

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 28th November 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, Lewis Road, Radford Semele.

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

In attendance: WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, WCC Cllr Redford accompanied by Mr Scott Tompkins and Mr Shail Chohan of WCC Highways Dept and a representative from FoRGE

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A T Hitchcox (positive Covid test). There were no declarations of interest.

Traffic management and Section 106/CIL issues

The Chairman outlined the history of their views on traffic management presented by this Council to WCC since the Clerk's definitive letter to WCC dated 7th May 2019. The summarised incidents were:-

- I. There had not been a positive response to that letter until October 2020 when, during the course of his enquiries at WCC meetings, the Chairman had got to meet Charles Barlow and Rob Powell of WCC; as a result of which it was suggested that a meeting between representatives of the Highways Dept and this Council would have a face to face meeting as Covid restrictions were in the course of being removed. A distillation on the points raised in the Clerk's letter are three major issues: - the installation of an electronic pedestrian crossing, the installation of pedestrian refuges at the junctions of Kingshurst and Lewis Road with the A425 and the imposition of double yellow lines at strategic points at the A425 junctions with Lewis Road and School Lane.
- II. Concern that the Chairman's enquiries over the period from 2019 to 2021 demonstrated there was a substantial fund derived from the Bovis Development under Section 106 Agreement, on which the present calculation of value was approximately £750,000. He had raised this on numerous occasions, the point being that this sum is adequate to cover the cost of the above remedial projects.
- III. He said the projected meeting between representatives of Highways Dept and this Council took place on 21st January 2022 when himself, two Parish Councillors, and the Clerk met with Cllr Redford and five representatives from Highways Dept. An agreed summary of the discussion at that meeting were drawn up between Mr Barlow and the Clerk. Copies were handed to the WCC personnel of a report by Mr Tom Head, a civil engineer, which had been commissioned by this Council. No response has yet been received by this Council from Highways Dept on the contents of Mr Head's report.
- IV. As a result of his enquiries, the Chairman had more recently discovered the existence of a fund of approximately £49,000 which has been held in WCC coffers for 18 years more or less unnoticed; this derives from a Section 106 Agreement entered into with the developers of the Ricardo's site. He had established with Mr Nigel Whyte, the Principal Transport Planner of WCC, that this fund can now be made available for improvements to the east-bound bus stop opposite the end of Lewis Road.
- V. The Chairman highlighted his investigation into the installation of a Puffin crossing at Ufton; his submission is that a similar crossing could be installed on the A425 between the main part of the Village and the new Bovis development. Previously it has been argued that the sight lines of such a crossing are inadequate, but he demonstrated that similar concern has not been expressed at the geographical scenario at Ufton. He argues that the 2011 census recorded the population of Ufton as 319, whilst the new Bovis development numbers 210 houses alone, irrespective of the existing number of dwellings in the main part of the Village. Acting upon advice received from Mr Whyte the Chairman informed Council that he had submitted a formal request, to WCC Infrastructure Team, that an electronic (puffin) crossing be installed on the A425 between the bus stop opposite the end of Lewis Road and the entrance to the Bovis development. This to be fully funded by the Highway Infrastructure Contribution received by way of the S106 Agreement with Messrs. Bovis.
- VI. Mr Tompkins apologised for the delay during the overall period since May 2019; he said that his department were working on improving communication and assessment of requirements by putting a lot of current issues online. They would take steps to review the report by Mr Head, with which Mr Chohan agreed. The Chairman then threw open the matter for general discussion.

- VII. The Clerk referred to the summary file which the Chairman had prepared for the meeting on 21st January. Analysis of this had been made, in the Minutes of the meeting and in action points identified by Mr Barlow arising out of the meeting. The summary had been returned by Mr Barlow to the Clerk with responses from different Highways departments (identified in colour). It had been compiled in February 2022 but a number of the points identified had not been followed up.
- VIII. Cllr Sudbury had received a referral from a resident pointing out the inadequacy of the signage at the entrance to Semele Park; the Clerk pointed out that traffic picks up speed during the 50mph section from The Fosse and then there is a very short distance under the 40mph limit before the 30mph signage between the entrance to Semele Park and Lewis Road. His observation from his own premises is that traffic regularly descends the hill from Semele Park into the Village at speeds of at least 40mph. Cllr Munn referred briefly to the findings of his SpeedWatch team; his observations during the months that it had been operating demonstrate a significant number of vehicles that are travelling in this area at speeds in excess of 30mph. The consensus of the discussion was there is a case for transfer of the 30mph limit to a position east of the entrance to Semele Park. Mr Tompkins said there are competing issues because signage needs to be effective; changing the location of the speed limits will require an order in council from WCC but there appeared to be logic in the suggestion of changing the location of the 30mph limit. The Chairman pointed out that he had calculated that there was £8,000 left over from signage costs which could be applied to fund this potential project; he pointed out that currently because of the location of the 40mph speed limit/signage the official speed limit within the estate of the Bovis development is 40mph which is excessive for an estate. Mr Chohan said he would investigate the availability of the fund. The Chairman referred to this Council's previous suggestion of the creation of gateways to the Village on which Mr Tompkins said that they may have to be funded by the Parish Council. There were no objections to these in principle.
- IX. The Clerk raised the point that there is a serious issue as to excessive speeds of drivers within the Village, in particular Lewis Road. This is exacerbated by the random parking. Cllr Munn gave a brief resume of the campaign for 'Twenty's Plenty' signs and Mr Tompkins said that currently WCC is looking at a potential scheme for 20mph speed limits throughout the County; the difficulty is that one size does not meet all and experience shows that signage does not automatically change the attitudes of drivers.
- X. Cllr Carter made two main points: firstly, a clear response is required from WCC to state what requests by this Council are out of the question so this Council does not have an ongoing responsibility to pursue them on behalf of the public; secondly, a programme or set of target dates needs to be put in place so that this Council can monitor progress on all the relevant issues. The Clerk suggested that there should be an identified point of contact for this Council to avoid the historical scenario of correspondence from this Council going to a variety of different departments such as Highways. Mr Tompkins said he would be the point of contact for the Clerk and this Council. The Clerk suggested that once Mr Tompkins has set up a review working party to deal with all the current issues, the practical approach might be to continue the existence of the working party with representatives from this Council involved. Mr Tompkins said he would look at that.
- XI. The Chairman thanked WCC Cllr Redford for organising the visit and thanked Mr Tompkins and Mr Chohan for their time and attendance.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 31st October 2022

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

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 31st October 2022

The Clerk outlined some matters :-

- a. Following the complaint by a resident in Slade Meadow as to the cultivation of the back land to The Cricketers development, AC Lloyd have confirmed that they will contact the resident direct.
- b. Outstanding issues regarding the Section 106 Agreement for the Ricardo development had already been outlined by the Chairman.
- c. A recent application by Air Ambulance to install a second-hand clothing bank at the Community Hall car park had been dealt with by Cllr Dempsey. Ensuing negotiations culminated in a written agreement being signed (the Clerk's main requisition on this had been the production of a satisfactory public liability insurance certificate). Cllr Dempsey will be making arrangements for location of the clothing bank unit.
- d. Whilst not strictly a matter arising, the Clerk invited Cllr Munn to speak to his SpeedWatch report which he had tabled. He indicated that they regularly recorded on 200 cars per session lasting about one and a quarter hours; they continue to seek further volunteers but sadly some prospective volunteers did not always continue their interest after being given full details of the scheme.

4. Traffic management issues and Section 106 and CIL issues

See above

5. Warwick District Council – update report

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt gave her report:

- a. The development of the new Local Plan by Stratford District Council and WDC; this contains a strategy for homes, jobs, infrastructure and climate change. It is going before WDC to consider in the near future followed by consideration by SDC in January 2023.
- b. The current WDC housing land supply is estimated to adequate provision in excess of five years.
- c. Christmas rubbish collections during the period from 26th December to 1st January will be dealt with one day later than usual.

6. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account was approximately £96,300 and the balance on the operating account was approximately £1,500.
2. A number of payments were approved as per the schedule tabled; proposed by Cllr Sudbury and seconded by Cllr Mrs Malin.
3. Cllr Friar spoke to the Budget preparation and the Precept. In the last few days, notice had been received from WDC as to the tax base to be adopted by them which gives a point of reference for the Precept calculation. In light of this, he had put on the website revised figures for the Budget and the Precept and had invited Cllrs approval. Questions from Cllrs ensued and a particular number of questions were on analysis of the figures by Cllr Carter. It was AGREED that the Precept to be claimed from WDC will be £36,362 based on the revised figures prepared by Cllr Friar and tabled at this meeting. The Clerk expressed his appreciation to Cllr Friar for his concerted work involved in preparing the Budget and the Precept papers.

7. Current Planning Matters

1. W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road – Cllr Carter reported on the issues relating to this property were ongoing
2. W/22/0471 - The Leasowes – no decision has been made by the Planning Committee
3. W/22/0493 - The Leasowes, House & Cottage – no decision has been made by the Planning Committee
4. W/22/1393 - 3 Lewis Road – no decision has been made by the Planning Committee
5. W/22/1574 - Leasowe House - new application for a certificate of lawfulness re use as a garden
6. W/22/1661 - 40 The Greswoldes - no decision has been made by the Planning Committee

Cllr Carter had had a preliminary look at the proposals for the new Local Plan from SDC and WDC; the consultation was scheduled to be from 9th January to 20th February.2023. In between the dates, will be a consultation period for the public when it will be important for this Council to review the recommendations and respond.

On a different issue, he undertook to review the consultation paper put out by SDC Open Space and CIL protocol in the period from 3rd November 2022 to 16th December 2022.

8. Footpath W123

The Clerk had served formal notice on WCC Footpaths Dept of a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. He had challenged WCC to prove any exemption claimed by them under Section 41 of the Act. In view of the forthcoming Christmas holiday period, he had allotted them a time to respond of 42 days expiring in January 2023; however, he had received an instant acknowledgement from their technical team dealing with such requests and they stated that they would respond by the 22nd December 2022.

9. Update on Website

Cllr Friar spoke briefly to the facilities on the Parish website he endeavoured to put a lot of information on the Parish website by way of information pages such as notice of free parking at Christmas in Leamington, Council Tax reduction scheme and health strategy. Although not directly Parish Council business, this Council should be seen to be informative and helpful by inclusion of this material.

10. Playing Field update

Cllr Follett outlined several matters:-

1. Following the funding by HS2 of the adult gym equipment, he had been required to make a report; this had been instantly accepted by HS2 which cleared this Council from any obligation on claw back of the funding.
2. New signage for the Playing Field has been installed – he had presented the account for this earlier in this meeting.
3. A large number of wildflowers and plants have been installed in the Playing Field with the help of ten volunteers (six of whom came from FoRGE). He is anxious that they should not be mown down when the grass cutting contractor next visits; the Clerk to advise the contractor. **Action: Clerk**
4. He is proceeding with arrangement for tree pruning on 29th November – he has notified the householder at 70 Lewis Road accordingly.
5. He had not had an opportunity to consider the issue of the gates on the children’s play area but will look into the safety factor regarding them.
6. He confirmed that the joint work carried out by him with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust had now been concluded.

11. Any other business

1. The Chairman referred to a meeting on 6th December 2022 of the Warwickshire Town and Parish Councils and WCC Reference Group. The main agenda item was Community Emergency Plans; he encouraged Cllrs to join with him in attendance. (The Clerk and Vice-Chair tendered their apologies for absence)
2. Cllr Dempsey referred to a brief report he had tabled on the Lengthsman Scheme; it involves the use of volunteer labour to assist in public works supplement done by employees of the Principal Authorities. It was AGREED that this should be further reviewed.
3. The Clerk reported that he had received from the Police a report on recent crime records; none of the items in the report related to the Village.
4. The Clerk raised the general issue of potential support by this Council for needy people suffering from cost-of-living rises. In particular, the provision of financial assistance and the provision of warm hubs. Cllr Mrs Malin explained that she had canvassed both the Baptist Church and the Community Hall on the question of provision of a hub; it was not currently practical for the Hall to make that provision and it is understood that the Baptist Church make provision on Mondays every week. The Chairman briefly referred to a report circulated by WCC Cllr Redford dated 26th November 2022 on assistance for Warwickshire residents struggling to pay utility bills. Cllr Redford said there were grants of up to £1000 available for this purpose. The Clerk referred to a leaflet on the cost-of-living expenses which he had received by email from WCC.

The outcome of this discussion was:

1. Cllr Friar will highlight these various matters on the website and invite the public to make contact if they wished
2. The Clerk will supply Cllr Friar a copy of the leaflet on the cost of living with a view to him obtaining hard copies from WDC.
3. The Clerk will write to the incumbents of St Nicholas Church and the Baptist Church offering support from this Council in connection with steps they are taking to help the needy
4. Cllr Mrs Malin will review the position concerning the Community Hall to see what facility can be made for a warm hub

12. Date of next Council meeting

The Chairman wished all present a happy Christmas and reminded Cllrs. that the date of the next meeting is 30th January 2023. This meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date.....January 2023

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

Date.....January 2023