

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 7th August 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele.

Participants: Cllr S Sabin (in the chair), Cllr A J Dempsey, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr R Munn and Cllr Josie Sanderson

In attendance: WCC Cllr Redford and WDC Cllr Becky Noonan

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies received from Cllr D Carter and Cllr B Friar (holidays). See below for declarations of interest.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 26th June 2023

The Minutes of the meeting on 26th June 2023 were approved, proposed by Cllr Dempsey and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 26th June 2023

The Clerk reported that, following complaints by a resident in Slade Meadow as to the 'back land' temporarily maintained by A C Lloyd at the rear of The Cricketers development, he had taken up her complaint with A C Lloyd again as this related to the unkempt nature of the area which they were supposed to be maintaining. They had advised the Clerk that the area would be trimmed twice a year in accordance with their brief. He had advised her that he could not take the matter further so she decided to take up some culling herself to reduce the impact of weeds from the area infiltrating into her back garden.

4. Update on SpeedWatch

Cllr Munn spoke to a report which he had tabled on SpeedWatch. WCC Cllr Redford said there was an opportunity to apply for 20 mph speed limits in certain residential areas – suitable for the Village. He recommended that an application form be requested from Ryan Machin, WCC Highways Dept. It was AGREED that the Chairman would action this.

5. Update on traffic management issues

- a) The Clerk said he had not heard further from Scott Tompkins as to the site meeting which was originally proposed for 1st June. ST's team is to review the interface of the A425 and the adjoining streets. His reason previously given was the shortage of staff and insufficient work time to prepare the paperwork before the site meeting.
- b) The Chairman referred to an email dated 12th July 2023 which had been issued by Alison Kennedy, Principal Transport Planner of WCC, setting out an analysis of the proposed walking and cycling improvements between Leamington and Radford Semele. This had been copied to Cllr Redford. The email highlighted a number of issues relating to the scheme not least of which is an indication that the scheme with the Canal and River Trust to create a canal access point at the bridge in the Village remains vulnerable for a number of reasons. This email originated from her as a result of a submission made by Cllr Sabin in an email to her dated 7th July 2023 enquiring as to progress on these various schemes.

6. Update on Section 106 and CIL issues

The Clerk was still waiting for a detailed response from Helen Hancox, WDC Open Spaces Officer, on the suggestion by the Chairman and the Clerk that the Section 106 agreement regarding the money due from The Cricketers development be amended. Her case is that it is not capable of amendment and she is seeking legal advice but the Clerk had recently done some research into the legal position from which it is clear that Section 106 is an integral part of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act which also has, in Section 73, provision for amendment of such agreements. Such amendments can be effected if the parties agree - A C Lloyd have

indicated their concurrence in an amendment sought by the Chairman and the Clerk. The Clerk will send a reminder letter to her referring to Section 73 with the view that WDC Cllr Noonan will follow it up with her.

7. Warwickshire County Council – update

WCC Cllr Redford reported that notice had been issued that surface dressing of Valley Road will be carried out today. He also reported that 180 new parking meters had been commissioned to provide a better service to the public, about 40 are expected in Leamington. They will cope with parking reservations by phone or by cash.

8. Warwick District Council – update

WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan updated on her report at the last Council meeting regarding the dilapidated building at the end of Hamilton Road; the ownership is clearly with A C Lloyd who have the matter now in hand. It is not clear whether they proposed to demolish the building but currently they are putting it in better repair.

She was pleased to have been able to play a considerable part in the dealing with the travellers' incursion on to the Playing Field a week or so ago.

She had offered to the Clerk to pursue matters with Helen Hancox regarding item 6 on the Agenda and she will take it in hand.

9. Financial Matters

- 1) The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account is currently approximately £93,000 and the balance on the operating account is currently approximately £4,800. This last figure is slightly higher than usual as he had recently injected funds into the operating account to cover potential legal costs in respect of the travellers.
- 2) A number of payments as per the tabled list were authorised, proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin. As the clean up process following the travellers visit has been apparently completed by WDC Officers, it was AGREED to settle the WDC account. The Clerk advised that it would be wise to ensure that the bollards were properly installed before the account of the suppliers was paid. This was AGREED.
- 3) A number of minor queries had been raised by the External Auditors (Moore & Co), but Cllr Friar and the Clerk expected the audit to be signed off in the foreseeable future. The current auditors are new to their commission and, on our file, there had been three different trainees employed.
- 4) With regards to the RSPC self-audit, the Chairman has this in hand.

Additional item:

- 5) Cllr Mrs Sanderson was invited by the Chairman to speak to her report dated 17th July 2023 on the Village Pond maintenance project. This had already been agreed in principle at a previous meeting. She confirmed that the total cost would be £300 which was APPROVED, proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Dempsey. The project managers will also examine the condition of the fencing and take action as is necessary.

10. Correspondence

- 1) Cllr Mrs Sanderson had enquired of the School Eco Committee project but had not received any reply; possibly this is the outcome of the school holiday period.
- 2) The Clerk had received notice from WCC Highways Dept that they proposed to install a Toucan Crossing on the A425 near to the Sydenham Drive junction and the entrance to the Radford Road car park.
- 3) The Council was asked by WALC to complete a members' survey; the Clerk said he had recently attended a Zoom meeting with WALC for Clerks from which it was clear that the CEO of WALC was anxious to create better interfacing between Cllrs and Clerks on the one hand and WALC on the other. She would like to improve the attendance at various meetings and training courses. The survey was designed to obtain information on this aspect. With the Chairman's approval, the Clerk had completed the survey recently and submitted it.
- 4) Reference was made to a report dated 15th July 2023 submitted by Cllr Mrs Sanderson to the Chairman and the Clerk. It highlighted the desire of FoRGE to make more wildflower areas in the Village, at different locations, with the intention that the areas be maintained as an ongoing project. Cllrs were generally in approval of the proposals and await details of liking costings. In particular, the thought is that the Council could draw on the Open Space funds, approximately £5,000, they hold and which arose from the planning consent for two dwellings on the site of The Lodge.

- 5) Following Cllr Mrs Sanderson's reference to an outcrop of brambles adjacent to the bus stop, the Clerk had requested that WCC Highways come to trim. Mr Machin had responded that it was part of his job schedule for the A425 and would be put in hand.
- 6) There was a brief discussion on the outcome of Cllr Mrs Sanderson's focus on the unkempt fences lining the footpath W124 (The Jitty) that runs from the bus stop on the A425 to The Greswoldes/Offchurch Lane. There is an inherent difficulty in persuading property owners to address the problem and/or admit liability. The Clerk advised that in the past during the Chairmanship of former Cllr Whitehead, attempts had been made to send blanket correspondence to the householders but it had been ineffective. The inherent difficulty in the Clerk's view, is this Council's lack of authority to require sight of the title deeds of individual property owners. He confirmed that the footpath is identified on the County Footpath map so it has legal status; perhaps WCC Footpaths Dept could be persuaded to take action against the householders? Perhaps Cllr Redford could persuade them?
- 7) The issue of inadequate clearing of dog bins was raised; the Clerk referred to a recent note he had received from Cllr Dempsey on this and reported that he had written to Zoe Court, Contracts manager at WDC, to resolve the problem. There appeared to be an issue of control and management of WDC's outside contractors. The Clerk had not yet received a reply from Mrs Court. It was AGREED that he would send a reminder and he said he would also return to the issue regarding public liability insurance relating to the collection/emptying of bins from households. Cllr Munn expressed his ongoing concern that the way in which contractors dealt with emptying of the bins was inadequate.

11. Current Planning Matters

- 1) W/23/0690 – The application on 17 Offchurch Lane for an extension was granted.
- 2) W/23/0730 – 7 St Nicholas Terrace: unusually, the Clerk had received a detailed note from the WDC Planning Dept asking this Council to consider at this meeting and comment further as necessary on the application. Cllr Mrs Sanderson declared an interest but it was AGREED that she should remain in the meeting room. Cllr Mrs Malin had made written submissions on the application and, after consideration, the Council decided there was nothing further to add to the submissions already made by this Council's Planning Committee (c/o Cllr Carter).
- 3) 22/00001/FUL – Solar Farm Planning Appeal. In the absence of Cllr Carter, he had tabled a brief report and it was noted that the revised application (item 4 below) has now been granted by S D C whilst the planning appeal on the original application with the Inspector is still listed for hearing on 24th August 2023 at Stratford. The Chairman expressed his concern that a significant part of the land concerned is within the area of WDC and this Parish and it was a further example of Stratford Planning Committee deliberating on a site within this Council's boundary. He asked WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan to take this up with those concerned.
- 4) 23/01305/FUL – Solar Farm. See above.
- 5) South Warwickshire Plan – The Chairman said there had been a call for further sites as part of the ongoing work under the Plan; two of these sites were in Offchurch Lane and Church Lane in the Village and must raise a cause for concern if they are proceeded with.
- 6) Additional item: Cllr Munn raised the question of an update on 56 Southam Road. The Clerk advised that a couple of years ago, Mr Brooks of WDC Highways had reached a compromise with the owners of the property as to the delineation of the boundary on the main road. He proposed no further action in that respect. WDC Planning Enforcement Dept had taken up the case concerning the excessive height of the fencing; In the time of former WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, the Dept head resigned and it reached a point where they had no staff at all. More recently, we were told they were recruiting but no further report had been received. It was AGREED that the WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan would follow this up as it appears that the owners of the property are now engaging in construction of the new building for which they obtained planning permission.

12. Footpath W123

The Clerk reminded the Council that some weeks ago he had submitted an application to the Information Commissioners Office under the Freedom of Information Act with a view to obtaining access to the file held by WCC in respect of the footpath. Initially an officer of the ICO had rejected the application as being too stale in time (the regulations do not specify a time limit). On receipt of a robust letter from the Clerk, the officer changed his mind and we now have written confirmation that ICO are dealing with the matter (but no indication of how long that will take).

13. **Playing Field update**

- a) Cllr Dempsey reported that maintenance personnel from A C Lloyd had damaged a significant number of wildflowers planted alongside the track between The Cricketers and the Playing Field – i.e. the plantation was on this Council's side of the track and should have been left alone. It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact the Managing Director of A C Lloyd to resolve the problem.
- b) Cllr Dempsey confirmed that the 7 bollards recently purchased will be installed on the Playing Field on 9th August 2023.
- c) The Chairman confirmed that the water leak problem found on the Playing Field recently had been resolved by rodding the drainage carried out by Dyno-Rod at short notice. Photographs circulated clearly showed that analysis of the manhole adjacent to the outbuilding had been blocked by inappropriate sanitary material being put down the drain. There was a discussion as to whether the inspection chamber in the Field which had revealed the water problem should be reconstructed into a full inspection manhole (but it was acknowledged that this might create a problem for football games).
- d) The Chairman gave a brief synopsis of the visit by travellers. Without warning they had appeared on Friday 28th July 2023 numbering 10 caravans. He was impressed by the assistance he received from Ian Jackson, the Senior Housing Officer of WDC, who has responsibility for this kind of scenario and Martin Rone-Clark, administrator in the Police Headquarters, with responsibility for this kind of incident. He said that WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan had also made a significant contribution. The main force was PC Ed King who had been a real friend and gone above and beyond the call of duty in coordinating the Police activity on the ground. This had involved the requirement for the Police to observe the Code of Conduct contained in the Warwickshire protocol procedural steps to be taken before the Police concerted action to require the travellers to depart. Cllr Sabin and Cllr Friar had served upon the 10 groups a notice to quit by midday on Sunday (30th July 2023) which was a prerequisite to Police action. The travellers left later on the Sunday. The Chairman of Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council had told the Clerk that, as a result of their experience there, he would welcome the formation of an informal group of neighbouring parish councils who have open spaces at risk of such incursions.

14. **Report from the Community Hall**

Cllr Mrs Malin said bookings at the Community Hall had been quiet recently, doubtless due to holidays. They are looking into a revision of the door entry system.

15. **Report on Sports & Social Club**

Cllr Mrs Malin said there was nothing to report as there had not been a meeting in June and the July AGM had not taken place.

Complaints concerning the Sports & Social Club –

The Chairman felt it right to declare an interest but the Clerk determined that it was appropriate for him to be involved in the debate because the issue was pressure from certain residents on this Council.

The Clerk summarised the position as follows: one or more anonymous residents (believed to be residents in Godfrey Close) had engaged a series of correspondence with the Clerk requesting that this Council terminate the licence granted to the Club by this Council to use the external area with seating. The complainants said that their families are disturbed by late night noise, drinking, shouting and swearing. The Clerk had invited the complainants to attend a Council meeting (projected at the June meeting) and had issued the invitation again but the complainants did not attend the June meeting and patently were not attending this meeting. However, they had made a recent peremptory demand for a meeting with the Clerk and/or an instant decision from this Council on revocation of the licence.

Cllr Mrs Malin raised the question of whether the alcohol licence issued to the Club by the District Council allowed the use of the outside area; the Clerk advised that in law there is a difference between the alcohol licence granted by WDC Licensing Committee and a property owners licence issued by this Council in respect of the seating area. His understanding of the terms of the alcohol licence is that the use of the outside area is covered but it is a matter for the club management to ensure that they comply with the terms of the alcohol license.

The Clerk had written to the Secretary of the Club with a view to management focussing on this issue and also he had written to the complainants informing them that firstly there would be no instant decision and secondly it would be helpful if they attended a Council meeting and put their case face to face. It was AGREED that the Clerk and possibly one or two Cllrs would arrange a meeting with Club management to see if the issues could be resolved.

A further complaint had been received by a nearby resident stating that they were subject to noise by the Club and ball games were engaged which involved kicking balls against the resident's rear fence. It was

AGREED in principle that a fresh notice would be installed stating that ball games were not permitted in the front area of the Playing Field but should be engaged in the main part of the Playing Field instead. In the meantime, the Clerk will write to her to advise that the matter is in hand.

16. Telephone Box

Cllr Mrs Sanderson tabled a report to which the Council expressed approval. It was AGREED that the adjoining property owners should be advised of the proposed scheme – the Clerk to write to them accordingly.

17. Subsidy to residents for cost of living

Cllr Mrs Malin said that no applications for support of any kind had been received in recent months – as previously stated, it was not practical to operate a warm hub at the Community Hall. She was aware that the Baptist Church had a facility similar to a warm hub. It was therefore AGREED that this item should be removed from the Agenda for future meetings.

18. Any other business

1. A prospective councillor had attended this meeting and it was hoped that she might proceed to become a Cllr.
2. Cllr Mrs Sanderson is mindful of the School Liaison role but currently there is no feedback from the School.
3. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 24th April 2023 were approved; proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin. They were duly signed.
4. The Clerk said that currently The White Lion is listed as a community asset but the registration expires in January 2024. To preserve the position, it would be advisable for this Council to apply for the registration to be renewed as it will lapse if no application is made. It is not known who owns the premises. Registration as a community asset goes some way to preserve the premises as a public house and avoid it being converted to some other use. It was AGREED that the Clerk should proceed with the renewal.
5. Cllr Mrs Malin raised the matter of the Emergency Plan; she had found that there was no copy of the Plan in the Emergency box at the Community Hall and this was a matter of concern. The most recent version of the Plan (prepared by former councillor John Sudbury) is, in her view, inadequate. It was AGREED that she and Cllr Friar would review and update the Emergency Plan as appropriate.

19. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on the 25th September 2023. This meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date September 2023

Counter signed.....

Date September 2023