



# RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

18<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The Parish Year began on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 when Warwick District local elections took place. Ten Parish Councillor positions were available to be filled. Unfortunately, as in a number of previous elections, an uncontested election was declared as only six residents put their names forward for consideration. In fact, in Warwick District, there was a total of 28 uncontested elections. This does not bode well for the lowest tier of elected Government. Parish Councils are at the heart of each and every village and without them acting as guardians who knows what may become of our rural communities. So, we started the year with four vacancies, two Councillors have been co-opted during the year, but we still remain short of our entitlement.

In May 2023 I had the privilege of being re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the period 2023-24.

I am now pleased to present my Annual Report for consideration.

A major, unprecedented, event took place over the weekend 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July. Late on the Friday afternoon a contingent of travellers, in a dozen or so caravans, set up camp on the Village playing field. As soon as the Parish Council were made aware advice was sought from Warwick District Council and the Police. We were quickly advised of the protocols that applied when attempting to evict travellers from private property. It was a steep learning curve. Excellent assistance was given by WDC, Police HQ at Leek Wootton, SNT PCSO, Ed King and Bishops Tachbrook PC. Accompanied by a Police Officer, Cllr Brian Friar, I delivered an eviction notice to each caravan on Saturday afternoon. The travellers left late on Sunday afternoon. WDC Cllr Rebecca Noonan facilitated a clear up of the field by WDC. This was undertaken early on Monday morning. Since then, the Parish Council have installed a number of bollards around the field which will go a long way to preventing a similar occurrence.

I reported last year that we were waiting on detailed plans from WCC Highways in response to our long outstanding Traffic Management Plan. These were eventually received on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023. A site meeting, with WCC officers, to discuss the plans, took place on 6<sup>th</sup> September. As you are all aware, work commenced earlier this year and mostly completed by March. One big disappointment, which I regard as being outstanding, is the intransigent stance of WCC with regard to the provision of an electronic crossing of the A425 towards the Bovis estate and the moving the 30mph limit beyond that estate entrance.

Another incident, this time involving raw sewage, occurred on 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> April and the week that followed. Numerous residents, Councillors and the Clerk of the Council all reported the issue, to the various bodies, on a number of occasions. To say the least, the responses we received were abysmal. This is ongoing.

Many of you will be aware that the Friends of Radford's Green Environment, (FoRGE), have, for a number of years, been promoting a canal access project, supported by the Parish Council, and in co-operation with the Canal and River Trust, WCC, WDC, and Sustrans. Good news was received earlier this year, in as much as planning permission was granted. But now another complication has beset this beleaguered project. Because the scheme has been on the drawing board for so long the original specifications for the access ramp do not quite meet 'present' requirements. The parties concerned do believe there is a way it can be satisfactorily built. Discussions ongoing.

Many thanks to Dave Steele, FoRGE, who has spent many hours on this project.

The three Parish Council Committees have, as usual, been busy during the year. My grateful thanks to the Chairpersons and members of those Committees. Their achievements will be outlined in their own reports.

Cllr. Josie Sanderson needs a special mention. She was co-opted on to the Council during the year and has been instrumental in driving forward the Council's green agenda and attitude towards the climate emergency. The wildflower meadow on the playing field is testimony to her hard work, admirably assisted by members of the playing field committee. Linking with FoRGE and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has seen proposals for improvements to the pond at the rear of St. Nicholas Road and clearing of the ditches in The Valley to alleviate flooding problems. Maintenance of our Public Right of Way Footpaths is also ongoing.

The Community Speedwatch Team continues to be a success. The group, under the guidance of Cllr. Roger Munn, is made up of volunteers and Councillors. They have made their presence felt monitoring the motorists that are breaking the speed limit through the village. We now have another fight on our hands, in as much that we have been advised that our Speedwatch team cannot operate within the new 20mph area. This will be vigorously opposed.

My thanks to Cllr. Munn and the whole team for all your efforts this year.

My gratitude is also extended to County and District Councillors, Wallace Redford and Rebecca Noonan for representing the Parish during the year.

I am, as always, extremely appreciative of the support and guidance that our Clerk, David Leigh-Hunt, gives to the Parish Council and to me, in particular, in my role as Chairman.

I offer my sincere apologies for any credits due that I have overlooked or for any notable omissions.

Council, I table my report.

Stan Sabin

Chairman, Radford Semele Parish Council