

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A virtual meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 29th June 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 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 apologies for absence from Cllr T Musa and no Declarations of Interest.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 18th May 2020

The Minutes of the virtual Council meeting held on the 18th May 2020 were approved, proposed by Cllr Hitchcox and seconded by Cllr Sudbury.

3. 1. Traffic management issues

The Chairman summarised the process over these which he had been engaged with the Clerk since the last Council meeting:-

- i. An email had been received from a resident, Mr Griffiths, whose parked car in Lewis Road was struck by a passing vehicle and the driver then made off. This was drawn to the attention of PC Ed King who was not personally aware of the incident. In response to the Chairman's email, a reply was received from Neal Westwood, a traffic management advisor for Warwickshire Police, and he was addressing issues of speeding through the Village area which had been highlighted by the Chairman in his letter to PC King. It remains to be seen whether things improve on that. Amongst other things, the Chairman and the Clerk had suggested that the installation of yellow speed boxes on the A425 might be useful as drivers would not know whether there was a camera fitted in them or not. Mr Westwood stated "I can confirm that the casualty rates for the roads you have mentioned are fortunately good. It would therefore not be possible to recommend the installation of a static speed enforcement camera".
- ii. Cllr Sudbury raised the question of what action this Council could take next; the Chairman said that the base line is the Clerk's comprehensive letter of 7th May 2019 which has in effect not been answered by WCC through one of their departments or another. Recently the Clerk had sent reminders to Karen Watkins and Phil Mitton (the correspondence to WCC previously referred to). No reply had yet been received.
- iii. The Chairman said he had been pursuing the matter of lack of consultation regarding the implementation of the Safer Routes to School Scheme, following receipt from PC King on an informal basis of the WCC plans for the area of School Lane. The Chairman had sent an email to Jo Edwards, the responsible officer, on the 27th May. He received a reply from her on the 28th May acknowledging that, in hindsight, the Parish Council should have been informed of the scheme, and tendered her apologies for the oversight. The project and plans do not however address the long running issue raised by this Council as to safe pedestrian access to the School for families living on the Bovis sites. The Clerk had been advised by RM Contractors (acting on behalf of A C Lloyd) that work on the A425/School Lane junction is to commence on 6th July 2020.
- iv. There was a short debate as to the outcome of this, the consensus being that a potential of two pedestrian crossings will be required; one on the A425 somewhere between the Bovis No 1 site and the bus stop in Lewis Road. The other one in Offchurch Lane to facilitate exit from the Bovis

No 2 site. These points had been raised previously, included by reference in the letter of 7th May 2019.

- v. As mentioned by the Chairman at previous meetings, they had been pursuing the question of the emergency access point from Offchurch Lane to the Bovis No 2 site now that a number of houses are occupied. Non-compliance with a planning condition is cause for concern. The Chairman had written to Dave Barber on 11th February 2020 and had not had a reply to two reminders he had sent in March and April concerning the issue as well as an apparent problem with leaking sewage in that area. Recently the Chairman had received a response from a member of Dave Barber's department tendering her apologies in an email comprising six pages; this explains that the inaction has been due to Bovis' need to seek further amendment of site conditions from the Planning Dept and they have now signed up to a new set of conditions. Hopefully this will have the effect of the access work being commenced.
- vi. The Chairman said that the issue of excess lighting on the site which he raised several times before had yet to be resolved satisfactorily.
- vii. The Clerk had received recently an email from David Elliston stating that extensive repair works would be carried out in Offchurch Lane between The Greswoldes and bridge over the canal. The projected works are to start on 27th July 2020.

2. Section 106 and CIL payments

- i. The Clerk reported that the first CIL money of £2100 had been received (with reference to the development at the site of The Lodge).
- ii. The Chairman reported that the Clerk had recently written three letters to David Anderson, the Open Team Leader at WDC; these concerned the formal application on behalf of this Council in respect of money for the Leam View development which the Chairman has in mind to make available for the projected Canal Access project, the Section 106 contribution by A C Lloyd of £5,052 in respect of the development at the site of The Lodge (which the Chairman had ascertained had actually been paid by A C Lloyd in 2018 but not passed on to this Council) and the contribution expected from A C Lloyd in respect of the Section 106 agreement for the development of their site in Spring Lane (this contribution of £50,410.81 being identified in the Section 106 agreement).
- iii. As mentioned in the Minutes of the last meeting on 18th May, the Chairman and Clerk are pursuing matters with Janet Neale; despite an apology for delay to Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, Janet Neale had not come back to either her or to this Council. It had been suggested by Cllr Sudbury that we should push a demand for a face to face meeting with the various WCC officials but the view taken by the Chairman and the Clerk was that during the overall effect of the current lockdown they are not going to be productive. An approach would be made in the Autumn at a time when concerted office working was resumed at County Hall.

4. Warwick County Council – update report

WCC Cllr Redford said that currently WCC had a shortfall of £60M created by the pandemic crisis. The major proportion of that sum had been absorbed by grants and supply of equipment connected with the pandemic. He calculated that at the end of the current financial period a real shortfall of £24M could be expected. Currently it is not known how this will be made up but WCC is hoping that national government will make a significant contribution to that.

He said that WCC had been supplying food parcels in the area at the rate of 1000 per week but they had now dropped to 500 per week.

In his capacity as a trustee of a local care institution, the Clerk said that the input from WCC on the supply of PPE equipment etc had been much appreciated.

Cllr Redford said all the WCC officers are working from home and it is not known how long this is likely to continue; certainly for a few months yet.

5. Warwick District Council – update report

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt tabled her report and answered questions on it.

6. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the bank balance on the investment account is £34,306.43 and the balance on the operating account is £19,290.08.
2. A number of payments were authorised including payment to the Clerk of £1,292.41 for the first quarter of the year and payment to Cllr Hitchcox of £40.80 in reimbursement of costs incurred by him in respect of goal posts on the Playing Field.
3. The Clerk had so far received a card reader from the Bank but not yet a card to use with it. He had chased the Bank and hoped to receive it in the next week or so.
4. Whilst not an Agenda item, it was convenient to mention a recent meeting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chairman of Finance and the Clerk to discuss a salary review for the latter. A Resolution of the Council will be required to approve the figures and it was AGREED that the matter should be put on the Agenda for the next meeting in July so far as the salary increase was concerned.

Action: Clerk

Consensus had been reached on the back pay due to the Clerk for the last year in the sum of £113.67 gross – it was proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin that this be paid forthwith to the Clerk. Cllr Friar outlined the basis of the proposed salary increase and it was AGREED he would table a report for the next meeting. He said that the basis of the proposed increase was that the Clerk's role had changed substantially over the years from when he took up office over 15 years ago.

Action Cllr Friar

7. Review of Internal Auditor's report and AGAR form

The Clerk took the Council through the details of the External Audit form – Annual Governance and Accountability Return ('AGAR'). He had circulated to the Council the report of the Internal Auditor, Mrs Best, which was adopted by the Council. She had signed off the AGAR form and it was AGREED that the form could be completed by the signatures of the Chairman and the Clerk in the usual way and presented to the External Auditor – proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Hitchcox and this was carried unanimously.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

8. Planning Matters

- 8.1 W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road
The Chairman said this was ongoing but there was little action that this Council could take at the present time.
- 8.2 9 Lythall Close (ongoing)
A complaint had been lodged by a neighbour about the footpath adjacent to this property with WCC; the Chairman and Clerk were concerned with the correspondence on this but the current position is covered in a reply from Richard Barnard of WCC to the effect that WCC are waiting for a response from the legal advisors to the occupant of 9 Lythall Close. The matter is being pursued.
- 8.3 W/19/1772 – Land at The Valley
The Chairman, the Chairman of Planning Committee and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt are all in the course of preparing responses to the Appeal now lodged by the owner.
- 8.4 W/20/0552 – 8 Williams Road - ongoing
- 8.5 W/20/0737 – Wilmsley, 30 Southam Road - granted

9. Update on the Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Friar said that the documentation is now with WDC in accordance with Regulation 16. Currently there is a consultation period for the public to make comments online and/or show their approval; the cut off date is the 18th August 2020. He urged Cllrs to personally make a contribution and encourage others to do so also. He is proposing to organise a leaflet drop to every household to the same effect.

Action: Cllr Friar

10. Update on the Playing Field

10.1 Cllr Follett tabled his report. He proposed adopting as a contractor Proludic for the reasons set out in his report. He confirmed the Council's previous decision that the project would proceed on the basis that he would apply for grants and the Council will only go ahead with the contractor if grants are secured. He pointed out that a condition of obtaining the grants is that this Council would be required to make a contribution to the Community's Foundation (WREN) of 10.75% of the funding secured; an estimate of this figure is £3,225. It was acknowledged that in the event of the Council receiving various monies under Section 106/CIL and Open Space provision there should be sufficient funding from those sources to cover this sum. It was AGREED that Cllr Follett should proceed to apply for grants and the matter be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Follett & Clerk

Cllr Sudbury raised the issue of whether Joe Ingalls could be encouraged to extend the ambit of his rubbish collection on the Playing Field; Cllr Follett said he had recently supplied Joe with a new set of tongs used for rubbish collection.

10.2 It was noted that some of the flags in the vicinity of the changing room of the Community Hall are becoming displaced; Cllr Follett will check them over.

Action: Cllr Follett

10.3 The Chairman referred to his arrangements in preparing the wording for a plaque to be placed alongside the recently planted pear tree. He and the Clerk had drafted wording and the next step was to identify a suitable stone to take the plaque and be embedded in the ground adjacent to the pear tree (which was prospering).

Action: Chairman

10.4 Cllr Carter suggested it might be appropriate to have a plaque installed alongside the pump outside the Village shop.

10.5 The Chairman said he had been investigating the acquisition of one or more dog bins but had not been able to find an item which matched the existing ones. He will pursue the matter.

Action: Chairman

10.6 The Clerk said that he had been in touch with Wagstaffs to obtain a quotation for regular clearance of the two footpaths previously mentioned; he is yet to receive the quotation.

11. Update on the Website

11.1 There had recently been two meetings of the Media Committee to focus on the recruitment of a creative manager for the website. The job role was distinct from being simply web manager or technician; it is envisaged that this person would bring innovation to the style of the website, monitor and create social media interfacing with the public and in general terms look at the design and presentation of the website and its material. The job specification had been prepared in draft and this was demonstrated at the meeting. The Committee estimated that the role would occupy the person about 20 hours per month. Cllr Friar had analysed a potential salary for this person in line with rates awarded to middle ranking technicians at WDC. He identified the salary scales on the range SCP (the standard NALC reference) at around Point 23. This gave a potential salary of £18,000 - £23,000 per annum which would be pro rata down to take account of the 20 hours per month. The estimated figure resulting was approximately £3,350 per annum. The Committee thought in terms of annualising this figure and it would be paid in instalments. The Council approved the proposal to go ahead with recruitment (the actual salary to be negotiated with a potential applicant) – proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Hitchcox.

Action: Media Committee

- 11.2 Cllr Friar spoke in general terms about the website. He said that each Committee now had its own page so the public could identify the work carried out by individual committees. There was also a page for comments.
- 11.3 He also has in mind creating a facility whereby the Community Hall bookings could be secured online through the website; the present manageress wishes to stand down in the foreseeable future and numbers of the Community Hall Committee are limited in terms of people and time. An online booking facility would greatly assist in this respect. It will need design input before it become operational.
- 11.4 He said that he had signed up the Council to engage in the new social media outlet next Nextdoor Neighbours and he will review it for the time being as he is sceptical of its suitability or empathy with this Council's business. The outcome remains to be seen. The Clerk reported that entries placed by members of this media had started to appear on the website feed to this Council's laptop but so far the postings are not relevant to Council business.

12. Update on Covid-19 Support group arrangements

Cllr Friar reported that the ongoing support continues but pressure on the volunteers has eased off as people become more relaxed. There are however a number of elderly/infirm people who are nervous about going outside and they still appreciate the services being given by the volunteers. He drew attention to discretionary grants of up to £1,000 which are being made available currently by WDC to cover expenses incurred by volunteers and others in this context.

13. Review of emergency procedures

Cllr Sudbury said he had prepared what he regarded as the final draft of the Emergency Plan and he proposed to table this at the next Council meeting in July.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 It was anticipated from the previous Council meeting that FoRGE had now supplied a management plan for the pond which the Clerk had circulated for this meeting. The Chairman looked for two volunteers to scrutinise the plan and come up with proposals for action. The Clerk expressed his concern that on his visual inspection of the pond, there could be health and safety issues; in particular a life belt which had been in situ for many years to his recollection had now disappeared. In his temporary absence from the meeting, Cllr Sudbury was nominated as the best person to look into these matters. **Action: Cllr Sudbury**
- 14.2 At the request of the Chairman, the Clerk had, since the last meeting, circulated paperwork at the wish of the Sports & Social Club to expand their external socialising following relaxation by the Government of the social distancing rules on or after 4th July. The Chairman had declared an interest in the matter; Cllr Sudbury had examined the issues and talked to people in the Club; the outcome is that the Club management had decided maintain the status quo, utilising the existing fixed tables outside the Club premises on the basis that people observe social distancing rules and purchase of alcohol is made from the bar and carried out to the tables by purchasers.
- 14.3 The Clerk had received a request from a lady known to the Chairman enquiring about facilities for allotments within the Parish; the conclusion is that there are no allotments available and the Chairman will make this known to her. **Action: Chairman**
- 14.4 The Clerk had received a written enquiry from a resident with a proposal to set up a boot camp utilising the Playing Field; the Council considered the implications of this and concluded that the Playing Field had an equipment project underway with Cllr Follett and this is adequate for the Playing Field and that a boot camp would be inappropriate. The Clerk is to advise the enquirer. **Action: Clerk**
- 14.5 It had been suggested by ex-councillor Mrs Northey that a wild flower area should be generated in the Playing Field to enhance both plantation diversity and make the appearance of the Playing Field more attractive. The Chairman had arranged for this to be taken in hand.

15. Date of next meeting

In the light of information received from Cllr Mrs Malin concerning action by the Community Hall Committee, it is anticipated that the Hall will not be open for meetings by 27th July 2020 so the next meeting of this Council will be a further virtual meeting one on that date. This meeting closed at 10pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council

Counter signed.....

Date.....

Clerk to the Parish Council