

PARISH OF RADNAGE

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY 2013 IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL AT 8 PM

Present: Councillors: Chairman Mr Robin Fawell, Vice-Chairman Ms Elizabeth Fynn, Mrs Sue Jones, Mr Lew Perring, Mr Roy Pitcher and Parish Clerk: Mrs G MacKenzie.

Also present: County Cllr Mr Carl Etholen, and five members of the public were in attendance. Apologies for non-attendance had been received from Cllr M Blakstad.

1. Welcome and Chairman's report.

The Chairman welcomed everyone present including Buckinghamshire County Councillor Mr Carl Etholen. He then introduced members of the council explaining the areas of work they were responsible for.

2. Financial Report

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the financial situation. A summary of the report is contained herein and a full copy can be obtained on request and filed with the minutes. She explained that all expenditure made as payments are detailed against the budget set by the Parish Council in December of the previous year at a meeting to decide the annual precept requirement. This summary is copied to all councillors on a monthly basis, with a full breakdown available on request.

- There have been no election expenses during this financial year.
- As the Common Land Registration project has been completed with all pockets of land now registered with the Land Registry, legal expenses have not been required.
- Subscriptions to organisations continue with the introduction of the annual fee to the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- Grounds maintenance to areas of common land managed by the council continues to be a high expenditure for the Open Spaces budget.
- The Village Hall fundraising group have disbanded and following the replacement roof and upgrades to the kitchen the previous year, the replacement of the few remaining windows and fire detection work have been the largest of the works to be repaired and /or installed.
- The cleaner for the Village Hall resigned and a replacement cleaning company engaged and two changes in the role of bookings manager has made for a turbulent year for the council.

3. Individual reports from Parish Councillors.

The Chairman invited councillors to provide a report on each of their areas of responsibility.

a. Village Hall.

Cllr Jones reported on the Village Hall, (this being a précis of her report – a full copy of which is available on request to the Parish Clerk).

The year had seen the completion of some long term projects including:

- Replacement of all windows and doors with double glazed units
- Extractor fans fitted in the kitchen
- Refurbishment of the wooden floor
- Access improvements from hall to patio
- Improvement to the noisy heating system
- Pre-set temperature controls for each hirer use.

New ventures had also been addressed:

- Fire detection system installed

- PAT testing of electrical equipment
- New wall mounted baby changing unit
- Wall mounted first aid boxes
- Crockery and cutlery supplies increased
- Provision of absorbent mats for entrances
- Bookings telephone number transferable

Cost savings have been made in both the rubbish collection and window cleaning services and changes in storage has made better use of the available space. The key safe entry system, the new hall administrator and cleaning service are all working well. The Village Hall Advisory Group is now longer active and all suggestions can be routed direct to members of the council. Redecoration, roof insulation, acoustics and toilet refurbishment are now the priority tasks.

Thanks were offered to Elizabeth Fynn, Lew Perring and Robin Fawell for their continued help and support in managing the Hall.

b. Burial Ground.

Cllr Blakstad had provided the Chairman with a written report. Following decisions made at council meetings, the council had undertaken an obligation to maintain the Parish Burial Ground in accordance with guidance provided by the Oxford Diocese. The Parochial Church Council had also agreed to adopt the Diocese guidelines more rigidly so that the overall look of both churchyard and burial ground was consistent and in harmony with their surroundings.

c. Playground.

Cllr Perring reported that monthly inspections of the playground and its equipment continued. An annual inspection by a representative from RoSPA highlighted areas of risk, (none being high), and where practical and feasible their recommendations were being followed.

d. War Memorial.

Cllr Perring reported that following the major refurbishment which had been completed in the previous year, plans were being discussed about relaying the paving slabs in the centre of the memorial garden, but with no timescale for implementation as yet.

e. Bus Shelters.

Cllr Perring reported that despite there being no bus service to the village, local schoolchildren still used the bus shelters and that these were being checked and swept on a regular basis.

f. Open Spaces.

Cllr Pitcher reported that the grass cutting contractor had been retained for a further 2 years and that the council were pleased with his work. A small gate had been installed in the hedge between the children's playground and the recreation area in an effort to prevent dogs straying into the playground area. The village hall car park was being kept in reasonable repair with holes being filled on an as and when necessary basis.

Allotments were being well utilised. An additional tenant is pending for the Sprigs Holly Lane site and at City Allotments the council is delighted that Radnage School has taken on a small pot. There are just a couple of small plots available around the village, one of them being very overgrown and would need a lot of work to make it viable.

No work has been undertaken on the village ponds other than to keep the surrounding grass and hedges neat and tidy. The council is looking for an interested volunteer to manage the ponds on their behalf.

g. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman opened his report by thanking Elizabeth Fynn for deputising for him during periods of absence and all the councillors for their hard work during the previous year. His report then mirrored much of what was provided in each separate report herein and will not be copied herein. A full copy of the Chairman's report can be obtained from the Clerk on request and will be attached to the minutes.

The Chairman stated that raising the profile of the Village Hall was a necessary task as the usage was low and as the council relied on income from hiring out the hall it was impossible to maintain the present standards without an increase in hiring's. A resident had offered to help with improving the profile using the internet so it was hoped that this would prove useful.

The Chairman closed his report with special thanks on behalf of all the councillors to the Clerk for her hard work and expertise.

4. Open Forum and Reports from other bodies.

a. County Councillors Report.

Cllr Etholen was invited to tender a report following his recent election as the County Councillor for Ridgeway West Division which covers Bledlow, Bledlow Ridge, Bradenham, Lacey Green, Loosley Row, Saunderton, Speen, Stokenchurch, Walters Ash and Radnage.

Cllr Etholen advised that he lived in Saunderton and had represented the Risboroughs at Town, District and County level and had been with Bucks County Council for the past 4 years and was currently Vice-Chairman. He welcomed any contact direct, especially if it related to Bucks CC issues and if more appropriate he would pass matters more related to District level to the District Cllrs.

He recommended the Local Area Forum as a way of identifying funding for local projects and stated that one of his main priorities included the provision of rural transport and suggested that consideration be given to utilising the community bus service based in Stokenchurch. He heard that previous attempts to have access to the Stokenchurch community bus had been unsuccessful 'due to political problems' and that the Parish Council were once again exploring the opportunity, to be included in the service, with the committee responsible.

b. Local Plan.

The clerk advised that Wycombe District Council had begun a consultation process with parish councils in preparation for the production of a Local Area Plan due to be issued in 2015. The parish council wished to assure residents that they considered it vital that the village be represented at the initial forthcoming meeting and that one of the councillors would be in attendance. However, it was important that the concerns of the electorate be represented and the Clerk encouraged views from the public to be voiced. A lively discussion followed mainly on the matter of planning permissions as 2 of the public in particular, thought there was no consistency in the planning decisions, and that the views of the parish council seemed to be ignored. It was mentioned that a Village Plan had been in the process of being drafted some years previously but it was never finalised.

Whilst planning regulations were the main area of concern, it was also mentioned that the provision of funds for playground equipment in rural villages appeared not to be provided and therefore children in rural areas had less facilities on offer to them.

c. Map Presentation.

Resident Mr Ian Blaylock and retired parish councillor Mr Bill Pilbeam presented the Chairman with a hand-drawn village map containing information dating back to 1603 and including the identification of old field names. The map had been made by Mr Alan Ashby having been completed in 2013 following research by both Ian Blaylock and Bill Pilbeam and been 5 years in the making. It was suggested that the parish council might consider framing and hanging the map in the Village Hall. The Chairman thanked everyone involved in making this gift.

d. Open Forum

Mr Blaylock stated that following a community speedwatch survey carried out in 2009, it did not appear that any action had been taken. Cllr Etholen advised that he would be willing to source community speedwatch equipment if the village could find volunteers to operate it. It was noted that vehicle activated signs cost several thousand pounds to install and it was suggested that funding provided through the LAF might be considered.

It was requested that a copy of the annual previous year's accounts be made available and the Clerk advised that this was to be made available on the village website in the very near future.

Mr Ralph Chadwick, resident of Green End Road wished to complain about the state of the road surfaces which he considered to be totally unacceptable and a disgrace. Cllr Etholen advised that an extra £30M had been spent on improving the road condition over the past year and a further £25M was required for the next 2 years. Road conditions had deteriorated in the past due to lack of investment and it was estimated that £300M would be needed to bring roads to an acceptable standard throughout the county. As this funding was unlikely to be available, the quality of pot hole repairs and resurfacing was being examined however, the road conditions were accepted as being a major problem for the county council.

Mr Blaylock asked that a record of thanks be given to all the parish council members for all that they do on behalf of the village.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting; in particular he thanked Cllr Etholen for taking the trouble to attend.

Minutes of this meeting will be considered for approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council. The meeting concluded at 21:15 hours and was followed by refreshments and the opportunity for informal discussions with councillors.

Chairman's Signature:

Date: