

RADFORD SEMELE PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 27th February 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 B Friar, Cllr A T Hitchcox, Cllr Mrs J P Malin and Cllr R Munn

In attendance: WCC Cllr Redford, a representative from FoRGE and Rebecca Noonan (Conservative Association)

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt (WDC meeting). A declaration of interest by Cllr Friar was noted in respect of his nomination as Treasurer of the Community Hall; it was AGREED this should be a standing declaration.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Council meeting on 30th January 2023

The Minutes of the last meeting on 30th January 2023 were approved subject to amendments in paragraph 3 a, 11 and 14; it was AGREED that the Minutes be signed off by the Chairman subject to insertion of the amendments sought – wording supplied by various Cllrs. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Malin and seconded by Cllr Sudbury.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Council meeting on 30th January 2023

The Clerk identified 3 matters not covered elsewhere in the Agenda:-

- a. Enquiry as to update on the Air Ambulance agreement; Cllr Dempsey confirmed that the clothing bank is in place and operational.
- b. Following the point raised at the last meeting about insurance cover in the event of any accident occurring in connection with wheelie bins on the pavement at collection time, the Clerk had written to Mrs Court, the contracts manager for WDC; she stated that in view of the complex nature of the question, she is carrying out research and will report back.
- c. The Clerk had published a revised notice of meetings to be held in the forthcoming months, in particular May 2023. He confirmed that the 15th May 2023 was set in the diary for the inaugural meeting of the new Council after the elections; the date of the 22nd May 2023 is to be retained in the diary so that if business is not completed on 15th May there is the additional facility. On the 20th May 2023, there will be held the Annual Assembly (on a Saturday to attract residents on a social basis). Cllr Mrs Malin confirmed that all 3 dates are listed in the Community Hall calendar.

4. SpeedWatch update

Cllr Munn presented his report comprised in 3 papers and spoke to them. The papers were previously circulated.

5. Traffic management issues

1. The Chairman, Cllr Dempsey and the Clerk had attended a site meeting on 23rd February 2023 to meet up with Scott Tompkins, Jo Edwards, Paul Taylor and Karen Watkins from WCC Highways Dept. The meeting had reviewed the different sites connected with the A425, being sites originally flagged up by the Clerk's letter to WCC Highways dated 8th May 2019. The Chairman invited Cllr Dempsey to summarise the outcome of the meeting. An attendance note of the meeting had been agreed between the Chairman, Cllr Dempsey and the Clerk and it was proposed that a copy of this note be forwarded to the WCC personnel. They had said they would prepare drawings by way of an overview of the proposals on which consensus had been agreed at the meeting. These drawings should be available in about 8 weeks' time. Cllr Dempsey highlighted the fact that whilst the discussions at the roadside were taking place the WCC personnel had the experience of seeing drivers proceeding through the 30mph restricted area regularly at an excessive speed. The Clerk expressed thanks to Cllr Redford for his efforts in getting Scott Tompkins and his colleagues to the site meeting.

2. The Chairman referred to recent correspondence from Nigel Whyte of WCC Highways Dept in which he confirmed that action in respect of the bus stop at the junction of Lewis Road and the A425 would be dealt with by the minor works team and funded by the S106 contribution from Messrs. Ricardo (as previously discussed in correspondence with Cllr Sabin.)
3. The Chairman brought to the meeting a recent copy of the S106 Funding spreadsheet showing allocations of different projects; he noted that the figures shown previously to this Council by Janet Neale of WCC needed to be modified in the light of the figures in the current version of the spreadsheet.

6. Section 106 and CIL issues

The Clerk said the current matter relates to The Cricketers. For very many months the Chairman and himself had been negotiating the terms of a Funding Letter issued by Helen Hancox of WDC. This is the backbone to a payment due from WDC to this Council under the terms of a Section 106 Agreement between WDC and A C Lloyd. The most recent draft produced by her at the end of November 2022 was unacceptable to the Chairman and the Clerk and a requisition has been raised with her on it. Her recent response to that requisition is disappointing. The Clerk is to have a meeting in the near future with A C Lloyd to review the position.

7. Warwickshire County Council – update report

1. Cllr Redford recommended that the file note be sent to Scott Tompkins (as mentioned above).
2. He was asked about the logistics of the HS2 bridge over The Fosse; work is to start on 4th March 2024 and is expected to be completed on 13th February 2025.
3. The cap on bus fares is to be extended for another 3 months.
4. He recommended a reminder be sent to Mr Tompkins' team; he can help with internal politics and the allocation of work projects if pressure from the outside is maintained.
5. There was a brief discussion about the provision of bus services. The Chairman mentioned that he had attended a Warwickshire Town and Parish Councils and WCC Reference Group meeting on 9th February. Stuart Payne, WCC Lead Officer Transport Delivery presented a session on 'Demand Responsive Transport' in Warwickshire. Trials were being undertaken in North Warwickshire but Cllr Redford made the point that provision of bus services is costly and there is always a question mark as to whether residents will use the services.

8. Warwick District Council – update report

In the absence of WDC Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt, the Clerk said he had no report save that he brought forward on her behalf a copy of a letter she had received from the Leamington & District Table Tennis Association. As is known, they have premises adjacent to the Community Hall. The letter seeks assistance from her to obtain a grant from the Sports Development Fund run by WDC. The Clerk reported on this letter purely for this Council's information so they are aware of the application, but he reported that Cllr Mrs Leigh-Hunt had told the applicants that they must apply to the appropriate committee; it was not something in which she had a hand.

9. Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the balance on the investment account was £88,000 and the balance on the operating account was £1,600 approximately.
2. A number of items on the authorisation of payments sheet were approved (except that pay due to the Clerk and an invoice in respect of purchase of the book Arnold Baker) were put over to the next council meeting; proposed by Cllr Friar and seconded by Cllr Munn
3. The Clerk had prepared a quarterly Internal Audit check sheet which had been briefly discussed at the previous meeting in the absence of Cllr Friar. He now confirmed his approval of the format of the sheet but took the view that analysis of the audit check should be carried out by someone other than himself and the Clerk. It was AGREED that Cllr Sudbury would carry out a review of the Internal Audit check sheet and make recommendations as appropriate.
4. The Chairman submitted that it would be useful for this Council to pay a subscription to The Open Spaces Society who have a track record for preserving the legitimate rights of footpaths use and the responsibilities of local councils in maintain the integrity of footpaths. Cllr Carter asked whether the annual subscription would include the provision by the Society of free or subsidised legal advice or other technical advice necessary. It was AGREED to subscribe to the Society for a year in principle; the Clerk to make enquiries as to cost and services., proposed by Cllr Munn and seconded by Cllr Hitchcox.

Action: Clerk

10. Correspondence

The Clerk had identified only 2 relevant items of correspondence: -

1. He had twice received a circular from WCC CCTV Services; they were offering provision of CCTV equipment. He had brought the matter to Council so they were informed of the option; after discussion, it was decided not to proceed with the suggestion.
2. A note had been received from FoRGE volunteering to revamp the telephone box on the main road; Cllr Friar said that his working party had not done any recent work on the costings but Council should be reminded that significant work to the telephone box could prove very expensive. The core issue was whether to revamp the box at its present location or have it uplifted to a new site; the latter would obviously be very costly. The Chairman expressed the view that the present location of the telephone box was inappropriate for any process of refurbishment or utilisation for any projects such as a defibrillator or book stall etc. It was AGREED that FoRGE be asked to look into feasibility - their representative present said she would report back to them .

11. Current Planning Matters

Cllr Carter said that the current position on planning matters identified as items 1 to 4 on the Agenda were as set out on the Agenda.

1. W/15/1635 - 56 Southam Road (ongoing)
2. W/22/0471 - The Leasowes (ongoing)
3. W/22/0493 - The Leasowes, House & Cottage (ongoing)
4. W/23/0038 – 9 Hallfields (ongoing)
5. South Warwickshire Local Plan – this was a serious matter and would be reviewed by Council on 2nd March 2023. He emphasised that it was essential to make representations where this Council thought it was appropriate however it was not necessary to answer all the questions in the Consultation Paper but, in his view, it is crucial to deal with the questions that impinge upon the development of this Parish. A number of Councillors will meet with the Chairman and the Clerk at 9am on 2nd March to complete the Consultation Paper.

12. Footpath W123

On the application for information sent to WCC Highways Dept, the Clerk had circulated to all Cllrs a copy of the Reply which he had lodged in retort to the Response submitted by the WCC Information Dept (purporting to be a proper reply under the Freedom of Information Act 2000). He had received a note from the Dept that they expected to respond to the Reply by 9th March 2023.

13. Update on Website

Cllr Friar said that he regularly reviewed the website to insert updates; he had observed that the WCC website was in need of revision.

14. Playing Field update

Cllr Follett reported: -

1. He had investigated with Wicksteed the provision of self-closing gates for the play areas; he is in the process of getting quotations from them and will report back.
2. It was clear that the tree roots adjacent to the seat by the Shop were becoming a problem. To cut out the roots would probably destroy the tree. It could be possible to overlay a concrete footing to stabilise the ground area. He will prepare a report on this; it was noted that as the land is that of WCC and their consent as to works is likely to be required.
3. He has commissioned manual aid to assist Joe Ingall in his work of tidying up rubbish; he will submit an account for this expense.

4. He will need to review a suggestion by FoRGE of refurbishing the wildflower area on the Playing Field in order not to conflict with the requirements set by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust recently under the agreement for support from them.
5. Cllr Hitchcox submitted a proposal to renew the hedgerow of the Playing Field alongside Spring Lane; he tabled a coloured plan photograph of the site. The Chairman asked whether the Playing Field Committee was in favour of the proposal; Cllr Follett said that he did not consider it was necessary. The Chairman put the matter to the vote on the proposal by Cllr Hitchcox, seconded by Cllr Munn; 5 of the 8 Cllrs present voted in favour of a refurbishment. The Clerk advised that if expenditure was to be involved then costings should be obtained and a resolution put forward at a future meeting of the Council.

Action: Cllr Hitchcox

15. Report from the Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Malin had circulated a report; she highlighted the difficulty of providing a 'warm hub' due to a lack of volunteers. The Clerk had not received any further communication from the clerics at either Church, so it was assumed they were progressing with their provision for 'warm hubs'.

Cllr Mrs Malin said that the main activity of the Committee was to prepare for the Open Day on Saturday 18th March 2023. She is putting out invitations to local organisations to have stands at the Open Day and welcomed contributions by way of raffle prizes for the tombola. The Clerk suggested that she let him have a public notice which could then be placed on the notice board and on the website.

16. Report on Sports & Social Club

There was nothing to report.

17. Subsistence to residents for cost of living

There was no update.

18. Any other business

1. Cllr Dempsey gave a detailed analysis of his research into the Lengthsman Scheme; whilst other parish councils may have a benefit in linking in with WCC for the scheme, he did not see a need for it in the Village. Looking at the type of works which could be undertaken by volunteers under the scheme, he did not perceive a need for their assistance because the type of works under contemplation were covered under existing arrangements. It would probably be necessary to employ a manager with implications of payroll management; the Clerk expressed the view that during his term of office, he had observed that it was easier for this Council to deal with outside contractors on an invoice basis than engage in payroll operations. Cllr Sudbury expressed the view that it was not needed. It was decided not to proceed with the scheme.
2. The procedure for the elections was outlined with reference to the details provided in the seminar attended by the Clerk put on by WALC on 24th January. Notice of the election is to be published on 17th March 2023 and nomination papers are to be lodged before 4pm on Tuesday 4th April 2023. Request for nomination forms and copies of the Electoral Register (if relevant) are to be made to the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer by email on elections@warwickdc.gov.uk
3. It was confirmed that the legal requirement for an Annual Parish Meeting would be taken up as an adjunct to the Parish Council Meeting on 24th April 2023. The wider, social meeting for residents (the Annual Parish Assembly) is confirmed for Saturday 20th May 2023 from 11am until 1pm. Cllr Mrs Malin and Cllr Friar are to organise it.

The Chairman reminded Cllrs that they would be responsible for reports (mainly chairmen of committees) and should have these available for the Annual Parish Meeting on 24th April 2023.

4. The Chairman referred to the social evening organised by the Chairman of WDC on 10th March 2023 for chairmen and clerks of parish councils; he will not be able to attend but the Clerk will be attending. The Chairman invited one of the Cllrs present to attend as his deputy. The offer was not taken up.

19. Date of next Council meeting

The date of the next meeting is 27th March 2023. This meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date.....March 2023

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

Date.....March 2023