

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 27th November 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 Gulliver, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr S Roe and Cllr Josie Sanderson

In attendance: WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Munn (medical appointment), WCC Cllr Redford (another meeting). A Declaration of Interest was made by Cllr Sabin in respect of item 15.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Stewart Roe to his first meeting as co - adopted Councillor.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 30th October 2023

The Minutes of the meeting on 30th October 2023 were approved, subject to some minor amendments, proposed by Cllr Dempsey and seconded by Cllr Friar.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 30th October 2023

- a. Considerable concern was expressed for the poor service of clearing both ordinary rubbish bins and dog bins in the Village, with particular reference to the dog bin in Spring Lane. The Clerk had not had a response from Zoe Court on his recent email drawing attention to his own inspection of bins on the Playing Field. It was hoped that WDC Cllr Noonan could bring some pressure to bear but it is likely that one or more members of this Council will make representations.
- b. The Clerk had written to the local farmer concerning the congestion in the ditch in The Valley but had not received a response yet.
- c. The Clerk and Cllr Mrs Sanderson have collaborated on the follow up letter which had been reproduced enough to cover delivery by Cllr Sanderson to houses in The Greswoldes and Chance Fields. A response was received from a resident in Chance Fields. As a result, Cllr Mrs Sanderson had met with this gentleman to explore the question of identifying the appropriate household where there was a problem with the fences/hedges bordering the Jitty. So far this has not produced a concrete result, but she will continue her enquiries. Comment was made that, as it is a public footpath, then WCC Highways Dept should be taking some action in respect of current issues but there is little likelihood of that being undertaken.
- d. The Clerk had asked A C Lloyd to repair the footpath alongside The Cricketers recently; Cllr Carter was pleased to report the repair had indeed been effected.

4. Update on SpeedWatch

In the absence of Cllr Munn, Cllr Dempsey spoke briefly to the other's report which had been tabled.

5. Update on traffic management issues

The Chairman had contacted a member of the Highways Dept, Mr Gafoor Din, as suggested by Chris Round of WCC. So far no response had been received. Cllr Redford had also emailed the Chairman and the Clerk as to an application being made (along with a countrywide situation) to impose 20mph speed limits in the vicinity of schools. This was probably unnecessary, currently, because communication received from the Working Group of Jessica Consolaro and Chris Round, the Senior Highways Engineer, following the site meeting in September is that they have now prepared a global plan for the Village which covers the issue of roads intended to have a 20mph limit imposed.

6. Update on Section 106 and CIL issues

Recently the Clerk had prepared draft clauses with a view to them being proffered to the WDC officer, Helen Hancox, concerning the Section 106 money arising from The Cricketers. He had in mind these clauses being inserted into her most recent draft of the Agreement she seeks to achieve via a document called Funding Letter. This was occasioned by an email recently received from her in which she indicated a disposition by WDC to amendments, but she took issue on previous wording proffered by the Clerk. Accordingly, the Clerk had sent a draft of these clauses to Alistair Clark at A C Lloyd and awaited his response. (Subsequent to the meeting and these Minutes, it transpired that Alistair Clark at A C Lloyd has forwarded the draft clauses to Helen Hancox indicating his total acceptance of them.)

7. Warwickshire County Council – update

In the absence of WCC Cllr Redford, there was no report.

8. Warwick District Council – update

WCC Cllr Mrs Noonan had three items to report:

- a. WDC are asking parish councils whether they will take part in a weekly trial; the objective is to use blanket spraying to keep down growth in the wrong areas. Through the Chairman, this Council agreed to take part.
- b. She said sadly there was no further work on the bridge over the canal being undertaken at present. Recently there had been some repair work.
- c. She had not been able to get any obvious progress on 56 Southam Road; the position with Enforcement Dept appears to be the same as it was several years ago in the time of her predecessor as District Councillor, i.e. the overstretched department consider they have more weighty matters to deal with than this particular site. The Clerk opined that as a new house is in the process of construction, presumably the occupiers of No 56 will in due course take down the high fencing abutting the main road to which we object because the resident in the new house will want to have some form of front garden.

9. Financial Matters

- 1) The Clerk reported that the balance on the operating account is currently £2,600 approx and the balance on the investment account is currently £102,600 approx; of that the unrestricted reserve sum is £54,330.39.
- 2) A number of payments were authorised to be made as per the list tabled - proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.
- 3) Cllr Friar spoke briefly to the Budget and Precept schedules which had been prepared by him with the Finance Committee a week or so ago. They cannot move forward until WDC Finance Dept issue the tax base they have prepared for the year 2024/2025. Cllr Friar thought that it will produce very little variation on the figures which the Finance Committee have already prepared. A small tweak to the draft Budget was proposed of £5,000 to be identified as capital reserve sum – approved by Council, proposed by Cllr Carter and seconded by Cllr Roe.
- 4) The Chairman said the self-audit revue was still in hand.
- 5) The Clerk said there had been no further report on the issues with the External Auditor which WALC were intending to raise.

10. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk and Cllr Friar and their wives had attended the WDC Supper on 17th November given by the WDC Chairman.
- b. The Clerk said the WCC Road Safety Partnership Consultation was still open to the public to submit concerns.
- c. The Clerk reported a nice thank you letter had been received for the donation made by this Council to the Brownies and Rainbows recently.
- d. A pest control report had been received by the consultants – no moles were found.
- e. The Clerk is still waiting for a reply from the Monitoring Officer on the question of a Declaration of Interest by Cllr Sanderson; he will chase it up.
- f. A complex letter had been received from a local resident concerning the footpath W123, basically suggesting that this Council should do more about it. After consultation, the Chairman and the Clerk will put together a suitable letter of reply to the resident stating that the issues had not been forgotten.
- g. The Clerk said he mentioned this item as his re-examination of the thank you letter from the Scouts for their donation recently raised the thought of what efforts this Council might make in obtaining a plot of land or funding for them in their objective to obtain suitable accommodation.

- h. The webinar talk to be attended by the Chairman and the Clerk to hear the Editor of 'Arnold Baker' on footpaths was sadly cancelled due to lack of response.
- i. The Clerk had received further communication from the PCC Treasurer on the legal aspects of donations by this Council for graveyard upkeep. Neither he nor Cllr Friar were impressed and will pursue their enquiries.
- j. The Clerk had picked up email correspondence suggesting that this Council might finance a session for Coffee with a Copper; the inspiration for this is coffee mornings run by the Baptist Church and one thought is to have something similar in the Community Hall. The matter is to be further investigated by Cllr Mrs Malin and Cllr Friar.
- k. Recently Cllr Dempsey had raised the question of paying money in recompense to the residents of two properties in Lay Gardens who had incurred the costs of clearing brambles and other growth from their fences in lieu of his Committee being able to get the work done by a contractor hired by this Council. The Clerk questioned whether there was legal authority to make such a payment to individual residents (i.e. Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 was not applicable). He is in the process of seeking advice from WALC on the issue. They had suggested applying to our insurers for the funds but the insurers have declined.
- l. The Clerk had brief correspondence with a member of the administration of British Railways in London as to their plans for the Viaduct as workmen had been seen in action. The answer now received is that the work involves structural repairs (presumably for safety reasons) and there is no current policy by BR to reopen the footpath across the Viaduct.
- m. New pay scales for Clerks had been published by NALC; advice received from our payroll managers, Johnsons, is that figures worked out by Cllr Friar for the Clerk's pay increases in order. These will be factored into his next pay round.
- n. For the record, the Clerk mentioned that following complaints from 'Radford residents' concerning noise etc from the Sports & Social Club, no further correspondence had been received since the last Council meeting.
- o. The Clerk had sent an email to the Club giving notice that Cllr Dempsey would be affixing a notice to the external wall of the Club indicating there should not be any ball games in the vicinity.

11. Current Planning Matters

Cllr Carter spoke to a few current Planning Matters (no specific issues):

- 1) W/23/0471 & W/23/1574 – The applications regarding The Leasowes are ongoing.
- 2) W/23/1437 – A425, Canal Access (ongoing)
- 3) W/23/1465 – The application regarding 15 Offchurch Lane is ongoing.
- 4) An application in respect of 1 St Nicholas Road is unobjectionable.
- 5) South Warwickshire Plan – continuing position to be noted.

12. Footpath W123 review

Apart from the letter from the resident mentioned above, there no developments concerning footpath W123 but the Chairman and Clerk are reviewing the situation.

13. Playing Field update

Cllr Dempsey spoke to plans for the Playing Field:

- a. He tabled a general written report.
- b. He was engaged on the prospective hiring of a jobbing gardener for the Playing Field – progress is being made.
- c. He had made some slow progress on getting contractors quotes for the repairs recommended by the RoSPA report; the Clerk had furnished him with a number of contractors; names known to him through the SLCC but it was difficult getting one to focus on repair work (as to opposed to supplying new equipment).
- d. He prepared a notice stating 'no ball games' and he showed a picture of this. He will shortly be in a position to affix the notice to the outside wall of the Social Club.
- e. In a similar fashion to the above details on the RoSPA report, Cllr Dempsey had made slow progress on getting a contractor to produce an acceptable quote for the construction of hardstanding at the adult gym area. The original quotation by Proludic seemed to this Council to be excessive.

14. Report from the Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Malin reported on the Community and the Sports & Social Club – she had tabled reports. On 25th November, the Community Hall held an open market event which proved a success and a number of Cllrs attended. Hiring commitments for the Hall are covered up till Christmas.

15. Report on Sports & Social Club

Cllr Mrs Malin said the Club had held an AGM on 15th November. At a meeting held on 21st November a new Committee was formed with Mr N Dhillon elected as Secretary. Cllr Sabin declared an Interest in respect of this item as he has been re-instated as a Trustee. The appointment of a new steward is also in contemplation.

16. Environment and Climate Change Update and

18. Village Pond refurbishment

Cllr Mrs Sanderson gave an update on these items.

- a. The group were exploring the next steps in completing the pond maintenance with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. A review of the fencing and the signage at the Council's Pond indicated that the item was satisfactory at the present time, installing fencing on the side of the pond which has none is still under consideration.

17. Telephone Box

The Clerk reported that he had referred the question of insurance cover to our insurers (Zurich); their declared view is that activity carried out by Cllrs is covered by our standard policy but activity by volunteers will not be covered unless they are identified in some way. When the Clerk asked how this should be done, bearing in mind volunteers come and go, the response was that he should file a number with them so they have a global figure even though they do not need individual names. He therefore needed a number; the Clerk was instructed to offer the figure of 6 volunteers at any one time.

19. Any other business

- 1. The Clerk completed the application for registration of The White Lion as a community asset; the WDC Officer had written to the owners/occupier to ask if they have any observations but has not reported back to the Clerk. He will chase this up.
- 2. Cllr Mrs Gulliver is still in touch with the School for the purposes of creating school liaison; this is a delicate matter as this Council no longer has legal authority to have a representative on the School Governing Body.
- 3. Cllr Sabin was pleased to announce that the outcome of the local British Legion Poppy Appeal in which he is heavily involved have collected £1,880; this was a good sum.
- 4. In the draft list of future dates prepared by the Clerk was considered. It was decided that next year the standard Council meeting for May would take place on 20th May 2024 (so to avoid the Spring Bank Holiday in the following week). Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Assembly would be taken together and set up on Saturday 18th May 2024. It would run from 10am until 1pm, the likely arrangement being that the official Council meeting will be held at 11am for a brief period. The other dates on the draft list are to remain as drawn.

20. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on the 29th January 2024. This meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date January 2024

Counter signed.....
Clerk

Date January 2024