

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 25th October 2021 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele.

Participants: Cllr S Sabin (in the chair), Cllr D Carter, Cllr B Follett, Cllr A T Hitchcox, Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr R Munn and Cllr J Sudbury

In attendance: WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were apologies from Cllr B Friar (family business), Cllr Musa (maternity ward), and PCSO Sharon Underwood (annual leave). There were no declarations of interest.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th September 2021

It was AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting on 27th September 2021 should be amended at item 15; one amendment was on a point raised by Cllr Hitchcox in respect of the hedge on the public footpath alongside the School; the other was a point of business raised by Cllr Musa in his absence concerning a review of the telephone box. It was AGREED that the Chairman would retype the last page to take account of these and they should be signed accordingly; proposed by Cllr Carter and seconded by Cllr Hitchcox.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 27th September 2021

The Clerk outlined matters not dealt with under other headings:

1. The grass surrounding the tree at the junction of St Nicholas Road and Lewis Road is currently satisfactory.
2. No response had been received from WCC Footpaths Dept as to the incursion on the footpath alongside the School by an adjoining landowner (who had demolished part of the hedgerow). The Clerk opined that there was little that this Council could do because appropriate action should be taken by the proprietor of the footpath in question, i.e. WCC, who showed no inclination to do anything. They had not yet troubled to report to the Clerk on their view of the matter.
3. Cllr Hitchcox had not yet made contact with the management of the Graham Fulford Prostate Cancer Trust; the Clerk supplied him with details of the current manager of the PSA testing scheme (although he pointed out that she is currently on holiday for a week or two). **Action: Cllr Hitchcox**
4. The Clerk had sent a further reminder to WCC Highways asking for remedial work on the tarmac outside the Village Shop but had not received any response. He will try again. **Action: Clerk**
5. The Chairman and the Clerk had completed the consultation document on the proposed amalgamation of Stratford District Council and WDC into the South Warwickshire District Council (so called).

4. Review of Speedwatch

Cllr Munn outlined his report on the initial action taken by this Council's team of volunteers headed by himself. Action to date had been reasonably successful and a number of car numbers had been reported to the Police. The Council was pleased to note that a write up on the scheme had been included in the latest FoRGE newsletter; the Clerk pointed out that he had contributed an article at their request which mentioned the Speedwatch scheme also. Cllr Munn said that the team expected to be out again on the roadside towards the end of the current month (October).

At Cllr Mrs Malin's suggestion, it was AGREED that the Speedwatch team should keep a record of the number of rotas and their outcome in which they were engaged during the Council's administrative year so that an annual report could be compiled. The Clerk pointed out the merit of forwarding a copy of that report to WALC as they are always keen to conclude items such as this in their Annual Report. **Action: Cllr Munn**

5. Traffic management issues

The Clerk reminded the Council he had a number of hard copies of Tom Head's report and now the Chairman was back in action, it was proposed to set up a face-to-face meeting with appropriate people at WCC. The working party that represents this Council would probably be the Chairman, the Clerk, the Vice Chairman, Cllr Carter and WCC Redford. Cllr Carter said he would step down if there was an overloading of numbers.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

6. Section 106 and CIL payments

1. The Clerk had sent a further reminder to Helen Hancox of WDC concerning the Open Space contribution to arise from The Cricketers site. He had still not heard from her but was aware she had received his emails because they are acknowledged automatically.
2. The Chairman noted that FoRGE had copied him and the Clerk in to an email between FoRGE and the Canal River Trust; this recent email drew attention to the need for CRT to raise funds within a suitable time frame; the Clerk advised that CRT had not troubled to reply to his email nor had they given the Chairman or himself any update on costings of the funding since they were originally advised that we had received the Open Space money from WDC. The Clerk said from memory the period of time for us to apply the funds was 5 years from date of our agreement with WDC; it followed that there are still about 3 years left. It was noted that the time limit could expire very rapidly.
3. Cllr Sudbury confirmed that the Clerk had drafted a suitable letter for the Chairman of Committee for Sunbeams to send to WCC requesting uplift of Section 106 money due in principle for pre-school development. The Chairman had amended the draft letter slightly and it has now been passed to the Chairman of Sunbeams for discussion. It was AGREED that Cllr Sudbury would monitor the position and report back.

Action: Cllr Sudbury

7. Warwickshire County Council – update report

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

8. Warwick District Council – update report

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt reported:

1. There will be a new waste disposal contract for WDC from August 2022. This is independent of any proposals for links between WDC and Stratford District Council.
2. Due to a shortage of HGV drivers, there will be no green bin collection this current week (as would otherwise be expected). The other collateral collection (i.e. red boxes) will be in operation.
3. The public consultation concerning the disposal of Riverside House has now closed and no decision or detailed debate by WDC has yet been taken.
4. There is continuing discussion about the linkup between WDC and Stratford District Council; but neither working collaboration between officers or political unification has yet been decided upon.
5. It was to be noted that the Covid infection rates have increased in the local area; this is not necessarily a danger to the local residents but is an indication of careless association and lack of proper social distancing which are still necessary.

9. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the balance on the operating account stood at approximately £10,774 and the balance on the investment account stood at approximately £94,316.
2. The bank reconciliation statement had been tabled. A number of payments were authorised as per the sheet tabled by the Clerk; in particular, these included items totalling £8,800 under contract to Wicksteed for completion of their works. The Clerk had received a post dated invoice from Proludic in respect of their recently completed work on the adult gym equipment; this invoice is for approximately £35,000. He did not seek authorisation for payment at this meeting but the matter is to be reviewed in conjunction with Cllr Follett. The payments were proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Carter.

3. The Clerk said he had not received any constructive interest from Nat West in opening a new account despite several reminders from him to the source of the initial email. He therefore proposed that he contact Handelsbanken with whom he has a personal account to see if he can get them interested; this was AGREED.
Action: Clerk
4. In the absence of Cllr Friar, there was a brief discussion on the mechanics of preparing the Budget for 2022-2023; it was noted that Cllr Friar from the last meeting was to arrange a extraordinary meeting of Cllrs (outside ordinary Council meetings) to discuss the substance of the proposed Budget. It was noted that the Budget needs to be approved by this Council at their November meeting so that Cllr Friar and the Clerk can put together the application for the Precept which will need to be filed with WDC during January – prior to this Council's next meeting in January 2022. It was AGREED that an approach should be made to Cllr Friar to propose a meeting date to fit in with his commitments and/or submit a paper on the construction of the Budget which the rest of the Cllrs could consider in his absence.
Action: Chairman & Clerk

10. Correspondence

The Clerk outlined different correspondence that had occurred:

1. His correspondence with Ryan Machin at WCC Highways had established that Mr Machin has on file a record of communication with Severn Trent Water and has ascertained their job number for rectification work on the A425. The view taken by WCC (as disclosed in correspondence with the Clerk) is that they consider it is not their responsibility because the leakage is not foul water or sewage, but it is in fact water originating in the Severn Trent Water system. The Clerk indicated that he has a professional friend who works for Severn Trent Water so it might be possible to establish access through him to the job assignment if it does not come up soon to the top of Severn Trent's programme.
2. The Chairman and the Clerk respectively had been in correspondence with Rev Martin Green as to arrangements for Remembrance Sunday. St Nicholas Church will hold a Remembrance service on Sunday 14th November outside the Church at 10.45am. Wreaths are welcome and it was AGREED that in the absence of the Chairman on that date, Cllr Sudbury will present this Council's wreath supported by the Clerk and other Cllrs who are able to attend.
3. It had been noted that the occupier of 57 Hatherell Road had gone ahead with work to his rear garden and currently there is a significant amount of rubble and destroyed fencing on the Playing Field outside the rear of the premises. The Clerk confirmed that he had written to the occupier requesting action be taken in the near future to clear the outfall from the works.
4. The Clerk confirmed that, on a reference from Cllr Hitchcox, he had written to Ashley House to request that they trim back their hedgerow which is overhanging the pedestrian drop kerb arrangement at the junction of School Lane and the A425. He had not yet had a response.
5. The Clerk confirmed that he had written to WCC concerning the hedges on the footpath by the School; Mr Machin of WCC Highways had referred him to the Footpaths Dept because (an interesting piece of information) the footpath is registered as a WCC footpath W121; As he had received no response from the Footpaths Dept in the past, he asked Mr Machin for help in getting cooperation; the latter is to contact a colleague to persuade him to reply to the Clerk.

11. Planning Matters

Cllr Carter summarised planning matters:

1. W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road
WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt said that the issue of the fence at 56 Southam Road is currently in the hands of the Enforcement Dept. They are grossly overloaded with work so it is not known how long it will take for any enforcement actions.
2. Canalside Development Plan Document Consultation (Ongoing)
No further news had been received on this; the Clerk confirmed that an acknowledgement of receipt of our response at the time had been received but he noted the then Head of Development Services now appears to have left WDC as a new name has appeared on the departmental letterhead. It could be therefore that the consultation document together with our response has been marking time in an office somewhere.

3. W/20/0432
It was noted that a decision on the planning application in respect of 3 Hallfields is still pending. WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt said that there is a significant backlog of work for the Planning Committee and there are a lot of pending matters which are taking a considerable time to reach the Committee because of this workload.
4. W/21/0862
The same observations related to St Andrews House application.
5. W/21/1412 & 1422LB
The same observations related to the application in respect of the White Lion.
6. W/21/1183
As regards 20 Southam Road, the application has been granted – Cllr Carter said there was no cause to object to the application.
7. W/21/1425
Cllr Carter said the position was the same in respect of the Fosse Wharf Farm (although that matter is still pending).
8. W21/1513
Cllr Carter said that the current application in respect of 11 Williams Road was an add-on/modification of a previous application that the occupier had made to the construct of their property. His Committee had seen no cause to object to the further application.
9. W21/1523
Cllr Carter said the application on behalf of 17 School Lane is for the construction of a pergola and his Committee saw no reason to object and had not done so.

12. Update on the Playing Field

Cllr Follett gave an outline update on current works:

1. The zip wire equipment has now been completed and Wicksteed's account for the work has now been properly presented.
2. The work to the skateboard is on the point of completion and an invoice can be expected for the November meeting.
3. The adult gym equipment installation has been completed and he welcomed the support of Cllrs to opening ceremony on Saturday 30th October next. The suppliers, Proludic, would like to make a short presentation. Notice of the event is to be put on the noticeboard and on the website. The Chairman said he would be absent on that weekend and Cllr Sudbury undertook to stand in his place, supported by the Clerk and other Cllrs. Cllr Follett confirmed that the HS2 Funding Committee had approved the works carried out by Proludic and payment was to be forwarded by them to this Council and it appears that they do not intend to retain the 5% in respect of the snagging items as originally envisaged in the contract.

Cllr Follett briefly referred to the proposal for installing shrubs in the verges from the footpath adjoining the Playing Field. The estimated cost of this would be £250 + VAT but he will report back on that figure at the next Council meeting.

Cllr Mrs Malin expressed a wish to plant a tree in memory of Anthony Malin (at her own expense). It was AGREED in principle with the location contemplated being on the Playing Field

13. School Matters

Cllr Sudbury reiterated the position on the letter of request for Section 106 monies (referred to above); he said the Clerk's draft letter had been appreciated and it will be despatched in final form to the WCC Portfolio Holder identified by the Chairman.

14. Pond security

Cllr Sudbury said work in respect of the pond security is ongoing and he will report at the next Council meeting.
Action: Cllr Sudbury

15. Any other business

1. The Clerk reminded the Council during the absence of the Chairman due to illness; he had received a letter from the Legal Dept of WCC and he had not yet replied. The issue raised by the letter is that in correspondence between WCC and the occupier of 9 Lythall Close is confidential; the Clerk contests this as a matter of law and good administrative practice by public authorities there should be transparency. He said he and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt would re- examine the documentation again and review the legal position before responding to the letter. The Chairman had also received a copy of the letter and concurred in this view. A number of Cllrs expressed their concern that the current unsatisfactory scenario; one comment was that the current bollard is of such heavy construction that if it fell upon a child it could cause injury. The Clerk read out the letter. It was AGREED that the documentation should be revisited by the Clerk and he be authorised to expend reasonable sums on carrying out searches at the Land Registry elicit more information on the plots of land involved in this scenario (i.e. plots of land in addition to the garden ground owned by the occupier of 9 Lythall Close.
Action: Clerk

2. The Draft Complaints Policy had been included in the Agenda because Cllr Friar, some time ago, had expressed the need for this Council to review the position. In the interim, the Clerk had consulted with the Deputy Monitoring Officer at WDC. He had advised that if a complaint is received by this Council against a particular Cllr then it is to be reported to him and investigated by him. This is under the WDC Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure put in place when the Localism Act 2011 came into force. His advice indicated that in the event of a complaint received by this Council relating to the Clerk or the administration of the Council in general then such a complaint would be outside the WDC procedure; therefore this Council might need to review the existing protocol created by the Clerk in 2012. It was AGREED that the Clerk would review the matter further in conjunction with Cllr Sudbury and Cllr Friar.
Action: Cllrs Sudbury, Friar & Clerk

3. The telephone box had been included at the request of Cllr Musa. The Chairman outlined that the issues surrounding the telephone box had been put out to the Media Committee some considerable time ago and no report had yet been received. He handed a fresh set of papers to Cllr Sudbury as the only Cllr present from the Media Committee. It was AGREED that he would get the Committee to review the position.
Action: Media Committee

4. For the sake of good order, the Clerk had included reference to the Highway Verge Management Policy; it was noted that FoRGE had agreed to undertake work under this policy (with a view to preservation of roadside verges etc); the Council decided to leave the matter to be dealt with by them.

16. Date of next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.40pm. The next Council meeting will be on 29th November 2021.

Signed.....

Date..... 2021

Chairman of the Parish Council

Counter signed.....

Date.....2021

Clerk to the Parish Council