification with a view to being issued to at least two other potential suppliers for the purposes of obtaining competitive tenders and that Cllr Sudbury would review the need for a fresh survey as to demand by residents for the equipment. Cllr Follett was thanked for the considerable amount of work he had done on the project so far.

Action: Cllr Follett and Cllr Friar

12. Update on Scout Hut project

Cllr Friar said this is ongoing.

13. Update report on Sports and Social Club Matters

There was no report.

14. Update report from Community Hall Committee

There was no report.

15. Update on School Matters

Cllr Sudbury said he had not made any headway in getting the School Governors' interest in a liaison system with this Council.

16. Update report from Media Committee

Cllr Musa gave a most interesting exposition on the current state of the draft website. He illustrated this with slides and explained a number of potential options, particularly news items for the public at large and personal information about the Councillors etc. Parts of the draft website are generic items which he explained to give a background picture and specific details could be added in later. He will present an update at the next meeting in February.

17. Review of emergency procedures

Cllr Sudbury is currently reviewing the emergency procedures.

Action: Cllr Sudbury

18. Pond at the rear of St Nicholas Road

Due to the length of this meeting and the lack of further time, the Chairman applied the guillotine to this item. It will be put on the next Agenda.

Action: Clerk

19. Update on the telephone box

There was a debate as to the making of a decision for the future of the telephone box; the issue is whether the telephone box should be removed from its present location to a new one (e.g. the Green outside the Village Shop) or left in situ and refurbished. Cllr Follett's own recommendation was that it should remain in situ; the advantage of that is to reduce costs and, in his view, to encourage the use of voluntary labour in refurbishments. The Chairman therefore called for a vote on a show of hands and this was exercised. It was unanimously AGREED that the telephone box should be left in situ and refurbished. Cllr Follett was requested to produce up to date costings and a programme for the refurbishment.

Action: Cllr Follett

20. Any Other Business

1. Severn Trent funds have been dealt with above.

2. The Chairman had prepared a site plan of the Playing Field showing three possible locations for the planting of a pear tree sapling, propagated from the ancient wild pear tree at Cubbington, which was about to be destroyed by HS2. With reference to the plan, the Chairman took a verbal poll of Cllrs' views and the majority view was to support the location defined on the Chairman's plan as site number 1. The installation is to be actioned by Cllr Sabin and former councillor Henry Marriott.

Action: Chairman

3. There had been email correspondence and there was debate at this meeting as to the selection of street names to be put forward by this Council for the AC Lloyd site at Spring Lane. The Clerk said it was initiated by a specific request from WCC Highways Dept for suggestions as to street names. As it appears that there had been a cricket ground on the site in earlier times, AC Lloyd had come forward with names relating to cricket. Following debate, it was AGREED that the Clerk should put forward the following names of previous people who had made a contribution to the community: Trevor Ashbourne (former Clerk), Norrie Foster (former Chairman of this Council)

and Derek Whitehead (former distinguished member of the PCC). There may be some issue whether the roads should be described as 'Way' or 'Close' but this was to be left open in the Clerk's correspondence. **Action: Clerk**

4. In the last day or so there had been an issue as to excessive mud being spread over the roadway in the vicinity of Spring Lane and the Clerk had managed to get the attention of AC Lloyd immediately to have the matter resolved.

21. Date of next meeting: 24th February 2020

The meeting closed at 10.10pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council

Counter signed.....

Date.....

Clerk to the Parish Council