

# RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

A virtual meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7.30 pm.

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

**In attendance:** WCC Cllr Redford and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt

### 1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence or Declarations of Interest.

### 2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The Minutes of the virtual Council meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were approved, proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Friar.

### 3. Traffic management issues

1. The Chairman outlined to the Council that ongoing issues on traffic management had been continuing since the definitive letter to WCC Traffic and Safety Dept configured by the Clerk and dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Progress had been exceedingly slow prior to the lockdown which had now, apparently, put an almost complete break on anyone at WCC addressing the issues raised in the letter of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The Chairman and the Clerk had continued to pursue matters with difficulty.
2. A reply had been received from Phil Mitton dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 indicating an interest in effecting double yellow lines associated with the main road but there had been no follow up.
3. On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019, the Chairman had written a specific enquiry as to traffic / transport improvements in connection with the A425; this had been addressed to Karen Watkins of WCC but no detailed response had yet been received apart from the implication that a significant proportion (if not all) of Section 106 monies received from the Bovis development was to be spent on the end of the road in Leamington in the vicinity of Bath Street and High Street. This had been challenged by Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt in a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 which had resulted in Ms Watkins passing the issue to Janet Neale to deal with; the latter had confirmed that she was looking into the matter but a detailed reply has not yet been received. The Chairman and the Clerk will pursue matters.
4. The Chairman advised that he was still pursuing the matter of lack of consultation regarding the implementation of the Safer Routes to School Scheme with particular reference to Radford Primary School. He reminded Councillors that the technical information relating to the scheme, drawings etc. had been passed to the Council by PCSO Ed King. Cllr. Sabin said that he was now aware that Ms J Edwards was the WCC officer responsible for the scheme and would be writing to her accordingly.
5. At the end of March and the beginning of April, the Chairman and Clerk at his shoulder had been in correspondence with Graham Stanley, Principal Engineer to the Traffic & Road Safety Group; this was over an issue made by Mr Stanley that further and better speed signage on the A425 was inappropriate. In an email of 1<sup>st</sup> April to the Chairman, Mr Stanley indicated that the matter had not been filed away but put on the back burner as he saw a legal issue over whether the 40mph order was legally made. (At the time the Order was allegedly made the Council queried its legality.)
6. On car parking in the Village, it is still to be pursued; the Chairman and the Clerk took the view that hitherto we are unlikely to get any attention from the Police as they are fully committed to policing the fallout from the pandemic.

7. Cllr Sudbury pointed out that a face-to-face meeting with officers of WCC might be more productive than email correspondence but WCC Redford advised there is no possibility of any physical meetings with WCC officers at the present time and probably no possibility of virtual meetings either. Cllr Sudbury therefore proposed that the physical meeting aspect be pursued in a few months' time (say, August or September).

#### **4. Update on Section 106 and CIL payments**

1. The Chairman outlined that Janet Neale had indicated that there was a sum of about £5,000/£6,000 remaining from payments made by the developers of Bovis 1 site; the Chairman would like to see this applied to the Safer Routes to School project.
2. The Chairman said a similar situation related to Section 106 money being made available for the development of public footpaths.
3. The Chairman and Clerk had had correspondence with Janet Neale and established that a fund of £95,000 had been earmarked to finance the cycle route from the Village to Leamington but this was not sufficient to cover the full costs. It appears that the Infrastructure manager for WCC (Janet Neale) is working on this.
4. The Chairman pointed out that the Canal and River Trust had done some preparatory work at the site of the proposed access point to the canal from the A425. The plot of land purchased from the land owner has now been fenced off and trees felled etc. When completed it will provide a fully accessible route to the towpath. Correspondence with David Anderson of WDC indicated that it was possible S106 Open Space Contribution money, from the Leam View development, could be used on the project.
5. Recently the Chairman and the Clerk had signed up the first CIL agreement with WDC under which a payment of £2,100 was expected shortly.

#### **5. Warwick County Council – update report**

WCC Cllr Redford said he had no report to deliver but he could advise that the offices of WCC are on effective total lockdown; all staff and Cllrs are working from home. He does not know what is in the mind of the Chief Executive as she has not produced a paper on forward planning – i.e. there is no programme of meetings before September. There is no chance of a face-to-face meeting with any staff or councillors until about that time at the earliest. There may be a virtual meeting of the WCC in June but he has no firm details as yet.

#### **Warwick District Council – update report**

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt had tabled a written report and invited questions but there were none.

#### **6. Financial Matters**

1. The Clerk had tabled a bank reconciliation statement via email which showed a balance on the investment account of £34,305 approximately and the balance on the operating account at £21,026 approximately. This account has been enhanced by receipt of the first half of the Precept for the year of £15,224. He confirmed that the year end accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 had been lodged with the Internal Auditor, Mrs Best, who is currently working on them. He anticipated putting them before this Council at the next meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June for approval.
2. Cllr Friar gave an exposition on his proposal for online banking. He found the services of Lloyds Bank, the Council's historical bank, very satisfactory and their online procedures easy to deal with. He had had a virtual meeting with the Chairman, Vice-chairman and Clerk a few days earlier to explore the technicalities of the system and to consider the security issues outlined by the Clerk. Cllr Friar briefly outlined the many services that could be obtained from online banking and the security systems in place by Lloyds which meet the criteria expected of a local council. It was noted until 2014, payments by a local council had to be made by cheque signed by at least two signatories and approved in general meeting of the council. This requirement had been removed by an enabling regulation which had not altered any other structures imposed upon local councils by the Local

Government Act 1972. The Clerk drew attention to papers issued by NALC, WALC and SLCC about the removal of the mandatory requirement did not in any way alter the responsibility of a local council to ensure that its financial arrangements were secure from internal misuse.

3. Cllr Friar explained that every user of a Lloyds Bank system had an individual ID kit comprising a password and a memorable word to be used in conjunction with the banking reader and that each user had an individual electronic identity. The Clerk advised that while individual users would be in a position to check on each other, the Council should consider how many users there should be and that authority for payments must be approved by the Council as a whole in a general meeting as hitherto.
4. Cllr Sudbury said, based on his experience in commerce, there is a good case for segregation of the functions in operating such a system, i.e. the person implementing a payment should be separate from the person giving authorisation. This Council's Standing Orders had required three signatures on cheques for a period of at least twenty years and it was proposed by the 'officer group' that they should not depart from the use of three authorisations.

It was proposed that the Council adopt online banking with Lloyds Bank, proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Follett, carried unanimously.

5. The Clerk advised nomination of the number of users and individuals concerned by name so on any enquiry from the Bank, individuals could be identified from the Minutes. It was AGREED by all (including the Clerk) that the "creator" of a transaction would be the Clerk, authorisation of a transaction should be effected by three Cllrs. It was considered unnecessary to have all members of the Council for this function; it was proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Friar that the following should be nominated as authorities on transactions:- the Chairman (Cllr Stan Sabin) the Vice-chairman ( Cllr John Sudbury) the Chairman of Finance Committee (Cllr Brian Friar) the Chairman of Planning Committee (Cllr David Carter) the Chairman of Playing Field Committee (Cllr Brian Follett) and a representative from the Media Committee (Cllr Tunde Musa)

It was unanimously AGREED that Cllr Friar and the Clerk would proceed to implement the new system.

## 7. Planning Matters

1. Cllr Carter had examined the planning application by AC Lloyd to develop 200 houses at Sydenham. It was noted that the development was within the terms of the Local Plan and at a significant distance away from the Village Envelope; Cllr Follett pointed out that it was not within the area of restraint. Two points will be taken up by Cllr Carter in his submission which has been pending this meeting;
  - a) The proposed development has the potential for infiltration into the nature reserve nearby and
  - b) The powers that be need to be aware that a significant number of houses are likely to put pressure upon school places and Radford Semele School. **Action: Cllr Carter**
2. An application for 8 Williams Road was considered; both Cllr Carter and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt are to lodge objection to this application; the format of design would be out of keeping with the property and with the ambiance of Williams Road.
3. The Chairman said it was not strictly a planning matter at present but there is continuing concern over the activity of the occupant of 9 Lythalls Close; it had been reported to the Chairman that the occupant has been cutting down the hedgerow in the footpath and was seen driving his 4x4 vehicle along the footpath on a number of occasions recently. The Clerk advised that following the meeting he had had with the Chairman and Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt at Shire Hall in November he had not received, as he had requested, copies of any correspondence between the WCC officers and the occupants' legal advisors. The inference was that WCC Footpaths Dept concurred with the legal view taken by the Chairman and the Clerk (which is to the occupants' disadvantage). A debate ensued as to the merits of the occupant's legal position and what the outcome of the correspondence was between his advisors and WCC. Cllr Sudbury suggested installing a concrete bollard at the entrance to the footpath so it will be accessible to pedestrians but not vehicular traffic. It was acknowledged that there could be serious difficulties doing this; the Clerk advised that any such action should not be taken unless endorsed by WCC. It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would continue to pursue matters with the WCC Footpaths Dept as hitherto.

**Action: Chairman & Clerk**

**8. Update on the Media Committee**

Cllr Musa reported that the website had been up and running since 10.4.20. He would be grateful for feedback; he would like to consider development of interactive social media and welcomed views on that. Cllr Friar said a significant element on the website at present was the Neighbourhood Plan – he hoped its presence would generate local interest and comment. The Committee is to have a meeting shortly to review these matters. **Action: Cllr Musa**

**9. Support group arrangements**

Cllr Friar reported that the group now has about 67 volunteers. The point had been raised as to whether the Council’s prospective public liability policy would cover the supporters; the Clerk and himself had been in touch with insurers and had received confirmation that the group would be covered.

**10. Review of emergency procedures**

Cllr Sudbury put up on screen a draft plan he had prepared and invited comments. This is to be reviewed by him and a final draft prepared. **Action: Cllr Sudbury**

**11. Any Other Business**

- 1. The Clerk said the footpath off the A425 was again overgrown; he had invited FORGE to deal with it but they had declined; it was agreed to take temporary action to deal with it but consider a permanent arrangement with a contractor. **Action: Clerk**
- 2. Cllr Sudbury gave an update on the state of the defibrillators – he has arranged for one to go for repair and the other to have renewed batteries.
- 3. The Chairman expressed his pleasure at seeing the pear tree advancing in growth; it was AGREED that he should draft the wording of a suitable plaque to instruct future generations as to the origin of the tree (from the HS2 site).
- 4. Cllr Hitchcox drew attention to damage to goalpost fittings caused by football teams’ carelessness. It was agreed he should purchase replacement fittings and consideration given to charging the teams with the cost.
- 5. Cllr Follett said that notwithstanding the lockdown he thought it appropriate to pursue the adult play equipment project; forward planning, especially to obtain grants, was required. It was agreed he should continue with the project, in particular with grant funding.

**12. Date of next meeting**

It was AGREED to have a further virtual meeting on 29th June 2020. The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed.....

Date.....

**Chairman of the Parish Council**

Counter signed.....

Date.....

**Clerk to the Parish Council**