

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 25th September 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele.

Participants: Cllr S Sabin (in the chair), Cllr A J Dempsey, Cllr D Carter, Cllr B Friar Cllr Mrs J P Malin, Cllr R Munn and Cllr Josie Sanderson

In attendance: WCC Cllr Redford and WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan
Mr Stewart Roe

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

No apologies for absence but Declarations of Interest were received from Cllr Sabin and Cllr Friar in relation to item relating to list of proposed donations.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Debbie Gulliver to the meeting, it was AGREED that she should be co-opted as a Councillor and she was pleased to accept.

2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 7th August 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting on 7th August 2023 were approved, proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Dempsey.

3. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 7th August 2023**

Cllr Munn made the point that he had sent chasing correspondence to Mrs Zoe Court at WDC concerning bin collection; it was noted that she had not responded to the Clerk's previous correspondence and Cllr Munn and the Clerk will respectively pursue the matter. There were no other matters arising.

4. **Update on SpeedWatch**

Cllr Munn spoke briefly to his report which had been tabled; he said the most important point about his team's activity was the visible presence. Despite their disappointment at drivers continuing to speed, there was no doubt that the driving public were becoming aware of his team's operations.

5. **Update on traffic management issues**

The Chairman reported on 6th September 2023 there had been a site meeting between himself and Cllr Dempsey and the Clerk together with two representatives, headed up by Mr Chris Round from the WCC Highways Dept Specialised Traffic Management Unit. The meeting was about one and a half hours and was very positive; the meeting surveyed all the different locations in the Village (including Semele Park) to cross relate the four plans supplied by the Highways Unit previously. Many of the suggestions made by this Council over the interim period since discussions started in 2019 have been accepted, the main issue on which the Unit are adamant is that they will not accept double yellow lines at the junction of Lewis Road and the A425. The outcome is that they will report back to the Dept and/or Committee for approval to proceed but actual implementation may be some time.

6. **Update on Section 106 and CIL issues**

The Clerk reported that the outstanding issue remains that of agreeing the terms of a Funding Letter concerning The Cricketers money with Helen Hancox of WDC. At the beginning of the month, she sent us a revised form of the Funding Letter but the wording adopted by her in the revised draft will not move this Council away from the risk factor to spend the funds in conformity with the Section 106 agreement. The Clerk had recently discussed it with Alistair Clark of AC Lloyds when he confirmed they had no objection at all to our proposed wording being adopted in the FL which will, in effect, amend the terms of the Section 106 Agreement. They take the view that having paid their money under the Section 106 Agreement, it is really up to the Parish Council to exercise discretion on how the money is to be spent. Any term of the FL which limits that discretion is unnecessary. He will tell Helen Hancox so when he is next in touch with her.

7. Warwickshire County Council – update

- a. WCC Cllr Redford said that his Member's Dedicated budget was currently unallocated so he might have available funds on which this Council could draw. There followed a brief discussion as to the merits of the Canal access scheme. The budgeted cost referred to by FoRGE is approximately £290,000. He said it might be possible for a claim to be made upon his budget for some assistance with that project; in answer to the Clerk, he said there was probably a form to be filled in.
- b. There followed a discussion about the location of the County budget towards the project for the cycle track putting Radford Semele and Sydenham together. Cllr Noonan queried that the scheme was marking time; Cllr Redford suggested that she should contact Scott Tompkins at WCC for a progress report.
- c. Cllr Sanderson then raised the question of progress on The Greenway (climate friendly) scheme and it's apparent lack of progress. Cllr Redford said there was ongoing discussion with the adjoining landowner to Offchurch Road in order to acquire appropriate land to complete the scheme; there might be consideration of compulsory purchase but that stage had not been reached.

8. Warwick District Council – update

- a. WDC Cllr Mrs Noonan said that following her appointment to the WDC Planning Committee she had been advised that she should withdraw from the meeting whilst Planning Applications are being discussed. This Council took the view that it was unnecessary for her to withdraw from the discussion in every case, it might be appropriate in a case in which she had a particular interest.
- b. She said she would explore with WDC the present position concerning the cycle way and report back.
- c. She drew attention to the boundary changes proposed which will involve Radford Semele being part of Warwick and Leamington at the next Election.

9. Financial Matters

- 1) The Clerk reported that the balance on the operating account is currently £4,881 approximately and the balance on the investment account is currently £93,271 approximately; of this, taking into account the actual items of restricted reserves, the unrestricted balance is £44,973 approximately.
- 2) A number of payments were approved for payment as per the tabled list, proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.
- 3) The Clerk reported that the External Audit had now been completed and tabled a copy of the Auditors' Certificate (to be displayed on the notice board and website). Cllr Friar and himself had found dealing with representatives of the Auditors to be unsatisfactory and it had been AGREED with WALC that the Clerk would submit a short paper to them for their pending discussion with the External Auditors (as a number of complaints had been received from other parish councils).
- 4) A list of regular donations were approved as per the tabled list (Cllr Sabin and Cllr Friar did not vote), proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Carter.
- 5) The RSPC self-audit is in hand by the Chairman.

10. Correspondence

- 1) The WALC AGM is to be held on 15th November 2023 at Stratford upon Avon Town Hall. Parish representatives from parish councils are invited. No one present took this up.
- 2) The Clerk reported that the next Police meeting is to take place on 20th November 2023 at a site to be confirmed; he reminded Council that at the previous Police meeting which had taken place in August, it was said to be helpful in dealing with local issues. Representatives from this Council are invited.
- 3) The Clerk referred to a circular letter received from WALC drawing attention to Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership. This is a prospective scheme to allow members of the public to submit a speed concern through a single online location. They are currently working on a pilot project for this – it is not yet open to the public. Comments from interest parties are welcome. Cllr Munn said he would look into it.
- 4) Cllr Sanderson had brought up the possibility of tree planting adjacent to the pond owned by this Council and it was AGREED that further thought would be given to this – Cllr Friar to secure a copy of the online registered details of the land.
- 5) Cllr Sanderson raised the question of clearance of the ditch in The Valley. This is the ditch which faces the cottages on the opposite side of the road; it was cleared by former Cllr Marriott some years ago but apparently residents are concerned at the potential of flooding. It was AGREED to look into this further to see if WCC could be persuaded to deal with it.

- 6) The Clerk reminded Council of a previous difficult correspondence he had had with anonymous complainants concerning the Sports & Social Club. The complainants appear to be based in Godfrey Close and are currently declining to give their identities. The Clerk had twice challenged them to attend a Council meeting and put their case which they had failed to do. A further note had been received recently by the Clerk pointing out that there had been no action taken on this Council's part; the Council agreed with the Clerk's proposal to reply to this correspondence stating as before that further discussion would not be entered into unless the complainant appeared before Council and put their case.
- 7) A circular style letter had been received by the Clerk indicating that the equipment in the defibrillators was nearing the end of its life. The Chairman had undertaken to investigate, in consultation with former Cllr Sudbury who had dealt with the matter originally. The matter is ongoing.

11. Current Planning Matters

Cllr Carter spoke to the Planning Matters:

- 1) W/23/0471 & W/23/1574 – The decision concerning The Leasowes was subject to appeal - pending.
- 2) W/23/0730 – 7 St Nicholas Terrace application granted 12.9.23.
- 3) W/23/0929 – 32 Lewis Road application refused.
- 4) W/23/0939 – A decision on 36 Slade Meadow is pending.
- 5) W/23/1238 – A decision on 32 Lewis is pending.
- 6) 22/00001/FUL – The Solar Farm adjacent to The Fosse and Cedar Tree Farm –The appeal by the developer in relation to this application was allowed on 13 September 2023..
- 7) 23/01305/FUL – Solar Farm. The revised scheme submitted in relation to the Solar Farm adjacent to the Fosse Way and Cedar Tree Farm was approved by Stratford District Councillor 18 August 2023.
- 8) South Warwickshire Plan – nothing to report.

12. Footpath W123

The Clerk reported that our application to challenge the refusal by WCC to make available their records have been put to the ICO who have now issued a decision and refused the application. As a matter of urgency, the Clerk prepared a portfolio for obtaining legal advice from the solicitors linked to WALC and recommended by them. The solicitors are headed up by Roger Taylor, current editor of the textbook Arnold Baker and well known to the Clerk over many years. Mr Taylor issued a brief written legal Opinion in which he advised that the prospects of success at a Tribunal and overturning the ICO's decision is unlikely to be successful. (The Clerk had restricted its circulation of the Advice Notice to the Chairman and Cllr Carter). It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would give the whole matter of the footpath further review.

13. Playing Field update

- a. Cllr Dempsey said he had procured a number of sets of keys to the bollards on the Playing Field; one set to be lodged with the Clerk for safe keeping.
- b. He asked Council whether there was sufficient interest in carrying out refurbishment to the shelter in the centre of the Playing Field. It was AGREED he should review the potential cost of this and report back.
- c. The Clerk reported that he had received two telephone calls from a resident in Lay Gardens representing two households; their complaint is that their rear gardens are being invaded by overgrown brambles and other vegetation in the Playing Field. The rear gardens are located in the far corner of the Playing Field from the Community Hall. It was AGREED that Cllr Dempsey would investigate this with a view to interim work being carried out on removing the brambles and a long term review of refurbishment of the area.
- d. He had ascertained that it was possible to obtain at low cost standardised forms of notices prohibiting ball games which could be set up on the Playing Field as previously discussed. The wording can be agreed and the locations agreed, he will implement these. It was AGREED that he would report back with suitable wording.

14. Report from the Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Malin reported that there are a number of events booked at the Hall which is good for business. During December there is to be an Arts Festival.

15. Report on Sports & Social Club

Cllr Mrs Malin said there was nothing to report; the current position is that there is no existing management committee as the previous members of the committee have all resigned. She will report back.

16. Telephone Box

Cllr Friar presented a report on the current situation concerning the telephone box. He calculated that the likely costings will be £2,100. He sought approval from the Council. It was AGREED that he should proceed on the basis of this cost, proposed by him and seconded by Cllr Carter. The Clerk advised that it would be a cautious move to check with WCC Highways whether any specific permissions or licences of them were required bearing in mind that previously he had approached WCC, when removal of the box was contemplated, whereas the present position was different. The contact point is Gerald Brooks at Highways Dept.

17. Any other business

1. The Chairman was pleased to note that Mrs Gulliver has agreed to become a Councillor and he noted also the attendance of Mr Roe who had expressed an interest. He recommended to Cllrs that a continued search for new councillors is carried on.
2. It was AGREED that Cllr Mrs Gulliver would take over the School Liaison role; she had been entering into correspondence with the Head and Deputy Head.
3. The Clerk had been investigating the possibility of renewing registration of The White Lion as a Community Asset but found that the person/department at WDC previously dealing with the matter could not be located. He had been given a new lead by the Deputy Monitoring Officer and will pursue that as registration must be renewed before January 2024.

18. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on the 30th October 2023. This meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date October 2023

Counter signed.....

Date October 2023