

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 23rd September 2013 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr D E Chater (in the Chair), Cllr Mrs J A Edwards, Cllr Mrs J Loveridge, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr A J Malin, Cllr H E Marriott and Cllr J M Whitehead

Not present: Cllr F Walsh

1. **Apologies for Absence** - Cllr Pickford, WCC Cllr Wallace Redford and WDC Cllr Michael Doody

2. **Minutes of the Council meeting on 29th July 2013**

The Minutes were approved.

3. **Police Matters**

3.1 There was no input from the Police apart from a recent email newsletter circulated to all Councillors in the usual way.

3.2 Cllr Chater referred to the matter of Police control of the speeding in Offchurch Lane. He had recently attended a meeting of the Eastern Neighbourhood Forum and raised the matter with the Police. He pointed out that regular speed checks are conducted on the main Southam Road but there was not much indication of any speed checks in Offchurch Lane. He was assured that attention would be given to it.

4. **WCC Matters**

4.1 The Clerk reported that after the last Council Meeting he had written again to the Footpaths Dept of WCC in respect of the obstructed footpath at the rear of Dunbar House. This had resulted in a telephone call he received on 8th August from Mr Barnard stating that the paperwork prepared by Cllr Whitehead and submitted earlier was being considered. The Clerk purposely made a written record of the telephone conversation as there is an issue as to the correct line of the footpath which he had to look into with appropriate legal advice this could take some time. He doubted that he would be able to report back for the October or November meeting of the Parish Council. He said that if the Legal Dept confirmed the position in line with submissions made by this Parish Council then the occupier of Dunbar House would be written to by WCC, followed by enforcement action if necessary. It was agreed that the Clerk should write again to Mr Barnard to draw his attention to the fact that the footpath was now entirely blocked off with the erection of a 6 ft fence. **Action: Clerk**

4.2 The Clerk had raised the other issue concerning the occupier of Dunbar House – the Leylandii trees planted on the main road. He had suggested that the two matters should be dealt with together but Mr Barnard said they were to be dealt with separately. The Council were advised that nothing further had been heard from WCC on the progress of or proceedings against the occupier in respect of the Leylandii trees.

- 4.3 Cllr Marriott had received a query from a member of the public as to the status of bridle paths. The question was whether bridle paths were being reduced in status to footpaths.

The Clerk had accordingly written to WCC Highways Dept to enquire as to the position and challenged the legal authority for such downgrading, if in fact it was in process. He awaited a reply.

5. WDC Matters

- 5.1 The Chairman reported briefly on his attendance at the Eastern Neighbourhood Forum. He noted however that the total budget for the Forum is about £10,000 and about a dozen parish councils to cover. It was thought unlikely that a significant grant would be gained as a result.
- 5.2 The Clerk had circulated a number of emails prior to the meeting originating from the Budbrooke Parish Council. That Council is still campaigning against WDC's Local Plan. It is now seeking to get co-ordinated action from other parish councils with a view to legal action as a possibility. The Chairman and Clerk felt that it was not for this Council to subsidise legal proceedings organised by other councils and the question also arises as to whether this Council's budget is sufficient to risk that kind of expenditure. The Clerk advised that engaging in legal proceedings is a risky business and is likely to incur irrecoverable costs. Accordingly it was agreed:-
- a) that the Chairman and the Clerk would monitor the passage of emails to see how the action group was getting on and report back to this Council;
 - b) as appropriate, the Clerk would indicate the support of this Council for the argument against the Local Plan but not commit any funds to the action group.
- 5.3 The Clerk reminded the Council that a consultation document for the Warwick District Community Governance Review of 2013 having been tabled, invited comments from parish councils by 4th October 2013. The Clerk summarised the provisions of the document following which it was agreed that he should write to the Electoral Registration Officer to confirm that the Council had considered the paper and was content with the current position and had no recommendations to make.

Action: Clerk

6. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 29th July 2013

- 6.1 The Clerk had been unable to make contact with the prospective parish councillor referred to at a previous meeting so that the Chairman and the Clerk could discuss the nature of the post with her at a private meeting. The Clerk will make further endeavour to contact her.
- Action: Clerk**
- 6.2 The Clerk had been asked to check up the legal authority denoting the number of councillors there could be on this Council; despite extensive correspondence with the Electoral Registration Officer of WDC, he had not been able to ascertain the answer. He advised the Council that, as a matter of legal logic, the number must be specified somewhere and accordingly regulated. He will pursue the enquiry. **Action: Clerk**

- 6.3 Following service by the Clerk of a notice on the occupiers of a house in Southam Road to trim their rear hedgerow adjoining the School, this had resulted in compliance and the path by the School was now in good order.
- 6.4 It was decided not to pursue the current enquiry as to the condition of growth of rear hedgerows in Chance Fields.
- 6.5 Regarding the dates of meetings in the forthcoming year, the Clerk was awaiting approval from the Community Hall manager and he will pursue this. **Action: Clerk**
- 6.6 The Clerk had received confirmation that the Chairman of WDC, Cllr Richard Davies, will attend a meeting of the Parish Council on 28th October 2013.

7. Finance and Accounts

- 7.1 The Clerk reported that the balance on the operating account was £6,900 approximately and the balance on the investment account was £21,224 approximately.
- 7.2 The Council approved a number of payments including a sum of £185 in respect of PAYE tax on the Clerk's quarterly payment of salary and a sum of £828.01 in respect of the net quarterly payment of salary to the Clerk. This latter figure was calculated with reference to the certificated sum due for the quarter prepared by the Council's payroll managers, Johnson Associates, less a deduction of £309.59 made in accordance with Minute 7.3 of the Minutes of 29th July 2013.
- 7.3 The Council also approved retrospectively a payment by the Chairman and the Clerk during August of £225 to Mr C J Warr for preparing the framework of the website and also approved a further payment to Mr Warr for £40.78 for the installation of the website. See item below.
- 7.4 The Clerk confirmed that the Annual Return had been submitted to the External Auditor but he had yet to hear from the Auditor with his final assessment of the Audit.

8. Correspondence

- 8.1 The Clerk had received no correspondence as such subject to the following points:-
- a letter had been received from WALC of their AGM to take place on 13th November 2013 at Shire Hall, Warwick. (the Clerk tabled their Annual Report)
 - the Clerk had received an email from a resident in Chance Fields suggesting that unauthorised development was taking place at an address in Chance Fields with the question of whether the Parish Council were aware of the planning position. The Clerk had referred it to Cllr Walsh who had said that she would look into it. No report had been received from her before this meeting.
- 8.2 There was no other correspondence not dealt with under other headings.

9. Bus Shelter

It was agreed that this item be put on the Agenda for the next meeting pending costings being obtained.

10. Website

- 10.1 The Chairman outlined the activity he had undertaken during August in preparing the framework of the website for installation following assistance in the layout from Mr Warr (see above).
- 10.2 Mr Warr had submitted an interim account for £225 which had been paid (see above).
- 10.3 The Chairman and the Clerk had spent some time together looking at the Chairman's draft and supplying some tweaks to the layout and he now felt it was ready for installation.
- 10.3 The Chairman explained that there were several pages of direct information being given out by the Parish Council. There were other pages giving details of local organisations and their respective websites (where applicable). Most of these websites will be accessible by link.
- 10.4 The Chairman explained that the intention was that material submitted either internally by the Council or externally by residents would be submitted to the Clerk for insertion in the website and the Chairman would physically undertake this. That way the content of the website would be under constant monitoring by the Clerk and the Chairman. It was not intended that there should be a facility for members of the public to insert material on the website directly.
- 10.5 The Chairman invited the Councillors to click on the new website which will shortly be up and running as www.radfordsemelepc.org.uk

11. Report from the Planning Committee

In the absence of Cllr Walsh, there was no report. Cllr Janet Malin said that the planning committee had a dearth of applications to consider in recent months.

12. Report from the Playing Field Committee

- 12.1 There was considerable discussion about the play equipment with reference to the failure of the application a few months earlier for a Heritage Lottery Grant. Cllr Whitehead explained that the lady fronting up the action group was preparing a fresh application but it was recognised that the success of such an application was in itself a lottery.
- 12.2 It was recognised that the Parish Council should be seen to be supporting the application with a specific fund and the actual amount was discussed. It was agreed that the Council would support the cost of the play equipment project up to a maximum amount of 10% of the cost of the works. (On the current estimate of the costs, this will be about £2,300)
- 12.3 Cllr Marriott reported that when he had visited the tree which had been planted to the memory of Sunny Dillon to ensure that the brass plaque was correctly installed, he had noticed that it was now in flower which was most satisfying.
- 12.4 The aerial slide is still awaiting attention from Cllrs Marriott and Whitehead but they still have in mind to deal with. **Action: Cllrs Marriott & Whitehead**

13. Report from the Finance Committee

There was nothing to add to what had been stated above.

14. Report from the Sports and Social Club Committee

Cllr A. Malin reported that the club is on an even keel and there is nothing to report.

15. Report from the Village Emergency Committee

15.1 Cllr Edwards reported that an offer had been received by email to supply more sandbags. Her conclusion was that no more sandbags were required because they deteriorated in storage and therefore a better prospect would be to obtain large builders storage sacks for retaining sand in bulk. They would be similar to those at Cllr Marriott's home. The strength of these storage sacks meant that they would not deteriorate as rapidly as individual sandbags.

15.2 She said the back-up from WDC was now weak since the retirement of Mick Potter. There was no obvious replacement for his post.

16. Report from the Community Hall Committee

16.1 The Chairman outlined that the cost of refurbishing the changing rooms was expected to be about £10,000.

16.2 The question arose as to whether a combi boiler was suitable for heating the showers or whether an electric storage cylinder, requiring to be switched on one hour in advance of use, was better. This needs to be resolved. At this point the Committee will continue to review the estimates of the work to be done and ways of funding it.

17. Report from the School Governors

In the absence of Cllr Pickford, there was no report.

19. Any Other Business

(a) The Clerk reminded the Council that in earlier years they had focussed on their September meeting to decide donations for the current year. It was agreed that a number of donations should be made at the same levels as the previous year to the same beneficiaries. Amongst others, it was agreed that a donation to CPRE should be maintained at a higher level, now £50, and that the donation of £700 to St Nicholas' Church for graveyard upkeep should now be reinstated following completion of the refurbishment works to the Church.

(b) The Clerk referred a complaint as to the overgrown footpath from Southam Road into the fields to the south east of the Village. Cllr Marriott agreed to cut back the excessive growth and it was agreed that he should be paid for this service.

(c) It was noted that the two salt bins requisitioned by the Clerk a month or so ago were now available to be installed and this would be attended to.

(d) It was noted that there was a broken post at Lythall Close which required replacement.

Action: Clerk

- (e) A complaint had been received about overhanging trees at the bus stop on Southam Road opposite Lewis Road. Cllr Marriot agreed to cut the trees back when attending to similar jobs in the area (Note work done in the following days).
Action: Clerk

- (f) A complaint had been received as to the uneven situation of the flag stones in the footpath outside the Village Shop. Although this had been done a few years ago, it appeared that the flags were now being pushed upwards by tree roots or similar. It was agreed that this should be rectified.
Action: Clerk

20. Date of next meeting: 28th October 2013

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council