

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 30th October 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 D Carter, Cllr B Friar, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr R Munn and Cllr Josie Sanderson

In attendance: 3 members of the public including Mr Stewart Roe

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Mrs Gulliver (holidays), WCC Cllr Redford (illness) and WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan (illness) and no Declarations of Interest were received.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th September 2023

The Minutes of the meeting on 25th September 2023 were approved, subject to some minor amendments, proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin. The Chairman and Clerk were authorised to make the amendments before signing.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th September 2023

- a. WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan had tabled a report (for details see below); the Clerk conveyed that part of her report on her communication with Ms Zoe Court at WDC and the ongoing issue as to management of rubbish bins. Cllr Munn expressed his concern that despite this correspondence, performance by the contractors in dealing with bins on the main road outside his house was still unsatisfactory. He will pursue matters with Ms Court.
- b. The Clerk raised the question of any further development on the ditch in The Valley; Cllr Mrs Sanderson said there is no amelioration of the congestion in the ditch which needs clearing. The question is who is responsible. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to the local farmer to see if his cooperation could be obtained in the clearance of the ditch.
- c. The Clerk raised the question as to any further developments on the Jitty adjoining The Greswoldes; Cllr Mrs Sanderson had been unable to make positive progress because of difficulty over the identity of the proprietors of various gardens adjoining the fencing. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write a circular letter to all the relevant householders and see what transpired.

4. Update on SpeedWatch

Cllr Munn spoke to his written report which he had tabled. He had been informed that Laser training for his newest volunteer had been arranged but the way in which the Police communicate with such volunteers is haphazard. The servicing of the Laser speed measuring device involves no cost to this Council as the service is paid for by the Police. Mention was made of the meeting projected for 20th November 2023 as a Police and local Council liaison meeting to which representatives of this Council were invited; the venue is yet to be advised. The Clerk had received today a circular letter giving notice of a number of sessions with the Police Commissioner; councillors and clerks are welcome to attend these sessions on Teams to hear/discuss Police plans for the year ahead. The dates are 6th, 8th and 28th November and 1st December 2023. Registration in advance is required.

5. Update on traffic management issues

- a. Sadly, there was a lack of progress on this matter. Cllr Dempsey pointed out that it was many weeks since the site meeting we held with WCC representatives in September. The Chairman outlined that he had attempted to get information specifically on Highways Dept's view of the pedestrian crossing at Ufton which is a reasonable comparison with the projects that this Council has in mind. The Chairman contacted Chris Round, the Senior Highways Engineer who was at that site meeting, and he indicated a colleague to deal with the matter but nothing further has been heard from that colleague. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to Asst Director, Scott Tompkins, to endeavour to progress matters.
- b. The Clerk referred to receipt of a circular letter from Alison Kennedy, Principal Transport Planner at WCC, that the Chairman outlined at this meeting. Broadly she refers to proposals for the Toucan crossing on the A425, Radford Road, east of the car park entrance and states that WCC are continuing to work

closely with Sustrans and the Canal River Trust on adjacent projects to improve access to the Grand Union Canal. They are also pursuing the question of the Radford Road cycle route project but have not achieved sufficient funding yet. The circular letter had been distributed to WCC Cllr Redford and WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan.

6. Update on Section 106 and CIL issues

The Clerk sent an email containing legal submissions to Helen Hancox at WDC since the last meeting of this Council. No reply had yet been received. The current issue is that she has, in her latest draft of the Funding Letter to which this Council is required to subscribe, a description of the purposes of the Fund which is incompatible with this Council's discretion in carrying out expenditure from the Fund. The Clerk said that the current wording is unacceptable because it puts a straight jacket on that discretion. For reasons which he considers unnecessary, she has, in her wording, reverted to the original terms of the Section 106 Agreement. A C Lloyd have stated that they have no objection to any kind of amendment). It was AGREED that the Clerk would send a reminder letter to her.

7. Warwickshire County Council – update

In the absence of WCC Cllr Redford, there was no report. The Clerk outlined recent correspondence that the Chairman and himself had had with Cllr Redford to obtain funding from Cllr Redford's personal budget. This resulted from an observation made by him at this Council's last meeting; an application had been put forward with the assistance of Cllr Mrs Sanderson to see if part funds could be obtained from his budget although it was acknowledged that the total amount required for the Canal Access project was in excess of that. Cllr Redford had taken advice from Scott Tompkins and reported back that his personal budget was not appropriate for 'capital' projects.

8. Warwick District Council – update

In the absence of WCC Cllr Mrs Noonan, her report was as follows:

- a. She had had a response from Zoe Court regarding the bins. All bin issues should be reported directly with Biffa via the website: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/wdc-forms/refuse-enquiry.cfm/form/refuseenquirywdc/g/1>
- b. With regard to who is liable if there is an accident in relation to bin obstruction, she had not been given a straightforward answer but she will ask WDC's insurance officer again for clarification.
- c. She is still chasing Planning Enforcement on 56 Southam Road and will be in touch with Cllr Munn to take this further.
- d. Regarding the bridge access to Newbold, she has very little update on this and it is still in the hands of Cllr Roberts and WDC. She will continue to contact him to prioritise this matter.
- e. She has a meeting with WCC to discuss the details of the cycle route improvements and will update everyone on the outcome following the meeting.

9. Financial Matters

- 1) The Clerk reported that the balance on the operating account was approx. £3,000 and the balance on the investment account was approx. £102,500. There were two significant features of this; this sum includes recent receipt of approximately £18,000 as a second part Precept from WDC; secondly, after allowing for restrictions on part of the funds for various reasons, the unrestricted reserve available currently is approximately £54,217.
- 2) A number of payments were authorised to be paid, proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Dempsey. In passing, the Clerk reported that, subsequent to the last meeting of this Council, he had made enquiries with Rev Martin Green as to allocation in the PCC accounts of donations given by this Council periodically for upkeep of the graveyard. Research by Cllr Friar had not revealed appropriate entries. The Clerk had a visit from the PCC Treasurer to advise that all relevant entries were on an Excel spreadsheet maintained by the Church Treasurer and a copy will be supplied to the Clerk. He had told her that the current donation had been suspended until this enquiry was complete. It was AGREED that Cllr Friar and the Clerk should pursue enquiries and, when they reached a satisfactory conclusion, bring the matter back before the Council.
- 3) There had recently been a meeting of the Finance Committee to determine a draft Budget. This was presented by Cllr Friar to this meeting and was accepted unanimously. It was noted that it is a provisional document at present pending receipt at the end of November of the tax base calculations of Council Tax to be issued by WDC. Following receipt of that information, the provisional Budget and the accompanying provisional Precept figures (prepared by Cllr Friar) can be progressed.
- 4) The Chairman said that the self-audit was in hand.

- 5) The Clerk said Cllr Friar and himself had put together a complaint submission concerning the External Auditors for the CEO of WALC. She was endeavouring to collate complaints from other parish councils and have a meeting with the External Auditors. Nothing had been heard on that recently.

10. Correspondence

- 1) The Clerk had received a circular from WCC stating that a temporary road closure of the Fosse Way will take place on 11th and 12th November 2023.
- 2) The Clerk reminded all of the WALC AGM on 15th November 2023; he is not available. His understanding is that the proceedings start at about 1pm and continue until about 7pm/8pm at Stratford Town Hall.
- 3) WCC had issued a road safety partnership consultation – an invitation to the public to submit concerns about road safety.
- 4) A recently received report from Rugby Pest Control showed no moles had been found on the Playing Field.
- 5) Cllr Sanderson's query as to whether she should declare union membership as a Declaration of Interest, the Clerk had taken this up with the Monitoring Officer and awaited a reply.
- 6) The Clerk had attended a one day session at the SLCC Conference recently; he brought back a leaflet on heritage trails for Cllr Sanderson and some digital processes connected with hall management for Cllr Mrs Malin. He had also spoken with the stall holders representing Proludic.
- 7) A brochure had been received from the PCC inviting this Council to present a Christmas tree at the Church on 8th to 10th December (similar to the event run by All Saints Church in Leamington last year). It was decided not to take up this invitation. The Clerk had been in correspondence with Rev Martin Green as to arrangements for the usual Remembrance Service at St Nicholas Church; it was AGREED in the absence of the Chairman and the Clerk on that date, Cllr Friar would present the poppy wreath on behalf of this Council.
- 8) The Clerk asked for approval for the Chairman and himself to attend a webinar talk on 9th November concerning Rights of Way to be presented by Roger Taylor, the editor of the textbook 'Arnold Baker'. The charge from WALC will be £60 + VAT; it was AGREED that this should be undertaken.
- 9) The Clerk had circulated by email a copy of a letter dated 28th September 2023 from the Scout Leader, John Godbert; this expressed thanks for the donation recently given by this Council and gave a detailed report on the activities of the Scout Group in the last year.
- 10) The Clerk had received an enquiry from Cllr Friar as to the ownership of the land on which the Community Hall stands; this had arisen because a requirement for him to complete insurance forms. The Clerk took the opportunity to explain to Council that the Playing Field land was purchased by this Council in 1966, subsequent to which a 999 year lease was granted by this Council to a local group for them to be constituted as Trustees of the Community Hall. Later, it was contemplated that part of the land adjacent to Lewis Road would be transferred to WCC for the purposes of installing there a public library; this project did not proceed but the original lease was surrendered by the Trustees to this Council and a fresh lease was issued in 1967. The Council's Title to the Playing Field is freehold.
- 11) The Chairman said that the Clerk had put before him a handwritten letter received from a resident of Thornley Close (previous correspondence had been received from this gentleman). The handwriting is difficult to read but it raises concerns (again) as to the footpath W123. It was AGREED that the Chairman and Clerk will decipher the letter and consider the appropriate response.

11. Current Planning Matters

Cllr Carter dealt with current Planning Matters:

- 1) W/23/0471 & W/23/1574 – Planning permission has been granted to the proprietors of The Leasowes but they challenge the conditions on the consent and the matter is subject to appeal.
- 2) W/23/0939 – Planning permission for 32 Slade Meadow was granted.
- 3) W/23/1238 – Planning consent for 32 Lewis Road was granted on 17th October 2023.
- 4) Details on the current position for the South Warwickshire Plan are on their website; this reveals all the potential sites in our area. If all sites obtain development authority, this will have a massive impact on our community.
- 5) He had observed an application, (W/23/7448/TCA), to fell 25 ash trees at Radford Hall Farm without any details given; on reverting to WDC Planning Dept for further information, he was advised that on 27th October

2023, the Planning Committee had approved the application. In Cllr Carter's view, the application is unobjectionable – it is a thinning process to maintain woodland.

- 6) An application had been received to build an extension to 15 Offchurch Lane; he had examined this and the view was that it was not an excessive extension and could be accepted.
- 7) A consultation paper, titled – Draft Net Zero Carbon Supplementary Planning Document – October 2023 has been circulated to local councils and others requesting comments by the 29th November 2023. This is to be examined and comments forwarded, if appropriate.
- 8) The Clerk had recently circulated a reference by the organisers of a Rugby Local Plan; it was AGREED that the aspects of this Plan did not impinge upon our Parish and therefore no action was required.

12. Footpath W123

The Clerk reported that there was no update on this matter, save for the letter from the resident mentioned above.

13. Playing Field update

Cllr Dempsey had tabled a written report on developments for the Playing Field Committee.

- a. He had made enquiries with Proludic as to the likely cost for laying a safe surface material in the area of the adult gym equipment; the quotation received was for £23,000 so it was AGREED that further quotations should be sought for comparison.
- b. He had analysed the RoSPA – Playsafety Limited report recently received and circulated a list of items which were identified which require attention. It was AGREED that he and the Clerk should seek names of potential contractors who could carry out the relevant repairs. One possibility suggested is reference to Wickstead.
- c. He had done some research into one or more notices prohibiting ball games (as discussed previously in Council meetings). He had come to the conclusion that one notice was sufficient and it is to be affixed to the wall of the Sports & Social Club. The Community Hall Committee are content with the placing of the sign and it was AGREED that the Clerk would give formal notification to the Sports & Social Club before the notice was affixed.
- d. Previous discussion had centred on retaining the services of a jobbing gardener to maintain the wildflowers contained in the borders of the Playing Field. Cllr Mrs Sanderson and the Clerk had sought to contact Wagstaffes numerous times to discuss botanical issues but no response had been received. Discussion had taken place with a local person interested in doing the gardening work and Cllr Mrs Sanderson had a contact for another person. She will pursue the matter of hiring one of these persons.
- e. His written report recorded that he had acquired four sets of keys to the bollards installed on the Playing Field; he has retained the original set, the Clerk has one and two other sets are placed with Cllr Mrs Malin and WCC to enable their contractors to empty the bins on the Field.
- f. He has visited the residents in Lay Gardens whose gardens back on to the Playing Field; they had complained some months ago to the Clerk that there is ivy, brambles and other vegetation growing over the fence into their garden. He will arrange three quotations from local companies.
- g. The seating in the open sided shelter in the Playing Field appears to warrant repair; this building has been on site for many years. He will research the cost and report back.

14. Report from the Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Malin spoke to her report which had been tabled. She said that now all weekends in December running up to Christmas are full and November is very busy also. She is seeking to devise a number of special events.

15. Report on Sports & Social Club

Cllr Mrs Malin spoke briefly on current difficulties encountered by the Club. It has currently no effective committee, but it is hoped that at the AGM on 15th November 2023, a committee will be formed. Cllr Friar, in his capacity as Community Hall Treasurer, has been in conversation with the Club Treasurer, Mr Davidson, regarding the energy tariff that applies to the Hall and Club.

16. Environment and Climate Change Update and

18. Village Pond refurbishment

Cllr Mrs Sanderson spoke to her written report which she tabled:

- a. There were no current updates on progress with the Village Pond – she is waiting for a response from Warwickshire Conversation Volunteers.
- b. She is pursuing preservation policy for the maintenance of hedges, following the loss of five saplings during the year. It is expected that further saplings will be supplied by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.
- c. FoRGE volunteers have removed a large section of brambles along the path at the back of Williams Road and nettles in the Jitty.
- d. There had already been a discussion at this meeting about the overgrown ditch in The Valley.

17. Telephone Box

The Clerk had received a response from Gerald Brooks, Administrator at WCC Highways Dept; essentially, if there is no excavation or interference with the highway surface then a licence or consent from WCC is not required. He had however made the point that the following rules should be observed:

- a. No obstruction should be caused to pedestrians passing at the time of works.
- b. Noise and dust should be minimised.
- c. If grinding equipment is used, all flying fragments must be contained within the work area.
- d. The highways surface should be left clean following the works.
- e. If washing of the phone box is undertaken during cold weather, the avoidance of ice formation should be ensured.
- f. The Parish Council should ensure that the fittings attached to the phone box and activity with it is covered by public liability insurance.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact the insurers regarding the last issue.

19. Any other business

1. In the absence of Cllr Mrs Gulliver, there was no detailed discussion on School Liaison, but it was noted that she had contact with the Deputy Head. This is to be pursued in due course.
2. The Clerk had been having trouble in locating the appropriate person at WDC to deal with renewal of The White Lion as a community asset; but in the last few days he had received a response – a fresh application has to be made not simply a renewal.
3. The Chairman reported that Cllr Friar had raised the question of seeking installation of a Parish Council notice board at Semele Park; this poses a difficulty due to the management of Semele Park; it was AGREED that he and/or Cllr Friar would make attempts to contact Bovis to progress the matter.

20. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on the 27th November 2023. This meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

At the end of the meeting, Mr Stewart Roe, who had been present throughout the meeting, confirmed that he would like to be co-opted as a parish councillor; this was welcomed, and the Clerk explained to him briefly the usual procedure for meetings e.g. circulation of papers etc.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date November 2023

Counter signed.....
Clerk

Date November 2023