

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele, on Monday 27th September 2010 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor J M Whitehead (in the Chair), Cllr D E Chater, Cllr Mrs J A Edwards, Cllr Mrs J Loveridge, Cllr H E Marriott, Cllr A J Malin and Cllr Mrs J P Malin

In attendance for part of the meeting: WDC Cllr Doody

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr J Hodder and Cllr Mrs F M Walsh

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved subject to a minor amendment to paragraph 20 (d).

3. Police Matters

The last communication from the police was an email from PC Gary Holtby for the week of 17th August 2010. The Clerk circulated two emails last received from PC Holtby.

4. WCC & WDC Matters

4.1 Cllr Doody noted the concern of the Council as to the withdrawal of swimming pool subsidies and said that WDC have a very difficult task at present to balance their finances. It is likely that the subsidy will be withdrawn.

4.2 The Government are imposing drastic cuts on local authorities in the next few years which Cllr Doody calculates will have a total impact of £3.7 million approximately. One particular worry is that instead of regular reduction to achieve this target over a number of years, there may be imposed a reduction of 15% in the immediate year and a 30% reduction over a four year period. There will be a reduction in funding for WCC in the order of £320 million.

He said that WDC had decided that there should be no increase in Council Tax in the current year.

4.3 He explained that WDC had avoided making any redundancies but had reduced their workforce by using natural wastage and redeploying existing members of staff.

4.4 There were ongoing discussions about relocation of the bus station. It was thought that the bus service could be better operated from a site to the south of Leamington which would give better access by buses to the

rural areas. This presupposes the bus service abandoning their site in the centre of Leamington which is a very valuable site.

4.5 The management of free travel passes would be taken over by WCC and money to fund it would be removed from WDC and passed to WCC.

4.6 Cllr Doody declared that he was totally opposed to the proposals for the high-speed train – there is no benefit at all to the local community in the West Midlands and Warwickshire. The speed of 150 mph will require the construction of wider tunnels because the conventional train tunnels create such air pressure that would destroy a high speed train passing through them. It has been estimated that there will be 40 trains per hour on the track going through the Midlands. The track specification will also require 20 metres of track in width and a further 20 metres on each side.

He explained that WCC and WDC are only consultees to the Government and the proposed business consortium to construct the railway; the local authorities do not have any power to block the scheme. Personally, he does not see an economic need for it, quite apart from issues as to disruption.

4.7 He was asked questions by Councillors as what progress could be made on imposing speed reduction in Offchurch Lane. He said a reduction in the finances of WCC means that this cannot be done.

He said the prime cost was that of creating speed humps but it was open to the Parish Council to finance signage designed to create speed awareness. Details could be obtained from Graham Stanley at the Highways Traffic Dept; he estimated that the cost would be about £12,000 for speed humps.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 The Clerk had received from WCC Highways Dept an acknowledgement of thanks for the contribution made by the report from the Footpaths Overseer recently. It was agreed that an honorarium of £200 would be paid to the Footpaths Overseer. **Action: Clerk**

5.2 In the absence of Cllr Walsh, there was no report on the supply of stickers to go on wheelie bins as to speeding (item 5.2 in the last Minutes). The matter is to be put on the Agenda for the next meeting. **Action: Cllr Walsh**

6. Finance and Accounts

6.1 The Clerk reported that the investment account contains approximately £41,400 and the operating account contains approximately £8,500. The significant reduction in the investment account is due to a withdrawal of funds so as to pay a donation to Sunbeams Pre-School (see below).

6.2 Since the last Council Meeting in July, the Chairman and the Chairman of the Finance Committee approved a donation of £6,000 to Sunbeams Pre-School. This action was approved retrospectively. Cllr Doody said he had been pleased to obtain for them a grant from WDC of £26,000.

- 6.3 The Council approved a number of payments including the above items mentioned. The items approved included the purchase of two lots of playground equipment and fittings which had been actioned by the Chairman since the last meeting and this was approved retrospectively.
- 6.4 Since the last meeting in July, the Chairman had approved the Clerk's action in submitting an early application to join the Clerks Conference in October as the timing of the application being able to obtain a discount. The Chairman's action was approved retrospectively.
- 6.5 The Clerk reported that the External Audit had now been completed and he had a note from the Auditor to confirm that it was an unqualified audit. Payment of the Auditor's fee was approved.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1 The Chairman of WDC had confirmed that he would like to attend a meeting of the Parish Council on 25th October. It was agreed that the members of the Parish Council would assemble at 7.15pm on that date. An invitation to the Chairman of WDC to attend at 7.30pm for coffee has been sent and the business of the meeting will commence at 7.45pm. The Clerk is to notify all concerned. **Action: Clerk**
- 7.2 The Clerk had received a note from WDC Development Services with a list of a number of Local Plan Policies affecting sport, leisure, tourism and use of leisure spaces. These were available by way of hard copy or website, if Councillors are interested.
- 7.3 The Clerk had received a round robin email from WDC Care for the Elderly advertising the service of free electric blanket testing for older people.
- 7.4 The Clerk reported that he had received a card from ROSPA stating they would be carrying out an inspection of the playground in September but he had heard nothing further.
- 7.5 The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Jane Coates at WDC drawing attention to the launch of the Small Grants Scheme. He had passed this on by email to all Councillors. The application brochure was retained by the Chairman. Cllr Chater tabled a paper of concerns as to planned cuts by WDC. He saw this as having a direct effect the Community Care services. It would also have an effect on health education, police transport and welfare benefits. He raised the question as to the involvement / responsibility of the Parish Council for addressing any of these issues. Cllr Doody said it was open to the Parish Council to make appropriate applications to the Community Forum because that was endowed with funds of a limited amount for specific expenditure on local community items.
- 7.6 The Clerk reported that he had received email correspondence concerning the walkway from Southam Road to School Lane which he had passed out to Councillors for comment. The Chairman confirmed that he had actioned the matter by sending an email to the householder declining responsibility on behalf of the Parish Council.

8. CCTV at the Post Office

The Clerk confirmed that the balance of payment to the security company had been paid following production / installation of the pin number for the system.

9. Telephone Box

The Clerk reported that he had chased up BT and had been told by them that they expected to complete their technical works by 21st September and notify the Clerk as to handover. This had not happened so far and he will pursue it.

Action: Clerk

10. Notice board

The Chairman said he had not had an opportunity to review this item and therefore no progress had been made. He hoped to bring specifications and prices back to the Council at the next meeting.

Action: Chairman

11. Bus shelters

In the absence of Cllr Hodder, it was decided to defer this matter indefinitely until it was known when he could attend a Council meeting again. The Clerk is to be advised when the item should be put back on the Agenda.

12. Public Insurance Review, Risk Management Policy and Declarations of Interest by Councillors

These special items were to be considered by Councillors following reports on the items respectively by the Clerk which had been emailed to all Councillors. It was agreed to defer these items to the next meeting due to pressure of time.

Action: Clerk

13. The Sports and Social Club Committee land application

13.1 Cllr Doody said the key issue on the suggestion by the Club to have part of their activities on open land adjacent to the Clubhouse was the question of noise. Recently there had been a function which ran well past midnight with resonant noise from musical rhythms. He pointed out that if complaints about noise became significant, the Licensing Authority (WDC) would be entitled to withdraw the license entirely.

13.2 He wished to make it plain that he did not want the Social Club to be closed because it is an important feature in the Village. If there was significant noise and disturbance to neighbours, it could result in the alcohol license being withdrawn.

13.3 The Chairman said he had been in discussion with the Chairman of the Club Committee and a number of ongoing proposals were in hand but nothing had been concluded.

13.4 It was agreed when some consensus had been reached - the Club be offered not a lease but a licence for a period of one year (which would be determinable if there were any problems).

- 13.5 It was also agreed that the Club should be required to produce their Public Liability Insurance certificate as a term of the licence and they would not be permitted to prepare food for barbecues outside the Club building.
- 13.6 It was noted that the point could be made that Cllr A Malin was in a position of conflict of interest, being a member of the Council and a member of the Club; the Clerk reported that the true position is that Cllr Malin had been nominated by this Council to its representative with the Club and was in a position to report back to the Council as and when necessary.

14. Report from the Planning Committee

In the absence of Cllr Walsh, there was no presentation but she had requested by email that the Council look at the planning application on behalf of St Nicholas' Church for the purposes of restoration. It was recorded that the Planning Committee was content with the plans submitted for the Church.

15. Report from the Playing Field Committee

- 15.1 Cllr Whitehead reported that he had been involved in the partial demolition of a tree which had been entwined in its branches a BT line. He was in the process of getting BT to renew the line but because it became apparent that it was in a deteriorating condition.
- 15.2 Cllr Whitehead confirmed that he and the Clerk had received email correspondence from a complainant who pointed out that one of the items of equipment was defective. The Chairman had dealt with that and purchased equipment to rectify that particular fault together with replacement equipment and fittings for other items in the playground (approval given as above).

16. Report from the Finance Committee

There was nothing to report in addition to the matters mentioned above.

17. Report from the Sports and Social Club Committee

Cllr A J Malin said that there was nothing to report in addition to the above.

18. Report from the Emergency Planning Committee

Cllr Edwards has now completed the revised procedural plan in conjunction with Mick Potter of WDC. She distributed to each Councillor revised copies and it was agreed that Mick Potter be invited to address the Council, possibly at the January meeting, so as to update the Council on current arrangements for emergencies. Cllr Edwards is to arrange his visit. **Action: Cllr Edwards**

19. Report from the Community Hall Committee

- 19.1 Loveridge reported that youths have been climbing on the flat roof so anti-vandal paint has been applied to the roof in the hope of preventing

further incident. There is evidence of rotteness in the windows which will need to be attended to. There is a project in hand to sand down the surface of the stage.

- 19.2 The question was raised as to the emptying of the bin installed a few months ago in the carpark by Cllrs Whitehead and Marriott. Consideration is to be given as to how it can be emptied on a regular basis. **Action: Cllr Whitehead**

20. Report from the School Governors

There was no report to hand.

21. Report from the Youth Club

21.1 The Chairman referred Councillors to his recent email in which he suggested that the Youth Club building should be demolished. He had recently inspected it and found it in a very poor state created by vandals. In spite of a lot of effort over recent years, it had not been possible to get the services of a youth leader and / or get the involvement of a management committee. In the absence of any local interest, he felt that the building was simply a negative drain upon the Council's resources which the Council should not continue to support.

21.2 Cllr Marriott mentioned that he knew of someone who had expressed interest in what was going to happen to the building and the Club; it was agreed that the matter be put to this individual and an advert be placed in the Courier to attract interest before reaching a final decision on whether to demolish the building. it was thought that there might not be any interest forthcoming. **Action: Cllrs Chater & Whitehead**

22. Any Other Business

- (a) Cllr Marriot had obtained two estimates from contractors interested in clearing and renovating the pond. The proposal would be to create deeper water in the pond and hitherto; this would counteract natural drainage from the land which appears to be gravel and not clay. It is hoped that deeper water would ensure that the overall level of the pond did not sink to an unacceptable minimum. It was agreed that Cllr Marriott should proceed with an estimate obtained from Blue Bore of Dunsmore in the sum of approximately £1,200. **Action: Cllr Marriott**

23. Date of next meeting: Monday 25th October 2010

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman of the Parish Council