

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 31st October 2011 at 7.30 pm.

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

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr K Pickford and Cllr F Walsh

In attendance: WDC Cllr Mrs Felicity Bunker and WDC Cllr Michael Doody

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved subject to some amendments; it was agreed that the section would be retyped and the Chairman will sign outside meeting.

3. Police Matters

3.1 There was no police attendance or police report save a newsletter which had been circulated to Councillors for the period 17th October to 31st October 2011.

4. WCC & WDC Matters

4.1 WDC Cllr Doody explained the current situation over the Local Plan. Local authorities were required to produce a Plan with their figures for housing development. A considerable number of Councils in Warwickshire had produced figures, Coventry in particular had a proposal to build a further 17,000 houses, Solihull proposed 10,500 houses, Rugby 11,000 houses and Stratford 8,000 houses. So far WDC had not produced a figure and were still thinking about it.

4.2 The Government's current proposals are to allow District Councils to use part of the business rates which they are collecting.

4.3 There was an inter-relation between the Local Plan and parish plans. It was useful to parishes to have a parish plan which could then be used as an argument in respect of the Local Plan.

4.4 It is still the position that Radford Semele is not earmarked for any housing development.

4.5 Cllr Doody welcomed developments at the old Ford factory – the retail development by Morrisons was going to go ahead.

4.6 It was still the current intention to close the Fire Station at Leamington and relocate the unit near the Greys Mallory Police Station at the south of the conurbation. The clearance of the site in Leamington would produce valuable sales proceeds – a likely purchaser was going to be Waitrose.

5. Matters Arising

- 5.1 A discussion took place concerning the bus shelter. Cllrs Chater and Doody confirmed that the Eastern Neighbourhood Forum had agreed to provide a grant of £2,000 to the Parish Council for the bus shelter provided the Parish Council put forward the rest of the money for its development. Cllr Marriott had obtained an impressive quotation from a company called Shires Oak Buildings. He circulated a drawing of the bus shelter which was approved by all. It is timber framed with apertures in the sides to give visibility to the occupants. The apertures will probably be lined with polycarbonate material as glass would be at risk. It is made of oak which is tough and long-lasting; to avoid the footings of the woodwork getting rotten by contact with the ground, they will be mounted on industrial brickwork. It was agreed that Cllrs Marriott and Whitehead should proceed to make arrangements for the structure to be provided and to obtain building materials needed for its construction in due course. It is unlikely to be delivered before Spring 2012.

6. Finance and Accounts

- 6.1 The Clerk had received confirmation from the External Auditors (Clement Keys) that an unqualified audit opinion had been given and that today was the closing day for members of the public to ask to examine the accounts in accordance with Statutory procedures.
- 6.2 The Clerk reported that the operating bank account currently contains approximately £7,700 and the investment account contains approximately £43,000.
- 6.3 A number of items were approved for payment.
- 6.4 Cllr Chater said he had discussed with the Clerk the intended review of funds allocated to the Clerk to cover his office support services (it having been agreed that a supplement to the figure settled in March 2011 would be made). It was agreed that an increase on the amount called for by the Clerk in year 2010 be awarded on the basis of the Consumer Price Index and that in future from year to year the amount of the Clerk's costs would be increased on the same basis.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1 An invitation had been received from the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire to a County Service to Celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee to be held on 12 February 2012 in St Mary's Church, Warwick, and followed by a reception. Cllr Edwards agreed to attend and to represent Radford Semele Parish Council. Councillors agreed to give thought to what other celebrations could be arranged within the village.
- 7.2 The Clerk had written to Peter Morrell, Clerk to the School Governors, to thank them for his kind remarks on the appointment of Cllr Pickford as Parish Council representative on the School Governing Body.
- 7.3 The Clerk reported briefly on the Clerks Conference which he had recently attended. A random number of items had come up for the Council's thoughts:
- (a) The future of the Audit Commission is still under consideration but nothing is likely to happen for another 12/18 months;

- (b) The Government is considering the status of Internal Auditors – the suggestion is that they are too close to Parish Councils to be effective and one solution might be to abolish the function of Internal Auditor but increase the function of the External Auditors in the same way as commercial concerns have their accounts audited.
- (c) There are moves afoot to introduce compulsory training for councillors.
- (d) It is likely that at a future date it will be compulsory (at present it is voluntary) for payments in excess of £500 to be published while at the present it is only required to be recorded on the 'Payment Approval Sheet'.
- (e) The key note speech by the Minister for Local Government underlined the Government's keenness to get parish councils to encourage volunteers in order to promote the Big Society – this will clearly put pressure upon parish councils.

8. WDC Cllr Bunker

8.1 Cllr Bunker gave a short address covering the following topics:

- (i) WDC is focused on the importance of training, particularly with reference to the behaviour of councillors on how to conduct themselves in public.
- (ii) She is pleased that they will continue to have no charge made for refuse collection.
- (iii) They are very pleased with the response over recycling, both of the public's attitude and cooperation and in the commercial work of turning rubbish into financial profit.
- (iv) The Dog Control Order has recently come in; she feels that it is the right thing despite a large amount of objection but they have modified it to allow dogs under control to go into cemeteries with their owners as the bereaved get comfort from the companionship of their animals.
- (v) She was keen to promote parish plans to be run in conjunction with the Local Plan. One item that local councils might identify is whether it is possible to release more housing for the elderly without actually building new houses (i.e. identifying properties suitable for conversion or sub-division).

9 Noticeboard

9.1 Cllr Whitehead said he had not had time to address the issues. The question of cost needs to be balanced against the size necessary for adequate display of notices. The Clerk said he regretted there was no marketing of noticeboards at the Clerks Conference so he was unable to fulfil his promise to bring back literature. This subject is to be put on the Agenda for the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

10. Bus Shelter

10.1 Cllr Marriott reported that he had obtained two estimates and produced the one which he favoured. It was accompanied by a drawing which was tabled. The estimate is for £5,947 + VAT which it was resolved to accept. Confirmation is to be sent to the suppliers. **Action: Cllr Marriott**

10.2 The quotation is to be accepted subject to the Parish Council securing a grant of £2,000 from the Eastern Neighbourhood Forum. WDC Cllr Doody said this had been filed and would be processed.

10.3 The Clerk suggested it would be wise to check with the Planning Authority / Highway authority to ensure that there was no issue over official permission for substituting the new bus shelter on exactly the same site as the old one. **Action: Clerk**

11. The Youth Club building

11.1 Cllr Whitehead reported that the £1,000 grant which the Parish Council had supplied to the present occupiers of the building had been spent on refurbishment of part of the building but had not been used to complete all the external works. The Chairman's action had also supplied the cost of skip hire to take away the rubbish.

11.2 The organisers were looking for further finance but it was questionable whether they should be encouraged to look again to the Parish Council. Following debate it was agreed that they should be advised to make grant applications elsewhere for their further finance. **Action: Cllr Whitehead**

12. Report from the Planning Committee

In the absence of Cllr Walsh, there was no report save that the Clerk had received notice of an application from 38 Offchurch Lane. The Planning Committee had not objected.

13. Report from the Playing Field Committee

13.1 Cllr Marriott reported that the sycamore tree on the boundary was now in good order – there is an invoice for tree surgery which has been approved.

13.2 Cllr Marriott said that the sliding ropeway needs rebuilding but is too valuable an asset to remove completely. It has a great attraction for youth. It was agreed that this should be repaired.

13.3 Cllr Whitehead reported that the ROSPA report had just come in but it had not been circulated. The original was tabled. He said it mentions a number of items of which he was aware and some which had been corrected. He said a particular feature of the report is that it now rates each item with a risk factor. How you deal with the risk percentage is a matter for discretion. He and Cllr Marriott will be examining all the items mentioned in the ROSPA report and taking action.

Action: Cllrs Whitehead & Marriott

13.4 Cllr Whitehead reported that the bins used by the occupants of The Lodge were full and overflowing and there appeared to be little attempt to get them emptied. The problem appears to be the distance of The Lodge from the main road at the end of School Lane. It was felt that a letter to A C Lloyd, the owners of the property, was required to draw attention to this. **Action: Clerk**

13.5 It was noted that WDC contractors would continue to empty the dog bins.

14. Report from the Finance Committee

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

15. Report from the Sports and Social Club Committee

Cllr Tony Malin said there was nothing to report.

16. Report from the Village Emergency Committee

Cllr Edwards reported that there was nothing to report.

17. Report from the Community Hall Committee

Cllr Loveridge reported that it was in order and it was pleasing to note that there was continued attendance at the functions held by Hybrid Arts.

18. Report from the School Governors

In the absence of Cllr Pickford there was no report.

19. Any Other Business

(a) The Baptist Church

Cllr Whitehead outlined the finance report submitted to the Parish Council by the treasurer of the Church, David Bishop. It was clear that the Church were in need of a grant for major reconstruction of the roof. The estimate submitted was £7,800 for the repair work. The Parish Council considered that the Church was a local institution which played a significant part in the community and merited support. It was resolved in principle to supply a grant to the Church of £5,000 on the basis that the Church looked elsewhere for the balance of the estimated sum.

(b) Telephone box

Cllr Marriott reported that he had received helpful advice on paint specification and had looked at the question of using polycarbonate glazing instead of glass. He was optimistic that the box could be properly refurbished and maintained in a way to detract from potential vandalism. He had recently obtained old style coin boxes (Buttons A and B) which he proposed to install as classic features. It was agreed that he should proceed. **Action: Cllr Marriott**

(c) The issue of gravel seeping from the driveway in Lewis Road opposite number 60 Lewis Road was raised. Previously the occupiers/owners had been asked to clean up the gravel off the road where it tends to get washed under heavy rainfall. It was agreed that some action would be taken to persuade the occupiers to clear up the gravel. **Action: Clerk**

20. WDC Cllr Bunker said that she had enjoyed the meeting and had found it very interesting. She found it particularly interesting to compare all the parish councils that she visited during her term of office because every one was different. The Chairman thanked her for her attendance and closed the meeting at 9.07 pm.

21. Date of next meeting: Monday 28th November 2011

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

Chairman of the Parish Council