

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 24th November 2014 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr D E Chater (in the Chair), Cllr Ms N Fleuty, Cllr B Follett, Cllr Mrs J Loveridge, Cllr A J Malin, Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr H E Marriott

In attendance: WDC Cllr Doody and WCC Cllr Redford

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Rev K Pickford.

2. **Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th October 2014**

The Minutes of the last Council meeting on 27th October were approved.

3. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the 27th October 2014**

- 3.1 It was agreed that in future this item should follow the approval of the Minutes under the above item forming a logical sequence.
- 3.2 It was agreed that, owing to the absence of input from the Police into meetings of the Parish Council there should no longer be a separate item on the Agenda for Police Matters.
- 3.3 Cllr Marriott reported that he had received contact from WCC concerning the footpath at the rear of Dunbar House. It appears that although action had recently been taken by WCC against the occupier on the complaint by the Parish Council (concerning the route of the public footpath across land belonging to the occupier) the legal department of WCC have reconsidered the position and come to the conclusion that the previous thinking was erroneous.
- 3.4 Following the above it is to be expected that WCC will redraw the route of the footpath and issue an order under footpaths legislation accordingly. It is expected that a consultation map will be produced by WCC in advance of the making of the order. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk would look out for this.
Action: Chairman & Clerk
- 3.5 The Chairman has received a letter from Mrs Fiona Walsh confirming her resignation from the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mrs Walsh to acknowledge her letter and express the appreciation of the Council to her for her many years of service.
Action: Clerk
- 3.6 The Chairman referred to item 5.3 of the previous Minutes concerning the overgrown hedgerow at the rear of 48 Southam Road; the hedge has now been cut back no doubt following correspondence from the Clerk in recent months.

- 3.7 The Chairman referred to item 5.6 of the previous Minutes. The Clerk had delivered a letter to the householder believed by the Chairman to have made a complaint about the growth of Leylandii trees next to her property. This letter contained factual advice on the department of WDC to contact concerning this problem. The Council approved this course of action.
- 3.8 The Chairman expressed his continued concern at the effectiveness of rubbish clearance from the Playing Field and it was agreed that this would be continued to be monitored by him. **Action: Chairman**
- 3.9 With reference to the Minutes of the previous meeting there was a short discussion concerning the excavations at 4 St Nicholas Terrace. The position appears to be ameliorated in that the excavated earth at the front of the premises has been laid over with flags and there appears to be an abatement of use of the area by commercial vehicles. The Clerk has still not had a written response from WCC or WDC on the matter. As the position seems to have improved, it was agreed that the matter would be left in abeyance for the time being.
- 3.10 The Chairman reported that the Clerk had approached Mrs Naomi Northey since the last meeting of the Council with a view to her attending this meeting (24th November). She had given her apologies for not attending the meeting in October and explained that she was unable to attend this meeting due to family commitments. She expressed an interest in attending the Parish Council meeting in January and it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with her on that. **Action: Clerk**
- 3.11 Further concern was expressed on the condition of the road bridge over the canal and the environment of Offchurch Lane with particular reference to speeding vehicles. WCC Redford said he would examine the position and report back. **Action: Cllr Redford**

4. WCC Matters

There were none apart from issues raised elsewhere with input from WCC Cllr Redford.

5. WDC Matters

- 5.1 WDC Cllr Doody reported that the street lighting on certain side roads of the Parish are to be renewed. The existing lighting columns are considered to be too elderly and past their prime so WDC has decided to replace them for more modern posts with led lighting.
- 5.2 On the enquiry by the Clerk, WDC Cllr Doody confirmed that since the Standards Commission was abolished there has been in place a Standards Committee as part of the District Council. There are three members of the Standards Committee whose CVs and pictures can be seen on the internet. The Clerk's enquiry arose out of a letter which had been copied to him dated 7th November 2014 from the Department for Local Government to the Chairman of WDC concerning the status of standards committees. It was apparent from what WDC Cllr Doody said and the letter from the Department that while the Standards Committee will continue as an entity it has in real terms only the power to comment on the conduct of members of the District Council but not to take disciplinary action against them.
- 5.3 WDC Cllr Doody's observations on the two current Planning Appeals are referred to below.

6. Finance and Accounts

- 6.1 The Clerk reported that the balance on the bank operating account is approximately £12,200 and the balance on the bank deposit account is approximately £24,200.
- 6.2 Preparation of the half year accounts had been delayed due to an accident suffered by the Clerk's bookkeeper.
- 6.3 The Clerk reminded the Council that the next significant matter to be dealt with was preparation of the Precept which was due to be filed with WDC before the end of January 2015. The Clerk will undertake preparation in consultation with the Chairman before the latter's departure on holiday around 20th January. **Action: Clerk**
- 6.4 The Chairman and the Clerk had considered the issue of an increase in the Precept which had been frozen now for at least the last three years; an example of constraint upon budgeting by the Council was the difficulty in finding funds to carry out effective repair/refurbishment of the play equipment in the Playing Field. It was agreed that the Precept should be prepared containing a 2.5% increase on the total amount sought last year. **Action: Clerk**
- 6.5 A number of payments were approved as per the list of approved payments which was tabled.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1 Nothing of significance had been received save for the item referred to above involving WDC Chairman Cllr Sawdon.

8. Report from the Planning Committee

- 8.1 No general items had been noted but there was a discussion as how, following Mrs Walsh's resignation, future planning applications should be processed. It was agreed that Cllr Fleuty should become Chairman of the Planning Committee and be responsible for monitoring applications as they came in. In the first instance the applications will be sent to the Clerk (by email in accordance with WDC's policy) and the Clerk will pass on necessary documentation to Cllr Fleuty for examination by the Planning Committee. **Action: Clerk & Cllr Fleuty**

9. Report from the Playing Field Committee

- 9.1 There was further discussion about the repairs needed to the skateboard area. It was agreed that the Chairman, the Clerk and Cllr Fleuty should have authority to resolve this by obtaining necessary tenders and make a decision as to the contract to be issued for repair/reinstatement.
- 9.2 There was a general discussion about the state of the play equipment – the Chairman pointed out that it had been hoped that Mrs Northey would be present at this meeting to give details of the current application to The Big Lottery Fund. The Clerk had not received any news from her on that matter. The Chairman reminded the Council that, in principle, they had agreed to put funding of 10% on top of the funds raised by the Action Group collecting funds under the Sunny Dillon Memorial. The Chairman emphasised

that it is not 10% of the contract sum for the whole of the play area but a matching grant of 10% from the Council on top of funds raised by the Action Group.

9.3 In the light of the above, it was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk would pursue issues of costings with Mrs Northey and they would be revisited when the Precept was prepared.

9.4 The Chairman reported that difficulties had been encountered with grass cutting in the Playing Field due to Mr Bunn's serious ill health. In an emergency situation the Chairman and the Clerk had commissioned work from Mr Dain Wagstaffe who had responded very promptly. It was agreed that he should be asked to quote for his grass cutting services in the forthcoming year. Cllr Marriott added that attention should be given to spraying the edges of the grass to prevent it overgrowing the pathways.

Action: Chairman & Cllr Marriott

9.5 It was agreed that the Clerk should have authority to terminate Mr Bunn's contract forthwith by reason of his ill health and sequential inability to perform the contract. He should be invited to tender an invoice for any outstanding work hitherto unpaid for. It was noted that Mr Bunn's contract had always been an annual one. **Action: Clerk**

10. Report from the Sports and Social Club

Cllr A. Malin said there was nothing to report.

11. Report from the Community Hall Committee

11.1 The Clerk confirmed that Mrs Leigh-Hunt is in the process of preparing a new draft Lease for the Sports and Social Club but has been delayed due to pressure of work.

11.2 It was reported that Peter Dove has now retired as treasurer and the bookkeeping is to be undertaken by an outsource contracted by the Chairman and the levy of payments is to be undertaken by Cllr Loveridge.

12. Report from the School Governors

12.1 In the absence of Cllr Pickford, a report prepared by her was tabled. The thrust of the report is that new progress measures are being introduced and there is also a new curriculum but the term is going well. (Cllr Pickford had also contributed with this report with a piece concerning the School which is to be inserted by the Chairman and Clerk into the draft parish plan.

13. Any Other Business

Cllr Marriott withdrew from the meeting for this item.

(a) Appeal relating to Spring Lane/ Slade Meadow site

- I. The Chairman outlined the preparation for this Appeal. WDC have retained the services of a barrister, Tim Leader, who together with the Chairman and the Clerk together with WDC Cllr Doody are due to meet in the next few days. The two Cllrs will be giving evidence to the Inspector but it is felt that they could do with support from one or two residents who are in a position to discuss the merits of this item because of their locality to the site. It is hoped that preparation of the draft parish plan by the

Chairman with input from others will help to give the Inspector a written and pictorial focus on the Village which he/she might not otherwise get from the formal documentation. One of the major issues appears to be the fact that under the Local Plan WDC do not yet have five years supply of potential building stock – the five year measurement is adopted as a bench mark to demonstrate how the District Council is working towards national government targets. Currently WDC have approximately 4.7 years of supply; this inhibits WDC from arguing to the Inspector that they are up to target on existing potential but it is hoped to adopt a counter argument to that to demonstrate that in the foreseeable future the five year supply target will be reached.

- II. The hearing of this appeal commences on 7th January 2015 and runs for three days. It is expected that WDC Cllr Doody will be in attendance for all three days and so will the Chairman.

b) Appeal relating to the Church site

- I. WDC have retained the barrister services of Mr Jonathan Powell. This appeal opens on the 22nd January 2015 and is expected to continue for six days. WDC Doody will be available from day 3. The Clerk will be in attendance on day 2 and some further days. The Chairman will be available on day 1 only and will be away from 23rd January. Both Cllr Doody and the Chairman are expected to speak to the appeal.
- II. Due to the vigorous input from the residents' group in Offchurch Lane, the chairman expected that a number of them will give evidence to the Inspector; these will be on different issues but will cover the ground discussed by the Chairman and the Clerk at a meeting they had with them on 11th November 2014. The residents had meanwhile contributed to the draft parish plan.
- III. The draft parish plan has now been completed by the Chairman and the Clerk and been filed with WDC who are content with it. It is proposed to present it to the Inspector of each appeal although it is recognised it is not a neighbourhood plan or a parish plan which had been confirmed by the District Council. Tacit approval from WDC Planning Department is of assistance on this.

c) Following advice from the barrister, Mr Leader, a special Minute has been prepared by the Clerk in respect of the meeting on Monday 27th October 2014; this Minute refers specifically to arrangements by the Parish Council in respect of these two Appeals.

14. Date of next meeting: 26th January 2015

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed..... Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council

Signed..... Date.....

Clerk to the Parish Council