

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 29th January 2024 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 Mrs J P Malin, Cllr S Roe and Cllr Mrs J Sanderson

In attendance: WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan and WCC Cllr Redford

Prior to formally opening the meeting the Chairman announced that he had regretablely accepted the resignation of Mrs D Gulliver.

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Munn (hospital) and Cllr B Friar (family). There were no Declarations of Interest, but the Clerk took formal Declarations from Cllrs Sanderson and Roe in respect of taking up office.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th November 2023

The draft Minutes of the special meeting on 17th January 2024 and the draft Minutes of the previous main meeting on 27th November 2023 were reviewed; a number of amendments were made to both – it was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk should see to the amendments, retype the documents and they could be signed up. Proposed by Cllr Roe and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th November 2023

- (a) There was a continuing unsatisfactory response from Zoe Court's dept at WDC on dog bin emptying. It was agreed the Clerk would seek a meeting with the dept together with two or more councillors.
- (b) The Clerk had not had any response from Gibbs on clearance of the ditch.
- (c) see below as to an update on The Jitty

4. Update on SpeedWatch

Cllr Dempsey spoke to a report tabled by Cllr Munn in his absence. The main feature was a report from the Police who stated that they could not provide feedback on this Council's returns as it would require additional staff to facilitate that. WCC highways related data is available which this Council could contact for more information but there will be a cost – application should be made to their website: As previously indicated, Cllrs and residents can submit speed concerns via the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership central reporting method which is online at Warwickshire Road Safety Speed Concerns (Warksspeedsconcerns.org)

5. Update on traffic management issues

- a) The Chairman had finally received a response from Mr Gafoor Din, on his enquiry concerning the likely installation of a puffin crossing on the A425 on the Southam Road in the Village when in fact there is a puffin crossing in Ufton. Mr Din had detailed a written analysis to explain that the Ufton crossing was essentially a one-off, derived from negotiation by Ufton Parish Council with the managers of HS2. WCC Cllr Redford said that WCC's policy on crossings was pedantic; if a project did not fulfil their strict criteria then it would be refused. He did not offer a comparison of this Council's proposal for a crossing with the recent installation of the toucan crossing on the A425 adjacent to Newbold Park, although a number of Cllrs queried the intellectual argument of distinguishing between the two types of crossings and the two locations.
- b) Concern was expressed that we had not received formal notification from Ms Consolaro that work was about to commence on the various items of road works that had been agreed with WCC Highways. The Chairman raised the fact with Ms Consolaro and was informed that work would start during week commencing 5th February.

- c) The Chairman reiterated that a need for dropped kerbs, around the village, still remained; WCC Cllr Redford said that if he was given a list of the sites concerned he would take the matter forward.

6. Update on Section 106 and CIL issues

- a. The Chairman had attended a recent presentation on the issue of the monies available under Section 106 agreements, the presentation was by Janet Neale, Infrastructure Manager for WCC. Attendees received a copy of the WCC Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23; this shows the Income and Expenditure of contributions received by WCC, from developers, via S106 Agreements. The report records that £15,502 was spent on Radford School and £57,450 spent on Sunbeams Pre-School.
- b. The Clerk reported that he had not received a response from the WDC Officer, Helen Hancox, concerned with funding conditions from money due to this Council from The Cricketers development. As previously explained, discussions between the Clerk and Alistair Clark at A C Lloyd have resulted in the latter sending, of his own volition, a comprehensive letter to the WDC Officer stating that he was entirely in agreement with the amendments proposed by the Clerk. Recently the Clerk has sent a reminder to her. He will ask Alistair Clark to follow up his previous note to her. **Action: Clerk**

7. Warwickshire County Council – update

WCC Cllr Redford reported:

- a. Social care was still a very large item in the WCC budget; the forthcoming budget is likely to go up to the maximum allowed by Government (3% increase).
- b. A Government grant is available to help with flooding damage and discomfort to property and it is proposed by a local Council where 50 or more houses are concerned. (It appears that this Village does not qualify)
- c. The South Warwickshire plan consultation is continuing but the analysis of the data is being reviewed.

8. Warwick District Council – update

WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan said she had little to report but was mindful of keeping up pressure on planning approval for the bridge access over the canal.

9. Financial Matters

- 1) The Clerk reported that the bank balance on the investment account amounted to £48,298 approximately for restricted reserves and £46,551 approximately for unrestricted reserves. The balance on the operating account was £7,700 approximately, a sum which had been reinforced by him making recent transfers from the other account in light of a significant number of items of payments to be authorised at this meeting.
- 2) A number of payments to be authorised were listed on the schedule tabled with copy invoices submitted; one of these items had previously been paid on the Chairman's authority because of a time factor, this was the tax on the Clerk's recent pay and the other was for the payments for the defibrillators. The Chairman opened this up to seek a decision as to whether a third defibrillator should be required by outright purchase or by a rental agreement. It was unanimously AGREED that payments on the list should be met, and a third defibrillator be acquired by the rental agreement discussed, proposed by Cllr Roe and seconded by Cllr Mrs Sanderson.
- 3) The Clerk confirmed that the Precept claim had been lodged with WDC, both by email and by hand delivery.
- 4) The Chairman reported that the self-audit is still in hand.
- a. Mindful that the current donation had not yet been paid to St Nicholas' Church in respect of graveyard maintenance, the Chairman said he had recently read, in a WALC newsletter, that the rules governing donations to Churches have been amended. Further information was to be found in NALC Legal Briefing L02-23 and Legal Topic Note 31E. It was AGREED that the Clerk would examine this together with Cllr Friar on his return to see how the matter could be progressed.
- b. The Chairman advised that Leamington Spa Courier, 26.1.24, reported that WCC has been allocated £3.3 million from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Capital Fund. WCC were now seeking the views of residents in the County of where EV charging points could be placed and are particularly interested in car parks and rural locations. The Chairman said that he would forward a show of interest to the contact address. (<https://shorturl.at/ntwyL>)

- c. The Chairman evinced the possibility of using the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011 (possible because the Clerk holds the CiLCA qualification). The Clerk advised that the use of the Power is a complex matter – it's main advantage would be in this Council being able to engage in commercial activity, for example, running the Village Shop. Having reviewed the position at the time that the Village Post Office was threatened with closure, he had come to the conclusion at that time that the Power was not appropriate. This matter to be reviewed.

10. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk continues to await a response from the Monitoring Officer on a potential Declaration of Interest by Cllr Mrs Sanderson; the Chairman invited her to file a fresh Declaration of Interest with the additional information as opposed to waiting for a response.
- b. The Clerk reported that in the next day or so, a fresh certificate to hold data will be issued by the Information Commissioners Office who will deduct their fee from our current account.
- c. It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact Rugby Pest Control as to their new prices to enquire what the cost of a one-off call out would be. This Council has in mind that, as no infestation of moles has been seen for some time, it might be practical to deal with any problems on a one-off basis (rather than a regular contract.)
- d. The Clerk had written to the two local MPs concerning the inefficiency of local deliveries by Royal Mail and he had discussed the general position with the Village Post Office owners. Matt Western had declined to deal with the matter as the Parish is not within his constituency; Jeremy Wright stated that he had a meeting in November with Royal Mail and was awaiting the outcome of the discussions with them.
- e. The Clerk had received notice from Cubbington Parish Council of their proposal of creating a Neighbourhood Plan; did this Council wish to get involved? The view taken was that this is unnecessary.
- f. The Clerk had raised with Gerald Brooks of WCC Highways the request from two members of the public for grit bins; these are to be located on the new Bovis site. Mr Brooks advises that it is for this Council to purchase the grit bins and then WCC will fill them, provided the grit bins are on adopted highways. As the roadways on the Bovis site are not yet adopted, it is premature. He suggests that negotiation is entered into with Bovis.
- g. It was AGREED (with reference to a memorandum created by Cllr Mrs Malin) that it is timely to carry out a review of our emergency planning procedures. Details are recorded are out of date and a significant number of personnel referred to in the previous scheme are no longer available. It was AGREED that a working party would be created comprising the Chairman, Cllr Mrs Malin, Cllr Roe and the Clerk.
- h. The Clerk referred to a WCC consultation paper, Review of Warwickshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This seeks the views of parish councils on their needs/aspirations for local footpaths. The feedback will help to develop the priorities and actions for the new Plan due to be produced later in 2024. It was AGREED that Cllr Mrs Sanderson will formulate the Council's response.

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/23/1588 – 8 Ashby Road (ongoing)
- 4) South Warwickshire Plan

12. Playing Field update

Cllr Dempsey reported:

- a. He spoke to a report that he had tabled in advance on general matters, the 'no ball games' sign was installed on the 4th December, authorised by the Community Hall Committee; the resident who originally raised a complaint has thanked the Parish Council for their action. Cllr Mrs Sanderson has monitored the wildflower plan for the borders in the northern end of the Playing Field; there are certain logistical problems with this due to the staff at Wagstaffe's mowing the grass.
- b. Quotations with regard to installing hard standing for the outdoor gym have been received from Proludic and HAGS and they have been passed on to Cllrs for their thoughts. He had met with a representative from a 3rd contractor, Fairways, and is awaiting a quotation from them. He sent a copy of the RoSPA

Play Safely Report of 19th October 2023 to several companies for quotes for minor repairs and maintenance recommended by the report; so far he has received a quotation from HAGS which has been forward to Cllrs and he is also waiting for one from Fairways.

- c. Following enquiries from residents in Lay Gardens, Cllr Mrs Sanderson, Cllr Friar and himself conducted surveys with local gardening contractors with a view to resolving the vegetation growing at the side of the Playing Field adjacent to Lay Gardens and, in a number of cases, growing over the fence into gardens. He will now arrange with a contractor a suitable date to carry out the necessary work. Meanwhile two residents of Lay Gardens have carried out work due to the delay and he considers that they should be refunded the cost. Concurrently the Clerk has now received advice from WALC as to how to deal with this and it was AGREED that an ex-gratia payment be made to one of the two residents (the other one is not seeking any finance). The payment has been listed on the ex-gratia payments at this meeting.

13. Report from the Community Hall and Sports & Social Club

Cllr Mrs Malin spoke briefly to two reports which she had previously tabled regarding the Community Hall and the Sports & Social Club. A new committee for the Club has been formed and it is proposed that the membership subscription will be increased for 2024.

14. Environmental Matters

Cllr. Mrs Sanderson tabled a comprehensive report.

- a) Tim Precious from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust visited on 11th January to advise members of FoRGE and the PC on ways to maintain the village pond at the rear of St. Nicholas Road. Using the pond as a natural flood defence was discussed.
- b) The ditch in The Valley continues to be of concern; the Clerk suggested an approach to WCC Highways should be made even though that may prove unhelpful. Maybe a personal approach to the Gibbs family might be successful – possibly by Cllr Friar.
- c) She still had in mind for progress on the Jitty but to date it had been not possible to identify householders whose rear fences and hedges are the core of the problem.
- d) FoRGE Footpath Group have planted five trees on the Playing Field.
- e) She said that she was finding it difficult to establish any form of programme/agenda with Wagstaffe's because they did not respond to telephone calls and emails; it was AGREED that she would prepare for the Clerk an agenda for Wagstaffe's in draft so the Clerk could try communication with them. In the past he had been able to get in touch with them direct.

15. Telephone Box

In the absence of Cllr Friar, the Clerk highlighted the fact that payment for a number of items ordered by Cllr Friar had to be made in advance of delivery – cost was identified on the schedule for authorising payments. The Chairman suggested that it was a suitable payment to be made out of the limited CIL fund held currently by the Council as in his view the telephone box could be identified as 'infrastructure' and therefore qualify under the CIL scheme. The Clerk had not had notice of this suggestion and queried whether the Chairman's submission was correct. It was AGREED that verification from WDC's officers would be obtained.

16. Any other business

1. The Clerk confirmed that The White Lion is now reregistered as a community asset; the period of registration lasts for 3 years.
2. There is no update on Footpath W123.
3. No further information had been received on the External Audit although the Clerk had not received any notice from WALC to the effect that their enquiry had been concluded.

17. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on the 26th February 2024. This meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date February 2024

Counter signed.....
Clerk

Date February 2024