

# RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:** Cllr D E Chater, Cllr B Friar, Cllr B Follett, Cllr Mr A T Hitchcox, Cllr Mrs J Loveridge, Cllr A E Malin, Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr H E J Marriott.

**Also present:** WCC Cllr W Redford

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr S P Sabin

### 1. Election of Chairman for the forthcoming year

It was proposed by Cllr Marriott and seconded by Cllr Tony Malin that Cllr Chater be confirmed in election as Chairman.

### 2. Neighbourhood Action Group

2.1 The Council were addressed briefly by Emma Dunn, Judy Steel and Naomi Northey who formed the core of a committee working to create a Neighbourhood Action Group. This group has an accent on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, and improvement of the local environment. They drew particular attention to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, pursuing issues of Speedwatch and improving the canal link with ideas of being able to obtain money under Section 106 from the current development going on in the area. They hoped that the Parish Council would make representations to the Highways Authority to improve the access way from the A425 roadway and bridge down on to the canalside. WCC Cllr Redford pointed out that this issue had been canvassed before and it was considered that the canalside was the responsibility of the Canalside Commission and not a matter for Warwickshire County Council. The Chairman pointed out that he and the Clerk had canvassed this issue a year or so ago before and had met with a negative response.

2.2 The initiative expressed by these ladies was welcomed by the Council and it was agreed that Cllr Friar would link up with Mrs Steel to get more people involved in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan as soon as possible. **Action: Cllr Friar**

### 3. Minutes of the Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

3.1 The Minutes Recorded that Michael Doody resigned his office on the Parish Council by making a verbal statement at the Meeting, confirmed by written notice to the Clerk.

3.2 Considerable discussion ensued. The Clerk advised that the chairman's allowance is not a block fund but is to be proportionate with the chairman's expenses for civic duties. The conclusion of the debate was that Mr Doody should be asked if he wished to review his decision and rejoin the Parish Council in the future.

3.3 Arising from the aforesaid it was RESOLVED that an annual chairman's allowance amounting to no more than £400 be paid on submission of invoices/receipts for expenses.

3.4 It was agreed that Councillor Chater and the Clerk would check that correct procedure were being followed and report back to the Council at the next meeting on 25th July.

3.5 It was acknowledged that Mr Doody would continue to represent the interests of the Village in his capacity as District Councillor and his attendance at Parish Council's meetings in that capacity would be welcome.

3.6 In other respects the Minutes of the Meeting we approved.

#### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016**

None apart from matters dealt with below

#### **5. Report from WCC**

WCC Cllr Redford said that a major issue in front of the County Council at present is the question of whether Warwickshire joins the West Midlands in a combined authority (commonly called a unitary authority). This would involve transferring the budget to the combined authority in the nature of numbers West Midlands County Council is going to be the heavyweight and the centre of gravity will be in Birmingham.

5.2 Encouraged by the Government, it would be proposed that there is a mayor with executive powers similar to those in London.

5.3 There would be limited funding and grants for Warwickshire but so far as he could see, it would bring no cost benefit to Warwickshire and there was a likelihood that the urban administration in Birmingham would have no focus on the needs of rural Warwickshire. He said no decision had been made yet but it was likely to be made in the course of the next year.

#### **6. Financial Matters**

(a) The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account was approximately £24,250 and the balance on the operating account is approximately £4,800. The approximate total of these figures is £29,000 which puts the Council's current balance broadly back where it was in the previous year before the extra funding for projects came in.

(b) The Council approved a number of payments as set out on the schedule filed with these Minutes. In particular, the payment to the Clerk of his quarter's salary for an amount of £1,221.75 was approved and tax on that was authorised for payment. The Council also approved a donation of £100 to St Nicholas' Church in support of an Open Day function to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

(c) The Clerk reported that he and the Chairman had had a preliminary look at adjustments to the Clerk's salary to take into account the increment due for the year 2015/2016 (held back over a delay in the national pay negotiations) but they had not had an opportunity to finalise the figures. This is to be put on the Agenda for the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

(d) The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had signed off the Annual Return subject to a number of comments and queries which should be dealt with. The Council RESOLVED to approve the completion of the Annual Return and the Chairman and the Clerk were authorised to sign it off – to be presented to the External Auditor.

- (e) The Clerk said he had omitted to put an additional item under this heading in respect of the Model Financial Regulations although they had been on the Agenda for several previous meetings. The Model had been issued by NALC earlier in the year and was a variation on a previous model which was issued in 2014. The Chairman and Clerk felt it was appropriate to adopt this new Model as much of the recommendations in it were already being followed by this Council. Accordingly it was RESOLVED by the Council to adopt this new version of the Model Financial Regulations.

## **7. Correspondence**

- 7.1 Notice had been received that the Warwick Relief Community Forum would be having a meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016; Cllr Chater said he proposed to attend.
- 7.2 By way of information only, the Clerk said that Whitnash Town Council were holding a civic evening on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and had issued an invitation to members of this Council to attend. (He said this might be relevant to the Council's consideration as to whether a civic event for this Council should be reinstated.)
- 7.3 The Clerk had received an email from the CPRE Warwickshire giving notice of their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall and the guest speaker would be the local MP, Andrew Mitchell.
- 7.4 The Clerk had received an email from Graham Leech, the Deputy Monitoring Officer, seeking recruits to the local Standards Committee; this is a statutory institution which is made up of district councillors, independent people and parish councillors. He was looking for parish council input.
- 7.5 The Clerk had received an email concerning the suicide of a young resident apparently suffering from depression. The email was seeking support for a petition with the objective of providing for attentive community services for which the support of the Parish Council was being asked for. The matter was noted by the Council with sadness but it was decided that it was not appropriate for the Council to take any action on the email.

## **8. Neighbourhood Plan**

The Council discussed the presentation earlier by the three ladies who wished to form a new community group to be known as the Friends Of Radford's Green Environment (FORGE). It was agreed that Cllr Friar would monitor the position and report back.

**Action: Cllr Friar**

## **9. Bus Shelter**

- 9.1 The Clerk reported that he had sought guidance from the WDC Planning Department as to whether planning consent was required for the new bus shelter and, despite several emails, he had not received a reply as yet. He will write again. **Action: Clerk**
- 9.2 The Highways Dept had responded to him asking for a plan with measurements to show the proposed location of the bus shelter in relation to the kerb edge of the highway. As no plans as such of the location existed, it was agreed that Cllr Marriott would draw up some measurements for presentation to the Highways Dept. **Action: Cllr Marriott**

## **10. Speedwatch and Traffic Control**

There were no further developments to report on this but note was taken that the FORGE group would be looking into that.

## **11. Report on Playing Field Matters and Play Equipment**

- 11.1 Cllr Follett said that negotiations were far advanced in obtaining finance for Phase Two of the play equipment; detailed specifications had been issued to him by Ludus Leisure with whom he had been negotiating. In the last few days, they had sent him a copy of the draft contract and the Clerk confirmed that he had also received at the weekend a copy of it. The Clerk advised that commitment to the contract should not be made until the finance was assured. It was expected that it would be in the very near future; in all probability before the next meeting of the Council on 25<sup>th</sup> July. It was RESOLVED that the Chairman and the Clerk in consultation with Cllr Follett should progress the signing of the contract, if appropriate, once finance was assured so that the desire of the contractors implementation of the contract could be progressed as quickly as possible. The Clerk said that he wished to review the legal terms of the contract before any commitment was made and he anticipated it was in the same format as the previous one for Phase One. Cllr Follett pointed out that it was advantageous to have the contract signed so that works could commence early in the summer months.

**Action: Chairman, Clerk & Cllr Follett**

- 11.2 Cllr Follett and the Clerk reported that there had been objections raised by a resident of Godfrey Close to height and display of one of the climbing frames in Phase One of the new play equipment. The resident had rendered photographs of item to demonstrate that a significant part of the structure was raised above the skyline in his rear garden. The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had the previous day inspected the equipment and viewed the resident's boundary line. They felt that some accommodation with the resident could be made by adjusting the equipment and it was agreed that Cllr Follett would approach Ludus Leisure to see if what accommodation could be made to allay the resident's concerns.

**Action: Cllr Follett**

## **12. Football pitches**

The Chairman and the Clerk reported that nothing further had been heard from the football clubs; it was down to them to approach the Council. It was agreed that the item should be removed from the Agenda for the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

## **13. Scout Hut**

Cllr Friar reported that he is continuing to make enquiries about finance, a site and a construction or a building but he has not achieved any progress yet. The matter is to be kept under review.

**Action: Cllr Friar**

## **14. Sports and Social Club Matters**

Cllr Tony Malin reported that there was nothing to report.

## **15. Report from Community Hall Committee**

Cllr Loveridge reported that wholesale decoration was to be put in hand for which there was sufficient funds. Cllr Marriott enquired what was the outcome of the query about a year ago concerning the emptying of rubbish bins at the rear of the Community Hall and the Social Club; the Chairman confirmed that WDC had agreed to empty the bins in the Playing Field so that it is not necessary for Mr Pearson to deposit the contents of those bins in the wheelie bins adjacent to the building. That particular problem had been resolved.

**16. Village School Matters**

There was no report to hand.

**17. Report from WDC and Planning Matters**

17.1 Cllr Marriott left the meeting and, In the absence of WDC Cllr Michael Doody, there was no report. However Cllr Chater outlined the recent planning meeting which he had attended concerning a variation in the specifications for building at the Bovis site on Southam Road because of the lie of the land it had been necessary for Bovis to realign the houses - to raise them by 0.3m. He had waited during the meeting for three hours because this particular matter had been put back and then the Planning Committee nodded through the variation in the specifications.

17.2 The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk were in the process of finalising a letter to the MP – the initial draft having been prepared by Cllr Sabin before he went on holiday. It was intended to draw the attention of the MP to the difficulties being encountered by the Village now due to the excess of housing development. In particular, the Planning Dept seem to disregard consideration or consultation as to the outline of the Village Envelope – the recent application for 150 houses, which had been granted by the Planning Committee, was clearly outside the Village Envelope. It was agreed that the Clerk and the Chairman would finalise a letter to the MP and send it off.

**Action: Chairman & Clerk**

**18. Any Other Business**

(a) It was agreed to leave the nomination of committees in abeyance for the time being.

(b) The Chairman drew attention to the fact that on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016 the Police are proposing to hold an open day on the Playing Field which did not have prior notice nor had the Clerk. It appears that Mr Doody had discussed it with the Police at a meeting of the Eastern Rural Forum and had agreed in principle that the Parish Council should make a donation and/or provide support services for the use of the Community Hall by those organising the fun day. It was understood that the Police would be running the fun day and the expected contribution from the Parish Council was apparently approximately £100. This is an event aimed at activities for people aged 4 – 16 years and is part of a PR exercise by the Police to interface with young people. It was agreed in principle that Cllr Chater should continue discussions with the Police as to the details of this event but only on the basis that the Parish Council was paying a contribution and/or supplying the support services of the Community Hall but not running the event itself. The Police were to be responsible for the event overall. **Action: Cllr Chater**

**19. Date of next meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

**Chairman of the Parish Council**

Signed.....

Date.....

**Clerk to the Parish Council**