

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 26th September 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele.

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

In attendance: WCC Cllr Redford and Julia Cooley representing FoRGE

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Munn (holidays) and WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt (WDC meeting). The Chairman referred briefly to the sad passing of the late Queen Elizabeth; the Clerk confirmed that a notice of condolence prepared by Cllr Sudbury had been put up on the noticeboard and on the website. Cllr Mrs Malin spoke to arrangements for the Book of Condolences which has been signed by a number of residents. A period of silence, in memory of Her Majesty, was observed by those present.

It was recorded that former councillor Tunde Musa had resigned from the Council with effect from 31st August 2022. Cllr Sabin and Cllr Friar declared an interest in the matter of the charity donations under item 11.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th July 2022

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved, proposed by Cllr Follett and seconded by Cllr Sudbury.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25th July 2022

- a. There was no news from Highways Dept on review of the incline in Lewis Road/The Valley.
- b. The application to Severn Trent Water in respect of funding for the canal access is in hand (Cllr Friar has been in consultation with FoRGE).
- c. The Clerk had had no response from Highways Dept concerning the paving slabs outside the shop but it appeared that they had been rectified; he had advised the resident to make a claim though he could not undertake it for her.
- d. Cllr Hitchcox said that he had discussed, with Mrs Wyatt, possible sites suitable for tree planting.

4. Speedwatch update

Cllr Dempsey spoke to a report which he had tabled. It was noted that a number of drivers had been reported to the Police and will receive warning letters.

5. Traffic management issues

1. It was noted that Mr Shail Chohan had not yet produced a response to the issues raised in the Tom Head report or followed up a significant number of action points identified at the meeting on 21st January 2022.
2. Charles Barlow, at a date around the meeting date, [and subsequently Mr Chohan] had stated that they would bring forward proposals to deal with the issues raised by RSPC at that meeting but these proposals have not been forthcoming. WCC Cllr Redford said that, if he was supplied with copies of emails to which Highways Dept had not replied, he would see what he could do to expedite the matter.
3. The Chairman referred to the inadequate road markings which had been placed on the A425 in the Village following resurfacing; Cllr Redford said this would be seen to when time had allowed the new surface to settle down.

4. The Chairman expressed his concern at the spasmodic arrangements for closing roads for work to be carried out without due notice being given; this was particularly acute in relation to sites where HS2 were involved. Cllr Redford said that, apart from emergency notice, the utility contractors and others are expected to give 2 weeks' notice to Highways Dept but this was not being observed. He is due to have a meeting shortly with HS2, the Police Commissioner and the MP to review this. He said that RSPC is not alone in being a victim of the spasmodic arrangements.
5. The previous Minutes referred to the overgrown hedgerows on the A425 and the Clerk confirmed that he had written to the householders concerned and the offending hedgerows had been cut back.

6. Section 106 and CIL issues

1. As was referred to in a previous Minutes, the Clerk had received a note from Helen Hancox of WDC regarding The Cricketers Funding Letter which she said she was in the process of drafting; however, this was many weeks ago since when he had been sending regular reminders to her - his last reminder to her was dated 4th September 2022.
2. Cllr Sabin reported that he had read a report in The Courier, dated 12 August 2022, which gave details of decisions made by Cllr P Butlin, WCC Portfolio Holder, Financial and Property, on 5th August 2022. These decisions involved the 'Addition of Developer Funded Highway Schemes to the Capital Programme'. One of these schemes related to the 'Provision of a pair of bus stops with infrastructure and traffic management within 1km of the development site on Southam Road in Radford Semele'. Approximate cost £49.1k. The Chairman later ascertained that this developer contribution related to a sum of £49k requested in a S106 agreement, dated 14th September 2004, attached to planning application W/03/0281. WCC had apparently overlooked this contribution and subsequently interrogated the WDC planning website to obtain a copy of the S106 Agreement. The Chairman suggested that, as the original intention of the contribution was to improve bus stops in Radford Semele, the sum should be used to improve/upgrade the stop opposite the end of Lewis Road. This has been mentioned on numerous occasions as not being fit for purpose, in as much, it is inaccessible to wheelchair users as well as restricting pram and push chair users. It was proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Sudbury that the sum of £49k should be allocated to improve the aforementioned bus stop. Cllrs unanimously agreed with the proposal. An appropriate written submission will be made to Cllr Redford, in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, formulated by the Chairman/Clerk.

7. Warwickshire County Council – update report

WCC Cllr Redford reported:

1. Currently WCC are carrying out trials for four separate sites to test the effectiveness of speed cameras as opposed to speed warning signs. Following the outcome of this research, WCC may budget for the installation of similar devices elsewhere. The Assistant Director of Resources, Mr Scott Tompkins, has a fund of £750,000 for this purpose.
2. He said that £106,000 had been received from HS2 to cover the costs of repair etc to roads which HS2 had been using.
3. Coventry City Council is developing a fleet of approximately 50 electric buses.
4. WCC is in collaboration with WDC on the creation of a hydrogen hub to power HGV vehicles used by them. (This is part of a move towards climate improvement)
5. The WCC area has been created 'an employment zone' by the Government so a subsidy should be attracted from them – he referred to one employer where 6,000 jobs are likely to be created.

8. Warwick District Council – update report

In the absence of WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, the Clerk reported briefly on her behalf:

- a. WDC is busy creating the hydrogen hub as mentioned; they are still looking for a tenant for the Gigafactory near Baginton Airport.
- b. The joint working party on the SWLP plan is proceeding.
- c. The Canalside DPD consultation is now on ice.
- d. Half a dozen new recruits have been found for the Planning Enforcement Office so it is expected that the backlog of planning enforcements will be improved (note: a return received by her from the officers shows a reduction from approximately 275 in the original backlog to a current backlog of 89 cases).
- e. Despite the unrest a month or so ago, the process of bin collections appears to have settled down.

9. Telephone box

It was AGREED that a working group would be formed to review the current position: Cllr Hitchcox, Cllr Dempsey and Cllr Friar. Cllr Friar pointed out that both the estimate given by former councillor Musa and the figure in the current budget were very inadequate in relation to the ultimate cost of the project. He calculated it to be about £50,000 would for the project. The Clerk reiterated his previous advice that it was impractical to consider the logistics or the cost of removing the box from its present site until the Council had determined where it would be repositioned as unnecessary, heavy, costs could be incurred in moving the telephone box more than once

10. Review of Risk Management Procedure

As Cllrs had not had a full opportunity to consider the Risk Management Procedure document for this meeting, it will be adjourned to the next meeting in October. Cllr Friar urged Cllrs to review the document on the website etc.

11. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account was approximately £81,300 and the balance on the operating account was approximately £7,100. He had effected recently a transfer of £5,000 from one account to the other to ensure liquidity.
2. A number of payments were authorised as per the schedule previously tabled, including a payment to the Clerk of the second quarter of his salary of £2,101.51, proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.
3. The Annual Audit had been concluded through the submission of the AGAR form; the External Auditors confirmed that all was in order.
4. Cllr Friar spoke to the template of an Internal Audit Control document; the template had been received from the Internal Auditor, Mrs Best, with a recommendation that it be used as an economical way for the Council to review their internal procedures regularly without the time and expense of instructing an external person to review. It was AGREED that Cllr Friar and the Clerk would undertake completion of the form on a quarterly basis, the first review to be in January 2023.
5. Cllr Friar produced an amended form of donations, changing the subcategories for the Scouting Organisation. Cllr Sudbury proposed a series of mark ups on the previous year's figures which are now reflected in the awards of 2022 on the revised form (filed with the Minutes). Council reviewed the request from Sunbeams in the summer for a donation towards their Open Day event; it was decided to make a donation to them this year of £500. It was then proposed that there should be an annual donation and the Clerk was instructed to include Sunbeams on the usual schedule. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Hitchcox.
Action : Clerk

12. Correspondence

The Clerk outlined a number of items:-

- a. The human faeces found in the bus shelter in July had still not been dealt with – the Clerk is pursuing this by way of complaint to the Chief Executive of WDC.
Action: Clerk
- b. Following a talk given to his Rotary Club by Phil Clark, Head of WDC Planning Services, the Clerk had asked him for an update on the Canalside DPD consultation; he had received a letter from Mr Clark which in effect said that the original consultation was probably now obsolete as WDC are considering a fresh consultation.
- c. WALC have introduced regular Chair's Update and Clerk's Operational sessions on Zoom. They expressed the wish to get more chairmen and very many more clerks to attend these sessions. Our own Chairman had been in an assiduous attendee to date.
- d. The Chairman and the Clerk had completed the survey issued by the working party on the SWLP; this is a catch up survey and neither the Chairman nor the Clerk were impressed by its format or content.

- e. FoRGE had recently responded to a WCC consultation paper, 'Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan'. The Chairman had responded, on behalf of the Parish Council, fully supporting the views, comments and concerns submitted by FoRGE.
- f. The Clerk had received an invitation to seek grant funding which had a deadline of 16th October 2022.
- g. The Chairman, in the last few weeks, had completed the bus transport consultation.
- h. Following a review by this Council of occupants in Lay Gardens who overstepped the boundary with their belongings and rubbish, the Clerk had written to three occupants in Lay Gardens and he had received one response by way of objection to this Council's submission.
- i. The Clerk had received a another note from the resident at Slade Meadow who had previously asked him about the hinterland at the A C Lloyd site at the back of The Cricketers; she claims that they are neglecting cultivation of trees and bushes on the site and wishes this Council to improve matters. It was AGREED that the Clerk would write to A C Lloyd to see what could be done. **Action: Clerk**

13. Planning Matters

- 1. W/15/1635 – 56 Southam Road (ongoing but note recruitment of new enforcement officers)
- 2. Canalside DPD Consultation (now on ice)
- 3. SDC22/00001 – Middle Rd Farm, Middle Rd, Harbury (Solar Farm) (no decision made)
- 4. W/22/0471 – The Leasowes (no decision made)
- 5. W/22/0491 - The Leasowes, House & Cottage (ongoing and no decision made)
- 6. W/22/1393 – 3 Lewis Road

An application has been received to construct a new dwelling and parking area at 3 Lewis Road; it was noted that WCC have lodged an objection. The Chairman and the Clerk said they knew the occupiers of this address and wished to step back from the discussion on the application; the Clerk confirmed that WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt was in the same position. During discussion, a comparison was made with applications in respect of other properties in recent years which constituted over development in the context of the sites concerned. It was put to the vote as to whether this Council should object to this application and it was agreed that an objection should be made; Cllr Sabin and Cllr Friar abstained. Cllr Carter was authorised to submit the objection.

14. Website

Cllr Friar reported that the renewal of the website domain name (for three years) and linked software (for two years) (radfordsemelepc.org.uk) has been renewed with Easily.uk prior to the meeting, as it expired in September.

Parish Online is due for renewal in October, the consensus of the Council felt it was worthwhile and the renewal is under the payments to approve at the meeting (which was approved).

15. Update on the Playing Field

- 1. Cllr Follett reported that the plaque for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee tree had now been installed.
- 2. The agreement with WWT had been signed and an application by them for a grant from STW had been made. WWT (via Olivia Williams) are planning to have an opening ceremony' on 18th November 2022; it is hoped that members of this Council will attend.
- 3. Cllr Follett asked if it is appropriate for a circular letter to be sent to all the occupiers of the houses in Hatherell Road explaining the WWT scheme. What he is planning to do is to have rows of flowerbeds along the back of the houses which have their back gardens facing the Playing Field and it has always been a bone of contention. However due to the cosmetic effect of people's back gardens and decrepit fences which face on to the Playing Field, he is hoping to improve it by these flower beds but he won't have them right up against the fences..

4. Cllr Follett had prepared a draft of notices to be put up on the Playing Field. He seeks approval of the Council and / or the Clerk on the wording before installation. **Action: Cllr Follett & Clerk**
5. Cllr Follett said he considered that work on the trees which had been under discussion should be put off until the end of the bird nesting season so he would sponsor a resolution to undertake costs at the next meeting on 31st October 2022. He will prepare the costings for that meeting. **Action: Cllr Follett**
6. Due to the drought a few weeks ago, he and former councillor Henry Marriott had been reviewing the Playing Field and were surprised to find they could identify the position of land drains under the Playing Field; their location has always been a matter of speculation. They are in the process of mapping the drains from their notes.
7. Following the grant funding from HS2 previously, the time is now come for Cllr Follett to make a report on the groundworks. They are keen to have a public reaction by way of a survey which is on the website so comments have been invited. So far there have been 56 visits to the website with 26 responses to the survey.
8. The Chairman advised Cllrs that the question of disabled access to playground equipment had been raised at a recent WALC Chair's Update meeting. It is an issue that will need some consideration.

16. School Matters

Cllr Sudbury referred to a recent meeting of the WCC Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at which a report was considered which highlighted a series of measures aimed at improving safety on the roads around Warwickshire's Primary schools. Seventy schools have been earmarked for attention. He requested that Cllr Redford make enquiries to ascertain if Radford's school was included on the list.

17. Report on the Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Malin said there are a lot of bookings so they are keeping busy but having a problem with no cleaner. Weekday users tend to tidy up after their meetings but domestic/family celebration parties at weekends create a lot of mess. She is currently standing in as locum Chairman of the Committee which is looking at ways to promote public relations for both the Community Hall and the Social Club.

18. Update on Sports & Social Club

Cllr Sudbury reported that a successor to the retiring Steward has been appointed and will be taking up the position at the end of October.

19. Any other business

1. Footpath W123
 - i. There was considerable debate over the current position concerning Footpath W123, the Clerk reiterated the legal opinion he had given on many occasions that the core point was that, although the occupant of 9 Lythall Close claims rights over the footpath, his personal title document does not record any such rights. It is stated by WCC that his advisors about a year ago submitted documents to WCC to justify his claims. The documents are alleged to have been submitted on a 'confidential basis'. The Chairman and the Clerk have been working on a challenge to this with a series of emails during 2022 but Richard Barnard of WCC Footpaths Dept has not provided a detailed reply; he states that he is advised by WCC Legal Dept to say the confidential information should not be disclosed to RSPC. To date no justification has been received for this despite requests from the Clerk
 - ii. WCC Cllr Redford said he had been approached by a resident by way of complaint (incidentally referred to by the Clerk in a recent email to Mr Barnard); the resident had claimed that vehicular damage was being caused to manholes, water mains and flowers alongside the footpath. Cllr Redford, accompanied by a witness with a camera, had checked these details and found no evidence to support them. Cllr Redford said this made his position on the complaint very difficult but if the Clerk were to forward to him copies of emails sent to Mr Barnard, he would see if he could pursue the matter with the latter. **Action: Clerk**

- iii. The question of RSPC making a formal application under the Freedom of Information Act was considered. The Clerk advised that there could be a cost element for making such an application but he will review it.

Action: Clerk

2. Councillor Vacancy

The vacancy for a councillor was briefly considered but it was AGREED that the statutory notice (already prepared by Cllr Friar) should be published and Warwick District Council notified.

20. Date of next Council meeting

The next meeting will be on 31st October 2022 when Cllr Sabin will be absent. It was AGREED that Cllr Sudbury would act as Chairman of the meeting. This meeting closed at 9.50 pm

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date.....October 2022

Counter signed.....
Clerk to the Parish Council

Date.....October 2022