

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 25th November 2013 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr D E Chater (in the Chair), Cllr Mrs J A Edwards, Cllr Mrs J Loveridge, Cllr A J Malin, Cllr Rev K Pickford, Cllr Mrs N Fleuty and Cllr J M Whitehead

In attendance: WDC Cllr Les Caborn, Mr Stephen Hay (WDC Senior Planning Officer), WDC Cllr Michael Doody and WCC Cllr Wallace Redford and approximately 25 residents

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr F Walsh.
Cllr H E Marriott

2. **WDC Matters**

It had been arranged that WDC Cllr Caborn and Mr Stephen Hay would address the meeting for approximately 20 minutes each and take questions for another approximate period of 20 minutes.

- 2.1 Cllr Caborn outlined the fact that WDC had a responsibility to implement The Local Plan and conclude their deliberations by the end of 2014. If WDC defaulted then the Government would impose a local plan on the area. Whilst the overall number of new houses to be built in accordance with Government policy in the area of Warwick District Council was still under debate, on any view it would be a substantial figure of around 10,000 houses.
- 2.2 This number of houses had to be accommodated at different points in the WDC area and wherever they were likely to be located there would be natural opposition.
- 2.3 In general terms to the north of the urban area of WDC there is established Green Belt which inhibits WDC from allocating the construction of new houses in villages in that area.
- 2.4 Whatever the overall number of houses WDC had determined that a number of villages on the southern circumference of the urban area should be identified for the construction of houses. The thinking behind this policy was to distribute the new houses throughout the WDC area and reduce the impact of new development. He pointed out that if the large number of houses contemplated by The Local Plan were built in concentration in one or more areas this would lead to the creation of concerted urban areas and in effect increase the existing urban area of Warwick, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa. In their thinking, WDC had sought to distribute the number of houses between the villages so as to spread out the developments.
- 2.5 He explained that he is the member of the WDC Executive Committee charged with overall supervision of The Local Plan implementation. It was proposed to have a series of presentations at each of the villages affected by the policy and the consultation period for Radford Semele would commence as of today's date, 25th November and run for 8 weeks.

- 2.6 Mr Hay then elaborated on the details of the consultation period. He brought with him a large collection of brochures detailing the proposed implementation of The Local Plan; the brochure features a detailed plan of Radford Semele and some narrative to go with it. This corresponded to the smaller plan produced by WDC Cllr Doody at the public meeting held on 18th November.
- 2.7 Mr Hay also confirmed that he had in the last day or so achieved a booking of the Community Hall on 7th January 2014 for a specific presentation to Radford Semele by himself and colleagues from 4pm to 8 pm. The overall consultation period will conclude on 20th January 2014.
- 2.8 He expressed his regret that he had not had the opportunity to interface with the Parish Council in previous months and indicated that this was a result of lack of interest on the part of the Parish Council. The Clerk pointed out to him that the Parish Council had filed their response to The Local Plan consultation in 2012 and then renewed their response when the further consultation papers came out in May/June 2013; to neither of the response papers had the Parish Council received any reaction or reply from WDC.
- 2.9 Mr Hay stated that he had walked the land in a number of villages and spoken to residents and other parish councils but that valuable interfacing had just not happened at Radford Semele. The Chairman pointed out to him that no invitation to have a walk about or other interfacing meetings had been received by the Parish Council except at the initial contact of Mr Hay when he joined WDC about a year ago. On 15th February 2013 Mr Hay met with Cllr Doody and with the Chairman for a brief meeting at WDC's offices. This had not been followed up by Mr Hay with any further approaches to the Parish Council. Cllr Doody expressed his annoyance because he too had not been advised, as District Councillor, of the plans for Site No 1 when it was obvious that discussions with WDC had been in progress for a considerable time.
- 2.10 Questions were then raised from the residents. A considerable number expressed their concern at the lack of information which had been issued both to the public in general and to the Parish Council in particular. It was acknowledged by residents that the Parish Council had not been kept informed as the residents had sufficient confidence in the Council and the Clerk to disseminate any information which came to hand – clearly that information had not been supplied by WDC.
- 2.11 Numerous questions were then raised of Mr Hay concerning the plan in the brochure which shows only 4 sites as having been determined upon by WDC Development Policy Dept. "Site No 1" is land to the east of Church Lane and the west of Offchurch Lane which Mr Hay said was the preferred option of WDC; "Site Nos 2 and 3" are land each side of the main road to Southam just outside the east of the Village which Mr Hay appears to have discounted; these are two of the sites identified by the Parish Council in their response prepared and filed in 2012. "Site No 4" is land to the west of the Village adjacent to Spring Lane which appeared to have been discounted by Mr Hay.
- 2.12 As clearly Mr Hay and his colleagues had a strong preference for Site No 1, a significant number of questions from the floor were on the issue that there was little point in having a consultation period if a decision was already made. He stated this was not so and that the consultation period was a concerted effort by WDC Development Policy Dept to consult with local people.
- 2.13 It had been noted that, at the meeting called by WDC Cllr Doody earlier than the present meeting, Cllr Marriott has an interest in the land between Church Lane and Offchurch Lane and some questions were raised to his part in the matter.

- 2.14 The Chairman, supported by the Clerk, made it clear that Cllr Marriott had not attended any meetings of the Parish Council where The Local Plan was discussed in detail and questions of the Parish Council's policy arose. Further if any negotiations have taken place between Cllr Marriott and those hoping to develop the land, the Parish Council have not been appraised of the position.
- 2.15 As indicated earlier, the Chairman applied a guillotine to the proceedings and the discussion about The Local Plan was terminated at approximately 8.30 pm when Cllr Caborn and Mr Hay left the meeting along with the residents who had been present.
- 2.16 There were no other matters in addition to issues on The Local Plan.

Discussion of The Local Plan

1. The Parish Council discussed the aftermath of the presentation by Cllr Caborn and Mr Hay. The Clerk reported that the policy statement prepared by the Chairman and himself had been published and copies were available for anyone interested.
2. It was agreed that the brochure handed out by Mr Hay and the response forms would be studied by Cllrs with a view to individual Cllrs completing a form on their own behalf but the Parish Council completing one as a composite in due course.
3. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk would prepare a statement to be published in a form of a leaflet to be distributed amongst all the households in the Village and installed on the Council's website.
4. It was agreed that the Council could not at present take a view preferring one of the proposed sites against another because of divergent views, interests and attitudes among the residents in the Village.
5. The Council took the view their duty is to look after the interests of all residents in the Village as a whole and it would be inappropriate for the Council to become partisan in respect of one site or another.
6. It was further agreed that the Council should not put itself in a position of supporting the cause of any developers but only to consider the interests of residents.
7. The Clerk expressed the view that the Parish Council, after deliberation, had identified three sites in their response in 2012 and there was a good argument for saying that the Parish Council should continue to support those sites as no substantial evidence had yet been produced by Mr Hay to invalidate them.
8. It was agreed that the consultation period would be monitored and the Chairman together with other members of the Council would attend the presentation on 7th January 2014.
9. It was agreed that Cllr Marriott should not attend any further meetings of the Parish Council when details of The Local Plan being discussed.

3. Minutes of the Council meeting on 28th October 2013

The Minutes were approved.

4. Police Matters

There was no input from the Police apart from an electronic newsletter circulated as usual. The Clerk reported that he had written to the WCC traffic monitoring group to ask for some enforcement in Offchurch Lane but had not yet received a reply.

5. WCC Matters

- 5.1 WCC Cllr Redford said that he had ascertained that there was no current application to alter any of the bridleways in the Parish area; any application to change the status of bridleways or footpaths had to go through a certain legal process and this would take a long time – we would get notice.
- 5.2 WCC Cllr Redford said he had checked up on the progress of matters concerning Dunbar House; there was to be court proceedings shortly concerning Leylandii trees at the front and concurrently action was being taken to unblock the footpath at the rear of the house. The proceedings are likely to be heard in February 2014.

6. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 28th October 2013

- 6.1 The Clerk confirmed that Nicky Fleuty's qualification to be a Parish Councillor had been approved; the Chairman therefore welcomed her by way of formal co-option onto the Parish Council.
- 6.2 Cllr Whitehead confirmed that Cllr Marriott had in hand the replacement of the aerial slide. This work was actually in hand.
- 6.3 Cllr Whitehead said there had been some issue about installation of the salt bins – it was necessary to dig them into the ground and this was to be done.
- 6.4 The Chairman reported that the grant application on behalf of the Community Hall to WDC have been rejected. He and the Clerk had put in some time on the paperwork and the outcome was disappointing. Basically, those at WDC are taking the view that the Community Hall had sufficient funds to cover the heating/hot water project.

7. Finance and Accounts

- 7.1 The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account was approximately £21,200. The balance on the operating account was approximately £13,400
- 7.2 A number of payments were approved including a payment of £3,834 to Coventry Demolition Co in accordance with their previous estimate for demolition of the Youth Building and a payment of £72 inc VAT to Henry Marriott in respect of mowing and strimming work in respect of flood prevention in Williams Road and overhanging vegetation in Southam Road

8. Correspondence

There was no correspondence other than that relating to other items in the Minutes.

9. Report from the Planning Committee

In the absence of Cllr Walsh, there was no general report.

10. Report from the Playing Field Committee

There was nothing to report in addition to the above mentioned matters.

11. Report from the Finance Committee

There was nothing in addition to matters mentioned above.

12. Report from the Sports and Social Club Committee

Cllr A. Malin reported there was nothing to report.

13. Report from the Village Emergency Committee

Cllr Edwards reported there was nothing to report.

14. Report from the Community Hall Committee

Cllr Loveridge reported that there was nothing arising in addition to the loss of the grant funding (as above).

15. Report from the School Governors

Cllr Pickford reported there was nothing to report.

16. Any Other Business

There was nothing to report.

17. Date of next meeting: 27th January 2014

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council