

# RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

## APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023 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 A T Hitchcox, Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr R Munn

**In attendance:** WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, WCC Cllr Redford, a representative from FoRGE, Debbie Gulliver (for the Community Hall) and Rebecca Noonan (Conservative Association)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Friar (family illness) and PCSO Sharon Underwood who filed a brief crime report to the Clerk. The Clerk stated that there was nothing relevant to this meeting in the report. There were no declarations of interest, save that the Chairman referred to a written declaration from Cllr Friar on being nominated as Treasurer of the Community Hall.

### 2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The Minutes of the last meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November were approved, proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Sudbury.

### 3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The Clerk referred to some matters which he had identified:-

- a. Cllr Dempsey reported that all was in hand with the Air Ambulance in setting up the clothing bank; arrangements have been agreed and the unit was installed on the 16<sup>th</sup> January. .
- b. The Clerk reminded the meeting that A C Lloyd had undertaken to deal direct with the resident in Slade Meadow who was not happy with their management of the back land of the Cricketers; the Clerk had not heard back from A C Lloyd but assumed that they had the matter in hand.
- c. The Clerk had written to the Rev Green and the Rev Pickford as to this Council assisting with any arrangements they might have as to Warm Hub provision in support of the needy; both clerics had responded immediately thanking the Council for their interest; if they need any help they will let the Clerk know. Cllr Mrs Malin said that difficulties with the diary meant the Community Hall could only offer a limited service but potentially the best date for a Warm Hub would be Tuesdays.

### 4. SpeedWatch update

Cllr Munn had tabled four pages of a report to update on SpeedWatch.

These were general points in the usual format, a schedule of some statistics on activity (e.g. times and locations of monitoring and numbers of vehicles observed), the third one was a sample letter approved by the Police to write to people reported for speeding, and finally the fourth one was a Q & A document he had prepared for publication in the newsletter for the Sports & Social Club; he sought to answer a number of questions which the public, from time to time, raised as to how the project operates.

### 5. Traffic management issues and Section 106 and CIL issues

1. At the Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November, Scott Tompkins of WCC had agreed to make arrangements for a site visit and to meet up with the Chairman, Clerk and other Parish Councillors; the Clerk had written to him twice since Christmas asking about progress and received no positive response.
2. The Clerk reminded Council that at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November Mr Shail Chohan who had accompanied Mr Tompkins, said he would go into detail on the report by Mr Tom Head and furnish a written response; that had not transpired (WCC Highways team had had a copy of Mr Head's report since the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022). It was AGREED that the Chairman and the Clerk would pursue matters.

**Action: Chairman & Clerk**

## **6. Section 106/CIL**

1. The Clerk outlined that in the Autumn after a review with the Chairman concerning the money due from The Cricketers, he had written to Helen Hancox to obtain a view (definition) of WDC's understanding of the wording use in the Section 106 Agreement with A C Lloyd and repeated in her draft Funding Letter. The issue is whether the funding is restricted by the wording to play units on the Council's land or whether the funding can be applied generally to ongoing maintenance and capital projects in the Playing Field as a whole. Despite a couple of reminders, the Clerk had not received a response from her.
2. The Chairman outlined that he was pursuing the available funds from the Ricardo development in respect of the refurbishment of the area of the bus stop at the junction of Lewis Road and the A425 and also the proposal that a footpath be constructed between the other bus stop and the junction of Kingshurst. Nigel Whyte of WCC was dealing with this.
3. The position concerning the proposed cycleway into Leamington from Radford Semele and funds available for the canal access scheme was discussed at length. The Chairman reported that at a meeting of Portfolio Holder Decisions/Leader Decisions held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, WCC Cllr. Peter Butlin approved the allocation of £252k grant funding from National Cycle Network Activation Programme to the A425 Radford Road Cycle Route capital scheme to deliver cycle infrastructure on the A425 Radford Road between Leamington Spa and Radford Semele. Sustrans were also successful with a bid to the same fund to deliver A425 crossing improvements and two new access ramps to the canal towpath. Following discussions between WCC, Canal and River Trust and Sustrans, it was resolved that C&RT will utilise part of the funding to deliver the two ramps and towpath improvements and WCC will deliver the crossing and other improvements along the A425 Radford Road. Cllr Redford confirmed that the £95k S106 developer contribution held by WCC, would be used to deliver the scheme, in addition to the grant funding received. In the light of this information the preparation of the grant application by FoRGE was currently on hold.

## **7. Warwickshire County Council – update report**

1. Cllr Redford apologised for any shortcomings on his part due to illness around the Christmas holiday period and he is now back in action.
2. WCC had given a focus now on Phase 1 of the cycle way to Kenilworth.
3. Preliminary work had been done by HS2 on construction of the footbridge across The Fosse.

## **8. Warwick District Council – update report**

WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt reported:

- a. The South Warwickshire Local Plan is now into its second consultation phase running from February until the 6<sup>th</sup> of March; it is open to any member of the public to make a contribution. The Chairman confirmed that this Council will be putting in a response – a working party to be created later on in this meeting. Despite last year's concern by the public as to the management of the emptying of bins, the scheme seems to have settled down. Renewal of permits for green bins has now opened and will run until a date in March. The charge for this year is £40 (previously notified when the scheme started).
- b. The Chairman asked as to the position on insurance cover when the bins are on the pavement (having been correctly put there by the householders) and an accident occurs, e.g. a member of the public falls over them etc. Is the insurance liability that of the householders or WDC or WCC? The Clerk said the question is best posed to the WDC Contracts Manager, Mrs Zoe Court.
- c. She had received a further letter from a resident in the vicinity of Footpath W123. This gentleman has corresponded with her and Cllr Redford on various occasions previously expressing his grave concern about activity going on in relation to the footpath. The Clerk said that the general position was an Agenda item at item 12. It was AGREED that a generalised reply to this correspondent should be made but it was not possible at the present time to give a definitive answer.

## **9. Financial Matters**

1. The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account is £88,900 approximately and the balance on the operating account is £4,400 approximately. In the recent months he had make a number of transfers from the investment account into the operating account to preserve liquidity.
2. A number of payments were authorised as per the sheet tabled; proposed by Cllr Carter and seconded by Cllr Munn. Two of the payments were to the Clerk; one for his quarterly salary in the sum of £2,101.51 and an annual charge for home office use of £960.94.

3. The Clerk reported that the Precept application for 2023/2024 had been lodged with WDC, by email and by hard copy.
4. The cost of living crisis was discussed as seen below under item 16.
5. The Clerk reminded the meeting that it had been previously agreed at the behest of Cllr Friar, that he and the Clerk should effect an outline quarterly audit following recommendation last year from the Internal Auditor, Mrs Best. It would be good practice for the Council to have a quarterly check on accounting procedures. This does not need to be as extensive as an annual audit and it designed as a 'ways and means' operation. The Clerk had accordingly prepared an internal audit schedule based on a template provided by Mrs Best and had received by email an outline approval from Cllr Friar. He proposed that the matter be brought before the meeting in February when Cllr Friar would be present so the document can be discussed. He then handed a copy to the Chairman.

## 10. Correspondence

The Clerk outlined a number of items:-

A report from the Scouts thanking this Council for the donation in the Autumn but also outlining their ongoing projects, material that the Clerk had offered to FoRGE for their recent newsletter, a circular letter from the Police inviting volunteers to participate in a Police Scrutiny Panel (designed to monitor the general efficiency of the Police) and confirmation from the ICO that the Data Protection Certificate for the forthcoming year had now been issued.

## 11. Current Planning Matters

1. W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road – Cllr Carter reported this property's application was ongoing
2. W/22/0471 - The Leasowes – Cllr Carter reported this property's application was ongoing
3. W/22/0493 - The Leasowes, House & Cottage – Cllr Carter reported this application was ongoing
4. W/22/1393 - 3 Lewis Road – refused
5. W/22/1574 - Leasowe House - refused
6. W/22/1661 - 40 The Greswoldes – this application has been granted
7. W/22/1893 – 11 School Lane – this application has been granted
8. W/23/0038 – 9 Hallfields – an application for a certificate of lawful development

Cllr Carter outlined the position on the South Warwickshire Local Plan for which consultation has just opened. He strongly advised this Council to make a response because there is a real risk of significant building development in the area of the Parish. The significant pages in a very large document are pages 53 to 73 which give the potential options. One option, based on the railway infrastructure, threatens a development of between 400 and 900 new houses in the Parish; a second option, based on railway and bus corridors, threatens a potential development of 1000 to 4000 houses; a third option is based on the situation of economic hubs does not appear to threaten more development in the Parish; the fourth option is a combination of the prior two which carries a potential threat of 50 to 100 houses, the fifth option is dispersed development which could involve between 400 and 900 houses.

## 12. Footpath W123

No observation was made by WCC Cllr Redford on any point so the Clerk summarised the current position:-

- a. The Chairman and the Clerk had been reviewing the response which had been received from WCC to the Clerk's formal request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In the Clerk's view, there was a significant amount of wording in it which was derived from standard template material used by the WCC Dept specialising in Information Act applications under the Act.
- b. The response itself stated that this Council has 40 days from receipt of a response to challenge it/present supplementary requests for information; the Chairman and the Clerk in conjunction with Cllr Carter will prepare this.
- c. In the Statute, if WCC do not revert in what this Council considers to be a satisfactory response then there is a statutory right of appeal to the Information Commissioners' Office.
- d. in the preliminary view of the Chairman and the Clerk, they had determined that it is now appropriate to obtain further registered material from the Land Registry; the Clerk had started the initial steps on this and would pursue further information from the Land Registry in the light of the first material that came to hand – still awaited.
- e. The Chairman reiterated his previously expressed view that it would be worthwhile for this Council to become a paid-up member of the Open Spaces Society; this will give access to their experience and archive advice – he will investigate the position and report back on the subscription rates etc. **Action: Chairman**
- f. The Clerk reminded the Council that our subscription to WALC carried with it a process through them to get legal advice at discounted rates. The retained solicitors by WALC are in fact well known to the Clerk and a consultant there is the current editor of the textbook Arnold Baker.

### **13. Update on Website**

In the absence of Cllr Friar, there was no report on the website.

### **14. Playing Field update**

Cllr Follett reported:-

1. Repairs have been carried out to the new gym equipment by Proludic (following a report from a member of the public).
2. He recalled that he was to investigate the structural operation of gates to the playing areas; he regretted his delay in this but will be attending to the matter.
3. Cllr Hitchcox proposed that the fencing alongside the Spring Lane entrance to the playing field should be taken down and the recently planted trees there replanted along the edge of the access track to define the field boundary. It was AGREED that this would be further discussed.
4. It has been observed that the tree roots near the public bench, outside the shop, were starting to lift the surface of the footway. This has the potential to become a safety issue. Cllr Follett is to investigate.

### **15. Report from the Community Hall**

- a. Cllr Mrs Malin tabled a report on the Community Hall. The significant feature is that the hire charges have been increased from the 1<sup>st</sup> January. This has not had an adverse effect on the volume of bookings.
- b. A significant number of bookings are for children's parties.
- c. The Committee have considered that the Hall is in need of redecoration.
- d. The Committee have planned to have the Hall's open day on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023; they contemplate having a Village organisations present with stands, brochures etc and wonder whether this Council would like to have a presence as well.

### **16. Report on Sports & Social Club**

There was nothing to report.

### **17. Subsistence to residents for cost of living**

There was a general discussion about the cost of living crisis. The Chairman and the Clerk had attended a virtual seminar put on by WALC in the last week or so and were expecting to receive from WALC an information leaflet with details of help lines, connections, email addresses and points of contact for either people in need who want help or people in a position to offer help. It was intended that the Clerk could distil information from this leaflet to create a form of poster to be installed on the noticeboard and on the website. Cllr Mrs Malin said, in this connection, the Community Hall Committee would keep in mind the creation of a Warm Hub if a local need is perceived.

### **18. Any other business**

1. The Clerk had attended a virtual seminar put on by WALC recently regarding preparation for the elections and a hand out had been produced by them - the Chairman had a copy. The Clerk had put a number of questions to the Monitoring Officer of WDC, Graham Leach, and received an immediate response. The guidance papers will be produced by WDC via Mr Leach but has not been yet put together but will be sent out in due course. The Clerk had asked for a sample nomination form for aspiring councillors but this has not yet been produced. The important factor is that such forms have to be filed with WDC before 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The second major point is the Council is required by law to hold its first meeting after the elections within 14 days of the election date. The outcome may not be certain until Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May (the day after the elections), the coronation is on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May and Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May is a bank holiday, four days out of the statutory 14 will have been lost. The Chairman and the Clerk will therefore be looking to have a date fixed for that first meeting after those four days but before expiry of the fourteen days (the Clerk calculates that the deadline is a date before 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023). Mr Leach will be issuing a practice guide on the procedure.
2. Cllr Dempsey provided an update on the Lengthsman Scheme; this followed consultation with a local parish council who have successfully run their scheme for six years. There were issues surrounding costs, set up and whether or not it provided best value for our parish over and above current services. A full report will be prepared and sent out for Cllrs to decide whether it is viable.

3. The Clerk reminded Council that recently there had been a meeting of the Parishes and Town Councils Group when a paper on the emergency arrangements had been produced and he had a copy on file. The Council had considered an emergency manual some months ago which Cllr Sudbury had compiled; the question now is whether this should be reviewed and expanded. Cllr Sudbury, in his capacity as Emergency Officer, expressed the view that the plan which he had drawn up a few months ago was adequate and no further action was required at the present time.
4. The Chairman reported that he had recently attended a HS2 Liaison meeting, at the invitation of Southam Town Council. A major point of interest was that in mid February 2023 a section of the A425 between Ufton and Southam will be rerouted to accommodate the HS2 tunnel construction. The speed limit on the alternative, temporary road will be 30mph. This diversion will be in force for 2-3 years.
5. Cllr Redford asked whether the Clerk had been receiving his forwarded reports regarding rail strikes and bus strikes, and whether these were helpful. The Clerk said he had been receiving them and, where the dates of the strikes were significant, he had been arranging for notices to go on the notice board and on the website. The difficulty with train strikes was that it was often uncertain whether the dates quoted by the strikers would be effective. He welcomed receipt of such notices.

**19. Date of next Council meeting**

The date of the next meeting is 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Signed.....  
**Chairman of the Parish Council**

Date.....February 2023

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

Date.....February 2023