

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 24th February 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr S Sabin (in the chair), Cllr D Carter, Cllr B Follett, Cllr B Friar, Cllr A T Hitchcox, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr A E Malin, Cllr R Munn and Cllr T Musa

In attendance: WCC Cllr W Redford &, for part of the meeting, WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr J Sudbury (on holiday)

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Carter declared his property interest in the issue non designated heritage assets (referred to in the draft Neighbourhood Plan) as this would be a live matter before the Council.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th January 2020

The Minutes of the meeting on 27th January 2020 were approved (proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Musa), subject to a couple of amendments. **Action: Chairman & Clerk**

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th January 2020

1.&2. The Chairman outlined discussions he had had with the Clerk and action on their part which was ongoing in conjunction with WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt. A summary is:-

- (a) Inconsequential correspondence had been received from a staff member of WCC on the application of the Section 106 funds and road traffic safety improvement in the Parish.
- (b) The issues are Safer Routes to School are being pursued following the recommendation from PC Ed King a month ago that suitable funding may be available from WCC. In this connection there are two outstanding points:-
 - i. Residents on the new Bovis sites (x2) have a tortuous journey on foot to the Village and the School along the A425 in the context that WCC staff have not responded positively to the comprehensive letter to WCC by the Clerk dated 7th May 2019
 - ii. An alternative to the tortuous route for the Bovis residents would be along Offchurch Lane, having exited from the emergency access point from the new site provided for in the planning consent (but not yet implemented).
- (c) Alongside the above, the m.p.h. speed signs for the A425 are inadequate (and contrary to this Council's recommendation).
- (d) This Council had not received a satisfactory answer from WCC as to a resolution of issues concerning 56 Southam Road and the potential road widening of the junction there with School Lane; it was noted that pedestrian orientation bollards had recently been installed but the question now arise as to whether they are compatible with the proposed road widening scheme.
- (e) Of all the significant sums of money which should be received by WCC from the two Bovis sites and the Leam View site there should be sufficient funds to delegate a budget for the Safer Routes to School project alongside improvements to the traffic management generally connected with the Village.

- (f) He referred to a meeting that he and the Clerk had had with Janet Neale, Infrastructure manager for WCC, in company with Cllr Sudbury and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt on the 22nd November 2019; despite representations made by Ms Neale with a view to assisting this Council in connection with the above enquiries nothing further had developed. The Clerk confirmed that he had sent a reminder email to her at the beginning of February but he had not had a reply.
- (g) A substantial sum of Section 106 payments had been allocated for bio-diversity; thoughtful correspondence from the department dealing with that at WCC had been received by the Chairman. It appears that a substantial amount of the funds had been allocated to bio-diversity refurbishment in the Kenilworth area but he is hopeful that some funds may be obtainable to rejuvenate wildlife pond/s in the Parish (see Minute below).

Cllr Friar suggested that WCC Cllr Redford could be asked to pursue some or all of these matters on our behalf. The Chairman's response was that the current difficulty is in identifying personnel at Shire Hall who are responsible for different aspects of our focus and the interconnection between Section 106 monies and expenditure on fabric and environmental improvement for the Parish. It was confirmed that these ongoing matters will be pursued by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

3. The Clerk had today inspected the site for the grit bin and ascertained that the utility works had now been completed with the pavement reinstated; he will pursue the installation with David Elliston at WCC.
- Action: Clerk**
4. The issue regarding Village security is whether this Council should undertake installation of a fresh CCTV system with a focus on Lewis Road and the Village Shop. The Chairman said he had discussed the old equipment with Mr Aujla; there was discussion about him purchasing the redundant equipment from this Council, he will confer with his technician. The Chairman will pursue the matter with him.
- Action: Chairman**
5. The Clerk had this week received a telephone call and two emails from Greene King Ltd; they acknowledged that the boundary wall at The White Lion PH required attention – it was being pushed by a substantial ash tree in their grounds. The surveyors department of Greene King are making arrangements for WCC permission etc to pull down the tree and reinstate the wall as this will involve part closure of the highway while the process is applied.

5. Warwickshire County Council – update report

WCC Cllr Redford stated:

1. The WCC increase in Council Tax will be 4% with 2% ring fenced (as directed by the Government) for adult social care. One of the effects is that on a band D property there will be an increase in Council Tax in respect of the WCC element of £57 per annum.
2. He acknowledged an ongoing problem with activity by utility contractors and he pointed out that there are safety issues in managing road excavations, notwithstanding irritation, to motorists who are delayed. There are also issues in that contractors will not step outside the terms of a particular contract so they will focus on one thing at a time. If there are particular issues on particular works then he should be contacted to see what could be done.
3. Currently there is no money available for the Eastern Neighbourhood Forum. There will be new funds after April. He has a personal allocation of £9,000 to spend at his discretion but needs to receive formal applications.

6. Warwick District Council – update report

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

1. She said that following on the issues referred to above, she had written an email to Ms Watkins of WCC pointing out that under the Section 106 Agreement with the vendors of the Bovis site £540,000 is payable as a Highway Infrastructure Contribution; 25% of that is payable by the developer prior to occupation of the first dwelling; it is to be noted that a number of dwellings on the second part of the Bovis site are now occupied so it is presumed that the first instalment had been received by WCC. No information hereto has been supplied to this Council. An email was designed by her and the Clerk as a follow up to the inconsequential email sent by Ms Watkins to the Chairman on 11th September 2019 (the pattern being lack of information as previously discussed in this Council).
2. WDC is to have an in-depth discussion at their next Council Meeting on the 26th February to raise Council Tax to cover costs of implementation of a green policy. The proposal will have an economic effect of a £1 per week for Band D properties (i.e. £52 p.a.); the extra sum to be ring fenced for implementation of green policies. If WDC vote for implementation there will be a public referendum on the outcome on 7th May 2020; this is the date already appointed for a referendum on the election of a new Police Commissioner.
3. Following a request at the last meeting by Cllr Friar, she had raised with WDC Finance Dept the question of being furnished information on Council Tax demand notices as to the financial effect of the respective elements of the Council Tax demand (with particular reference to the Precept of this Council). She is awaiting a reply.
4. The district councillors for locations other than the Village are in receipt of references concerning the impact of HS2 now that the Government has decided to proceed. The works will affect neighbouring villages. A HS2 forum has been set up, chaired by the MP, to assist local residents in discussion with the HS2 Company in order to ameliorate conditions to be suffered by them whilst construction work is being carried on (e.g. as to road closures etc).

7. Financial Matters

1. The balance on the investment account was £34,300 approximately and on the operating account was £12,598 approximately.
2. The Bank have now confirmed that all current Cllrs are recognised signatories on the bank operating account.
3. Approval of payments were made as per the tabled list, proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.

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

1. The Clerk had received a request from Dave Purdy that SANDS Utd FC be given permission to run another football event on 30th August 2020 on the Playing Field (as last year). The Clerk confirmed that in his absence Cllr Sudbury is a firm supporter of the proposition. It was AGREED that permission be given subject to the same administration procedures as last year (in particular, production to the Clerk of a certificate of insurance in advance of the event date). The Clerk is to implement this. **Action: Clerk**
2. The Clerk had received an unsolicited email inviting the Council to consider a rainwater harvesting system; it was decided to take no action on this.
3. The Clerk received an unsolicited communication from an organisation called Power For People promoting a Bill through Parliament for the creation of a local electricity company. It is seeking visible support from local councils and appended to their communication is a list of a number of parish councils throughout the country (but not an overwhelming percentage). It was AGREED that the Clerk make more enquiries about the scheme and report back. **Action: Clerk**

4. A communication had been received from WALC as to whether local councils were interested in planning VE Day commemorations; the date is 8th May 2020. Discussion ensued to the effect that there could be logistical difficulties to this Council in trying to organise such an event; it was AGREED that enquiries would be made of WALC as to how such a scheme could be implemented. **Action: Clerk**

9. Current Planning Matters

1. W/15/1635 – 56 Southam Road
Reference to this matter has been made above; Cllrs expressed their dismay at the lack of action by WCC and WDC in respect of this property. The Chairman said that the view taken by him and the Clerk thus far was to await development of the road widening scheme for School Lane/A425. The Chairman had recently had a meeting on other matters with Alistair Clark of AC Lloyd; he has in his programme a project for the road widening as required by the planning consent for the AC Lloyd site at Spring Lane.
2. 9 Lythall Close
The Clerk reported that he was awaiting news from WCC on their legal discussions with the advisors of the occupier of this property; he will now send a reminder to WCC. **Action: Clerk**
3. W/19/1772 - Land at The Valley
This item was for noting only – as to the expiry of the appeal period on 9th June 2020
4. W/19/2102 - 12 Thornley Close
This application has been granted.
5. W/20/0004 – 15 Williams Road
It was noted that this application has not yet been decided
6. W/20/0176 – 10 Chapman Close
It was noted this planning application was for retrospective approval of minor works and this Council had no issue with this. (Granted 14/2/2020)

The Chairman said that AC Lloyd had requested to have meetings each month approximately with himself and other Cllrs to smooth through operational matters in development of the site at Spring Lane. He and Cllr Carter had had a beneficial meeting with the site manager there, Mr David Alcock; it was impressive that a number of items had been dealt with by AC Lloyd to the satisfaction of the Chairman in recent months. They expect the first houses to be occupied in June 2020.

The Chairman reported that he had been approached by a resident of The Greswoldes regarding the amount of overnight lighting emanating from parking areas on the second Bovis site. He had taken this matter up with a relevant department at WCC. The issue was still being investigated but it was apparent that the cost of this lighting was being met by householders adjacent to the parking areas concerned.

10. Update on the draft Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Friar thanked everyone for their contributions by way of comment on the draft Neighbourhood Plan that he had presented at the previous meeting; he is consolidating the suggestions into a final version of the Plan; this will have to be formally adopted by the Council at the next meeting on 30th March. Thereafter it will be processed by the Working Group (headed by Mr Olly Aries) and leading ultimately to a referendum.

The Clerk referred to Cllr Carter's declaration of interest earlier and to a letter he had received from a resident raising the issue of a non designated heritage asset. It was confirmed that these do not come within the ambit of listed building consent requirements so that the compilers do not need to be concerned by the reference in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to the resident mentioned to clarify the position. **Action: Clerk**

11. Review of Playing Field

1. Cllr Friar said that he and Cllr Follett had carried out a survey to ascertain need/demand for the adult gym equipment. The survey had been promoted on the website and the noticeboard. 59 responses had been received online and 7 responses on paper. 52 respondents were in favour of the scheme and 14 respondents were not in favour. Discussion ensued as to whether these were a sufficient number of responses to justify proceeding with the matter. It was AGREED to leave the survey in abeyance for the time being to see if any more response was received. The Clerk advised that the number of responses was very low in comparison with the number of approximately 1,600 electors in the Parish.
2. Cllr Follett said that he put out the works specification to obtain comparative tenders. To date he had had a response from two suppliers whose quotations were approximately the same; he awaits the return of two other suppliers and will report back at the next Council meeting. He pointed out that with regard to competitive tendering and the issue of the Standing Orders requirement (as advised by the Clerk at the previous meeting) was, in his submission, not over significant because his scheme contemplates gaining the bulk of the funding for the scheme from grants. In particular, he proposes to apply to WREN for a substantial grant (as he did in connection with the previous play equipment application). A requirement will be 10% match funding which may be obtained from WDC or elsewhere, so, in his submission, the actual amount of funds spent by this Council will be on the low side. The actual figure will be well within the margin of £10,000 identified by Standing Orders.
Action: Cllr Follett

12. Update on Scout Hut project

Cllr Friar reported that the Scout Hut project is ongoing.

13. Update report on Sports and Social Club Matters

Cllr A Malin attended a recent meeting of the Club Committee. From this it appeared that the Club are doing well; the takings are up although there was a price rise imposed by the brewery. 16 new members have joined the club. Hot pies etc. are now on sale after a deal was secured with Pukka pies.

14. Update report from Community Hall Committee

1. Cllr Mrs Malin reported that a successful film show was organised by former councillor Chater a week or so ago (tickets were a sell out). Bookings for use of the Hall continue to overwhelm the organisation. There has been some issue with hirers of the Hall using the toilets allocated to the Club but in practical terms it is difficult to police so that the Hall users only use the toilets in Hall.
2. Cllr Friar suggested that once the Council's new website has been set up they could incorporate into it an online booking system to make the job of administering the bookings for the Hall easier. This is to be further considered.
Action: Cllr Friar & Cllr Musa

15. Update on Media Committee

Cllr Musa gave made an informed presentation with a projector of the draft website as it now is; there are a number of pages to be completed but the general structure of the website was very clear to Cllrs. He confirmed that he and Cllr Friar had had a meeting a few days ago with the Chairman and the Clerk when all aspects of the website had been reviewed in committee. He expressed the hope that the website will be completed by the next meeting on 30th March so that soon after that arrangements could be made to go live. The important feature of the website will be an integrated email addresses of the Clerk and all Cllrs with an accent on their specialities so that members of the public could direct their enquiries to the appropriate Cllr if any of those concerned had received a communication which was not within their field then they could use the transferable email system to direct the enquiry to a colleague.

16. Review of emergency procedures

In the absence of Cllr Sudbury the Chairman reported that the matter was ongoing.

17. Pond at the rear of St Nicholas Road

The Chairman said that he was continuing enquiries into refurbishment of the pond which is owned by the Council. The Clerk had identified two contractors who might do the work. The Chairman, following the correspondence referred to in 1 & 2 (g) above, had initially thought that S106 bio-diversity money might be available to fund this project. Subsequent information received proved this not to be the case, although an adjacent pond might well be eligible to receive funding for re-instatement.

Action: Chairman & Cllr Carter

18. Update on the telephone box

The Chairman and the Clerk confirmed that at the last meeting it had been decided to leave the telephone box in situ and not attempt its removal to a different site. The next step is to decide on the cost of refurbishment and its ultimate use. Cllr Follett said it was possible to obtain parts from specialist contractors (X2Connect) who have a special relationship with BT. He ascertained that the parts could cost approximately £1,800 and he had indentified potential contractors whose labour costs would be approximately £650. In view of the amount of costs involved, the Clerk called for a RESOLUTION that Cllr Follett be authorised up to the sum of £3,000 to exercise his discretion in the acquisition of parts and labour for the project. This was approved, proposed by Cllr Musa and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.

Action: Cllr Follett

19. Any Other Business

- 1. The Chairman confirmed he was in ongoing discussion with former councillor Marriott as to installation of the pear tree. The site on the Playing Field had already been agreed by this Council but the appropriate time for planting needed to be considered; consultation with Mr Marriott will be required.

Action: Chairman

20. Date of next meeting: 30th March 2020

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council

Counter signed.....

Date.....

Clerk to the Parish Council