

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A virtual meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 26th April 2021 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 Mrs J P Malin, Cllr A Malin, Cllr R Munn, Cllr 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 and there were no declarations of interest.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 29th March 2021

The Minutes of the meeting on 29th March 2021 were approved, subject to some minor amendments to be interposed later by the Clerk; proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Friar.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 29th March 2021

A number of matters were dealt with under separate headings below but the Chairman outlined the following:-

- a) He and the Clerk had had a lengthy onsite conference with Tom Head, the writer of a proposed expert report relating to traffic management. He will send the Clerk an email outlining what he can provide by way of a written report with an estimate of his fees. This report can either be used by this Council to put before WCC and/or Mr Head could use the report to front up negotiations with them. (he is a retired civil engineer)
- b) The Clerk has raised an order on the skateboard contractors to start work.
- c) The Chairman and the Clerk attended a virtual meeting organised by WALC which featured as a speaker, Jackie Weaver, talking about the traumas of difficult council meetings.
- d) The four dog bins have been delivered and uplifted by Jon Whitehead for installation.
- e) The licence to allow the Sports & Social Club to use an area of ground had been completed with wording prepared by the Clerk and settlement negotiated by Cllr Sudbury.

Cllr Sudbury asked to raise a further matter under this heading – namely that of the pond (although it appears as a later item). He said he had checked the existing fencing but there is an area adjacent to the public footpath where there is no fence. The Clerk advised that the Council had to consider its liability to the public should anyone gain access to the pond through the area where there is no fence; he referred to a reported leading court case on boundary fencing. The Council's relationship with their insurers has to be borne in mind. AGREED that Cllr Sudbury should proceed to obtain a replacement lifebelt and stand to take it at the previously quoted figure of £372.90 + VAT which was approved at the previous meeting. It was AGREED that he would report back with costings for the additional fencing. **Action: Cllr Sudbury**

4. Traffic management issues

1. Cllr Munn had tabled a report intended for the Annual Parish Meeting but he spoke to the current position. More volunteers in his team of Speedwatch monitors had been approved by the Police through PC Ed King. He outlined that in July 2021 there is to be a radar protection project which may help with an analysis of traffic flow and speeds.
2. The Clerk added that Mr Head had evinced an interest in the concept of village gates but more will transpire.

5. Section 106 and CIL payments

1. The Clerk was negotiating the terms of the funding letter with Helen Hancox at WDC Open Space Dept; she had not responded on the proposed amendments and the Clerk had recently sent a reminder to her.

2. The Chairman had been in further correspondence with Graham Palmer who is the WCC monitor for Section 106 payments. The Chairman calculated that Bovis, under their Section 106 agreement, agreed to pay approximately £58,000 as a contribution towards Pre-School provision within the village of Radford Semele and £15,000 for SEN adaptations at Radford Semele Primary School to support access requirements. The two aspects of this are that 50% of the second Bovis site has been completed therefore triggering a point where a payment is due to WCC and, secondly, there are identified contributions required for Education provision in Radford Semele.
3. The Chairman was confident that Mr Palmer would revert to him as soon as he had information to hand on the outfall from the above.
4. The Chairman and Cllr Sudbury had in mind in assisting Sunbeams to make an appropriate application as some of the Bovis money was in terms to include pre-school provision. Cllr Sudbury said that his contact at Sunbeams (manageress) had resigned so he is in the process of creating a new contact..

6. Warwickshire County Council – update report

WCC Cllr Redford reported:-

1. He had emailed the Clerk today with information concerning footpath W/123; and the Clerk had had a telephone call from Mr Barnard of the WCC Footpaths Dept with similar information - action by WCC is ongoing.
2. He said the news on the pandemic is good for the local area – there have been no more Covid deaths. The Pound Lane site for testing responded to large demand and he said that 35,000 residents have been through the testing.
3. Cllr Sudbury said his daughter who is in nursing has reported that at Warwick Hospital there is currently only one patient suffering from the Covid virus.
4. Cllr Hitchcox asked for an update on the situation concerning 56 Southam Road – the question was referred to WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt.

7. Warwick District Council – update report

1. WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt responded to the question on 56 Southam Road; she had recently received email information from the Planning Enforcement Dept that court proceedings are in progress against the householder – an initial case management hearing has taken place - the case is now awaiting a trial date. (Subsequent to the meeting she has been informed that the trial date is in July 2021)
2. In response to Cllr Sudbury's enquiry, she said that as far as she is aware no conclusion has been reached on the changes to rubbish bin collection from households. She has put out an enquiry to the WDC Portfolio holder for this item, Cllr Rhead, and is awaiting a response. She had not found the entry on the website which Cllr Sudbury says he has seen and it was AGREED that he will supply her with a copy.
3. She pointed out that it is not mandatory for WDC to confer with a local Council on this particular issue. A decision on any changes would be reached by voting at WDC.

8. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk had circulated a bank reconciliation statement from Lloyds Bank; the balance on the operating account was approximately £1,184; the balance on the investment account was approximately £91,300.
2. A number of payments were authorised as per the list circulated prior to the meeting – the payments were approved; proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Follett. The list is to be lodged with these Minutes.

3. The Clerk and Chairman of the Finance Committee had been unable to open an account with HSBC or in substitution with RBS as intended so had lodged an application with NatWest.

Action: Cllr Friar & Clerk

4. Cllr Friar outlined the examination of the year end accounts by the Internal Auditor [Mrs Best] and her report. The Finance Committee will finalise the AGAR report to the External Auditor; this is to be reviewed and signed off by the full Council at the next meeting on 4th May.

9. Correspondence

1. The most significant item of correspondence was a written request from the householder at 57 Hatherell Road asking to have access to the Playing Field so as to access the rear of his property with a mechanical digger. His objective is to excavate his garden and remove a significant amount of earth and rubble by use of a skip.
2. Cllr Follett was already on record that he was uncomfortable with the proposition because of disruption to the Playing Field whilst the work was in progress and any damage being caused to the hinterland would have to be remedied once the works had been completed. Cllr Hitchcox raised the question of whether the drainage system in the Playing Field was so adjacent to the site that there was risk of damage to the system.
3. The Clerk suggested that so the Council could give fair consideration to the application that he write to the householder to outline possible terms of an agreement with provision for the householder to make good any damage and / or cover the cost, which might accommodate the situation.
4. It was AGREED that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Clerk would put in front of the householder a suitable letter outlining the Council's concerns and making proposals for the matter to be dealt with in the light of the Clerk's suggestion.

10. Planning Matters

1. W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road – court proceedings pending
2. 9 Lythall Close (ongoing)
3. W/20/2145 – 2 Hallfields
4. Canalside Development Plan Document Consultation (Ongoing)
5. W/20/2152 – 2 Radford Hall
6. W/21/0083 – 58 Bloxham Way

11. Update on the Playing Field

1. Cllr Follett said an order had been raised for the skateboard repair on the contractors referred to with a previously quoted price (already approved by the Council). He expects them to start work on 10th May 2021.
2. An order has already been raised to Wicksteed for replacement of the cableway at the price previously agreed by this Council. The excavation of earthworks will be needed and the excess earth will be used to fill in the ditch adjacent to the site of The Lodge. The lead in for the works which involve fabrication and the expected commencement date is July 2021.
3. As regards the outdoor gym, Cllr Follett was expecting to receive a decision from the HS2 Community Fund as to whether a grant will be available from that quarter
4. It was noted that the dog bins are shortly to be installed.
5. He referred to a complaint received from the football teams hoping to play yesterday (Sunday) as allegedly there was a mole infestation. Cllr Follett had checked this out and was not convinced. The Clerk said he had reported the matter to the Council's mole catcher contractors and awaited their response.

12. Update on pathway to Radford Bottom Lock and The Greenway

The Chairman said there was no further progress on this; former councillor Henry Marriott is investigating the possibilities relating to the terrain.

13. School Matters

Cllr Sudbury reported that he and Cllr Follett had checked the Sunbeams building; this is of considerable antiquity and in a poor state of repair.

As regards liaison between this Council and the School Governors, Cllr Sudbury said there appeared to be reluctance on the part of the Governing Body to have a representative of this Council at their meetings but he was pursuing discussion on that.

14. Sports & Social Club Matters

1. Cllr Mrs Malin reported that the Club were delighted at being able to expand outside the building as from 14th April 2021 (following the new licence referred to above) and that it was the best day ever for custom.
2. There now have a number of new committee members which is good news for versatility etc.
3. In conjunction with the Hall Committee an external CCTV system has been installed which covers both the Club and the Hall; this is being monitored by the Club management.

15. Community Hall Committee

Cllr Mrs Malin reported that an all out effort had been made to clean the interior of the Hall – in particular mould was found on the chairs which have now all been cleaned. A fire assessment has now carried out. Former councillor David Chater is still dealing with the bookings for the Hall but is anxious that someone should take over this function.

16. Website

Cllr Friar reported that there is still a number of adjustments needed for the website which are being worked on. All this Council's reports and in particular those for the Annual Parish Meeting have been put up on the site.

17. Social Media Policy

Cllr Friar said that the social media policy is still in draft as between him and the Clerk; this is to be further reviewed.

18. Covid-19 Support Group arrangements

Cllr Friar said there was little activity by the COVID Support Team at present which was good news; he wanted to pay tribute to the 65 members of the helping group who had done a tremendous job during the threat of the pandemic.

19. Pond security

See item 3.

20. Any other business

1. A number of Cllrs including Cllr Sudbury expressed their concerns about the congestion in the ditch adjoining The Valley and adjoining Valley Road. It was unclear whether WCC accepted full responsibility for it or whether adjoining landowners were. On his suggestion, it was AGREED that the Clerk should contact WCC Highways Dept and the new successor to Mr Elliston who had previously been asked to carry out works to the ditch. Depending on the response from that Dept, the matter is to be further reviewed.

2. The Clerk enquired about the proposed carnival; Cllr Sudbury said that there was to be a meeting of the promotional committee in May – Dave Purdy from the Club has agreed to continue as a manager of the event. Cllr Sudbury is providing admin back-up.

21. Date of next meeting

The Chairman explained the purpose of the next meeting on 4th May 2021; this Council is required by law to hold a meeting in May under which officers and committees are re-elected. The Clerk was mindful of having a window to deal with the papers for the External Auditor. It is therefore to be a short meeting with a short agenda. It will be a virtual meeting whereas after 6th May it is anticipated that regulations will require Council meetings to be face to face. The Clerk said that the matter is still subject to debate; the Government has resisted representations from NALC and the LGA to maintain virtual meetings but there is currently an application to the High Court by a district council with the object of obtaining a court order to force the Government's hand.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm (much to the Chairman's delight).

Signed.....

Date..... 2021

Chairman of the Parish Council

Counter signed.....

Date.....2021

Clerk to the Parish Council