

PARISH OF RADNAGE

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th MAY 2019 IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL AT 8 PM

Present:

Chairman: Cllr Mr Robert Nikiel, Cllr Mr Everton Merchant, District Cllr Shade Adoh, County Cllr Carl Etholen and 10 members of the public were in attendance and the minutes were taken by the Parish Clerk: Mrs Linda Freeth.

The meeting began informally with refreshments being available, giving residents the opportunity to meet members of their Parish, District & County councils.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from District Councillor Saeed Saddique and Parish Councillors Ms Tamsin Addison, Mr Lee Shelton, Mr Darren Ungless and Mrs Morag Wagstaff.

2. Welcome and Chairman's report.

The Parish Council Chairman opened the formal part of the meeting by welcoming everyone present and thanked members of the council for their hard work throughout the year. Special mention was made of our school, our Church and all the various groups, clubs and associations that all contribute so much to our village. Thank you.

The purpose and format of the Annual Parish Meeting was explained to all present and that the Parish Council is here to represent Radnage, is apolitical, and that being a Parish Councillor is a voluntary and unpaid position that can be very rewarding in trying to make a difference to our community. The Parish Council is currently seeking to appoint another councillor.

Councillor Nikiel went on to say:

"We have had a very busy year and in that time have said goodbye to two councillors, Peter Turner and Alex Ryan - whose energy and contribution to the Parish Council was very much appreciated. We have also welcomed 3 new councillors – Lee Shelton, Darren Ungless and Morag Wagstaff - who has now been appointed as Vice Chair – and all being part of a great team council who work hard for the good of the village.

We have managed many projects with others being planned and some still ongoing – such as the installation of new playground equipment and restoration and maintenance of the older existing pieces, ongoing landscaping with clearance works to the NE boundary of the recreation ground, the provision of a defibrillator here at the village hall and another planned for Bennett End, MVAS speeding control and safety, and we are always challenged on budgets.

Elizabeth and Phil continue to keep the bus shelters and notice boards in good condition and to also the less than glamorous job of emptying the dog poo bins. We are so very grateful to them and all other members of the community who help to keep the village clean and in good repair – it is very much appreciated!

A big thank you to our Bookings Clerk, Carol Eden for running the Village Hall hirings and enquiries, and for ensuring the hall is in good condition for each visitor. Thanks also to Tony for his help, assistance and contribution. Carol reports that the hall is in use very day of the working week and at weekends for parties, events and special occasions, with hirers being generally respectful and complimentary of the facilities.

The hall is enjoyed by a variety of hirers, clubs and associations and hosts many events. The playing fields are regularly used by Radnage Raiders FC with the focus on individual and team development, encouraging the young players to be the very best they can be."

3. Acceptance of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2018

The minutes of the APM meeting held on 16th May 2018 were approved as proposed by Cllr Merchant, seconded by Cllr Nikiel and agreed by all as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed and dated the minutes.

4. Reports from Councillors

Cllr Darren Ungless – provided a report to be included in his absence - “I have been on the Parish Council for a year now and have lived in the village for just over 5 years with our young family. We love our surroundings, which is why I wanted to play more of an active role in our community.

One of my areas of responsibility is the play area. This is checked monthly by the whole family for anything that needs attention and reported on at each meeting. The external Annual Inspection is due to be carried out soon.

We have recently added new equipment that has had some great use and we are now looking to enhance the facilities further. We have asked through Contact, and soon to be sent on Facebook, what kind of equipment the community would like. Ranging from 0-5 years equipment up to adult training equipment. My goal is to add some diversity to what we already have, that will be used and enjoyed by many.

If you have any ideas then please feel free to contact me”

Cllr Tamsin Addison – oversees any landscaping and improvement projects around the outside of the village hall to make the most of the budget available with continued improvements.

Thanks to all those who contributed to, and made possible, the provision of a defibrillator at the village hall. We received a lot of support from the WI, Progressive Supper, and British Heart Foundation. A second defibrillator is also planned with some funds already secured.

Cllr Everton Merchant – manages our tree maintenance programme, any repairs to the bus shelters, and overseeing of the MVAS device which is regularly relocated around the village.

“The Parish Council now has the MVAS in operation at the 4 sites and the data collected shows that speeds are declining, with local opinion and feedback being that it is working to improve the general speed of vehicles using our lanes. Discussions have been had in relation to obtaining a second unit to be used predominantly in the locality of Radnage School.

The tree work that commenced last year has now been completed with phase 2. Logs were left in situ for anyone who could make use of them – and they were not there long!”

Cllr Robert Nikiel – has been looking after our Green Spaces, Common Land and Allotments, as well as the Village Hall.

“Radnage has a number of areas of common land and green spaces which need to be maintained, including the recreation ground at the Village Hall and the Children's Playground. The Parish Council is responsible for the upkeep of these areas and we have a contract with a local supplier for regular grass cutting and hedge trimming. Periodically, larger maintenance works are needed and these are dealt with as individual jobs as required - examples would be tree maintenance or pond clearance. The village hall kitchens are utilised by smaller start-up businesses but not on a regular basis. Free Wi-Fi is available to all users of the building and outside space.

We also have 4 allotment sites around the village - at Sprigs Holly Lane, Bennett End, Chapel (Common Road) and City (Green Lane) – many plot holders are now adopting the ‘No Dig’ approach which seems to work well. We also have a number of grazing fields behind our allotment sites at Chapel and City and it is the responsibility of the tenants to keep these in good condition.

We have entered the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition once again this year in which we received Highly Commended Certificates of Merit in 2017 and in 2018 with some very encouraging comments. Judging will take place at the end of June / beginning of July”

Cllr Robert Nikiel continues:

“Besides the activities already mentioned, an important element of the Parish Council is to review and comment on planning applications and enforcement cases in the Parish and have done so on over 36 applications received, being objective and to ensure relevance to our area and the AONB, whilst being sympathetic to each case on an individual basis. The public are also very much encouraged to make their comments known to the planning department.

Councillors have attended many meetings and consultations on our behalf including the Unitary Council for Buckinghamshire, Bledlow Ridge Recycling Centre - hosting and facilitating a consultation meeting with Bill Chapple, Cabinet Member for Planning & Environment, the Emergency Community

meeting with NHW when the incidence of local crime rose suddenly, and the NHW Meeting in January this year, as well training opportunities covering Finance, Planning, the Rural Forum, and District meetings.

Other areas under our care:

- Grade II Listed War Memorial
- Parish Burial Ground

We would like to thank our County Councillor, Carl Etholen and District Councillors Shade and Saeed for their helpful support and enthusiasm during the year.”

Shade Adoh & Saeed Saddique – District Councillors Report – provided by Saeed ahead of the meeting -

“Both Councillors, Shade & I, have been working with residents on a range of queries mainly to do with Planning; we aim to respond to residents queries as quickly as we can and with our best endeavours.

We hold quarterly councillor surgeries in Stokenchurch Library; it is good to see residents from Radnage as well as Stokenchurch.

We recently donated our ward budgets to Radnage Parish Council for sports equipment and also for Radnage CofE Primary School.

We will continue to work with Radnage Parish Council and be of service to our constituents in Radnage. Thank you. Cllr Saeed Saddique, Wycombe District Council”

Our grateful thanks are extended to them for all that they do for us, our residents and the surrounding villages.

(Clinic dates – 22nd June, 21st Sept and 7th December. Held at the Stokenchurch Community Library between 10.30am and 12 noon. No need to book, just drop in!)

County Cllr Carl Etholen –

“I am always delighted to be able to attend meetings whenever possible and receive any feedback from constituents so that it can be directed to the correct place to find a solution or obtain further information.

In November 2018, James Brokenshire, MP confirmed the decision for one new unitary district council for Bucks. Structural Change Orders (secondary legislation) are currently going through the House of Lords which will be followed by Royal Assent. The Shadow Transition Council will then become active. On May 21st all 205 Councillors will meet together to elect the Shadow Chairman and ratify the Shadow Executive Board of 17 members, with Martin Tett as Leader.

On the 31st March 2020 the current five councils will be abolished and on the 1st April, the new Buckinghamshire Council starts with election of councillors taking place on 7 May 2020 (this also includes the election of parish and town councillors). There will be 147 councillors elected (there are currently 236) and will be from 49 county divisions each having 3. The new unitary council is to be created from the existing 5 councils. It is not a continuing authority but a brand new authority that is not contemporaneous with the past BCC. This gives the opportunity to re-invigorate the new authority to meet modern day needs of local residents and communities.

In relation to our roads, and potholes in particular, I am happy to report that these can be reported and tracked for progress easily at Fixmystreet.com

Despite objections via public consultation the Bledlow Ridge Recycling Centre closed on 31st March. Many discussions were had and possibilities for continuance of service were explored but the legalities could not be met. It is still hoped that stakeholders could take on as a community asset. The site cannot be built on / developed as it is considered a contaminated site. Costs of £170k per annum could be covered by crowd funding, with Parish Councils joining together. It is thought by many that there will be an increase in people burning their waste, fly tipping and not recycling (putting items into their grey bins), also due to charges imposed at other sites.

5. Financial Report

The Chairman asked the Clerk to give a financial report:

As the Responsible Financial Officer the Clerk gave a financial overview from the previous year.

For the last financial year Radnage Parish Council had a budgeted income of approximately £42.3K - a little lower than the previous year, despite a small increase in Precept of 4.5%, due to an anticipated reduction in Village Hall bookings, budgeted expenses and VAT claim.

The actual income was higher than anticipated (by £7000) due to an actual increase in income from Village Hall bookings, receipt of donations (playground and defibrillator) / grants and unbudgeted income from burial ground fees.

Expenditure was below the budgeted target of £55,825 at £32,600 with larger, planned projects carried forward into 2019-20 - These include the provision of further new playground equipment, a second defibrillator device, security measures, and additional MVAS.

Administration, fuel costs, equipment and supplies, and repair and maintenance costs were less than expected across all areas.

2018-19

- Finalising the landscaping project;
- Ongoing works to the playing field boundary;
- Provision of the Mobile Vehicle Activation Sign (MVAS);
- Restoration of existing equipment and provision of new equipment in the playground;
- Installation of a Defibrillator and cabinet at the Village Hall;

At year end the bank balances held were:

Treasurers Account	£36,694.31
Business Account	£31,073.01 representing £15.61 received in interest.

The accounts have undergone the annual Internal Audit and the paperwork is currently being prepared for the External Audit.

All of the accounts documentation will be available via Radnage.net once approved.

Account budgeting needs to reflect the uncertain future changes, devolution of power from central government, and an increase in financial burden that it will place upon us.

From 31 March 2020 all five current councils will be abolished and the new Buckinghamshire Council will start, with election of councillors taking place on 7 May 2020 – This will also include the election of parish and town councillors. The new unitary council is to be created from the existing 5 councils. It is not a continuing authority but a brand new one. It is thought likely that, where appropriate, Council assets and services (powers and spending) will be devolved to town and parish councils. It is not known what the full implications of this might be but we must be prepared for whatever is decided.

At this point the matter of the amount of reserves held at year end was raised. It was explained that at the end of each year there may be monies carried forward to the next accounting period as working capital for larger planned projects still to be completed, and planned expenses. Any surplus amounts are allowed for within the budget / precept planning undertaken by RPC in November of each year.

The figures will be reviewed for the years mentioned – from 2012 – and a response made by the Clerk/RFO and the Chairman.

6. Reports from our local Groups, Associations and Friends.

There are various clubs and associations within the village including the WI, St. Mary's Church PCC, GLRA, the Radnage Charity, Radnage Raiders and the British Legion to name but a few, as well as pub restaurants, farms and businesses large & small and our village school and Scout Group.

The Chairman opened the meeting to those present.

David Salisbury of Radnage Raiders FC explained that the club began in March 2016 with just 4 children. It has grown and developed so that, now, many children of all ages and abilities are able to enjoy the regular training sessions and matches.

It has been a difficult year when the club was promoted, resulting in families taking their children to bigger clubs and so, in all, 18 players from the U12s were lost. As a result the U11s for this season were put with the U12s and have managed to recruit new players. The squad has won 15 games, drew 1 (no losses) and topped the division as champions to then go on to win the Cup Final against Thame United.

The club is doing extremely well and there will be 3 teams for next year. The club have managed to pick up our first Lady Coach and hope to very soon secure the services of our first Asian coach who will hopefully take the year 5/6. There are also hopes of a new Sponsor so watch this space! Funds are always needed for kit and equipment if there is anyone who can offer financial support. It remains the intention to become a Community Trust Club in the future.

The club have been sponsored for a new machine to enable them to mark out football pitches on the village hall grounds. The Parish Council are pleased to be able to finance the expenses for this covering the cost of the marking paint concentrate which will also include athletics tracks to encourage other users to of the recreation ground.

An offer is again made to make available the mobile defibrillator device that they have for the benefit of the village residents and visitors, and used by the club when at training sessions.

Many thanks are extended to David.

The Radnage NHW was represented and the previous rise in crime within the immediate area was mentioned and that it had now disappeared as quickly as it arrived. There is an awareness of travellers in Marlow who had now relocated to Ibstone Common. The NHW was relaunched at a community event held at the village hall in January of this year to both revive the existing Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Radnage and to launch the new ones started recently. All areas of Radnage are now covered and a NHW facebook page has been launched and is well used as a source of information and to be kept up to date.

It is reported that extra security measures have been taken by many local residents as a result of the incidences of burglary and a reminder given that membership of the NHW Scheme gives preferential rates for many goods and services including insurance and equipment – including a TV simulator light for when you are not at home. There is a Cons, Scams and Crime meeting at Lane End Community Centre on June 6th at 2pm. It is a public meeting and all are welcome.

Many thanks are extended to Julie.

The GLRA was represented and it was explained that 60 years ago the lane was a dirt track but the residents wanted a proper road surface. It was not constructed to the current standards and so the council will not take on its maintenance, leaving the residents to maintain it. It is also a Right of Way for the public. Costs are financed by an amount set aside annually as a subscription payable by each household, or road frontage. When the road was created the Green Lane Residents Association was formed. The speed bumps are not supported by all for reasons such as access by the emergency services, but they are present to keep the speed of vehicles using the lane down to the 15mph limit. The GLRA also looks after the welfare of the residents in other ways such as the gritting of the lane, residents welfare etc. and all but 4 of the 77 houses on the lane are contactable via email so all correspondence, information and news is able to be easily passed on.

Many thanks are extended to Jo.

St. Mary's Church PCC - Rev Linda Richardson provided a report ahead of the meeting - "We continue to hold services almost every Sunday at our lovely little church, which in a small rural parish these days is quite unusual. We enjoying meeting and serving those that attend regularly and also those we see at special festivals and on special occasions during the year or at times of loss. This last year we were especially glad to be able to join the British Legion and the Parish Council in a special service for the centenary of WW1. We would particularly like to thank the Parish Council and the Scouts and Beavers who provided the wonderful figures and painted pebbles that decorated St Mary's, and all those parishioners who bought Tommy figures that featured on our altar for the special Remembrance day service and beyond.

We continue to be grateful for the support – both financial and in terms of time and effort – of all those who give to the church so that it can continue to be a presence in our community and to be there for those that need and want a church in this place in the future. At the present time our Rector, Allan Barton is off on extended sick leave and no-one is entirely certain when he will return which means

the job of covering all the services not just in Radnage, but across the Benefice (West Wycombe, Bledlow Ridge, Bradenham and Radnage) has once again fallen to our 3 part time voluntary priests, myself, Veronica and Jenny.

The church is always open and many visitors make use of the quiet and peace as they pass by –an oasis of tranquillity that those of all religions, or none, are welcome to use. If anyone has questions about church services or policies, or is in need of help, they are welcome to contact me directly – my details are in Contact magazine or on the village website. Revd Linda.”

Chalk, Cherries & Chairs Project – a report was prepared and provided for the meeting and included here as agreed - Chilterns Conservation Board has been successful in obtaining funding through a Heritage Lottery Grant for a new, community partnership scheme “Chalk, Cherries and Chairs”.

This is described as: *‘the biggest conservation and people engagement project in the Chilterns’* and the project aims to:

- Make more space for wildlife
- Increase the wildlife value of small overlooked community sites
- Encourage local people of all ages to come together and enjoy looking after these sites (supported by a range of experts)

The project for Radnage is one of 11 approved sites and will be at the Glebe field below Yoseden Bank at St. Mary’s Church and is supported by the PCC. The land had been previously neglected and was purchased by St. Mary’s Church in 2015. We hope that the wider community will embrace the opportunity to make a lasting positive impact on our wildlife and environment by being part of the 5-year scheme.

The area was designated as a Local Wildlife Site in 2011 and is noted for its lowland meadow and lowland habitat which has a wide range of species present. It is not only an key site in its own right but connects well to other Nature Reserves and Estate land within the Radnage Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area – BOA (Yoseden/BBOWT; NT Bradenham etc). The project seeks to provide greater connected habitats in the Radnage Valley and to secure a closer collaboration between the Church, BBOWT and the local community in its management.

Expertise and equipment can be provided but a team of local volunteers are needed!! There may well be activities to get the local children involved and discussions will be had with the school and scout group but a commitment from the community is needed to initiate the project and for its ultimate success. The dual focus will be the management of the sites hedgerow and the grassland and will be hedge planting, gapping up and improving areas of the other sections to provide a better connected hedgerow habitat, and improving the quality of the grassland itself to connect with neighbouring land.

An estimate of costs for the planned project and therefore the cost of the partnership funding has been agreed and will be met by St. Mary’s PCC

If you care about our wonderful rural area and perhaps know and enjoy this specific area – either as a walker, with your dog, or as a runner - and would like to secure the future of it in conservation, development and management ...and also to teach our children about its importance please add your details to the list of potential volunteers.

Without enthusiasm and involvement from us all the project will stall. A real shame and a wasted opportunity.

7. Any other business.

Dog Fouling - There remains an ongoing problem with dog handlers / owners not picking up after their dogs, especially within the village hall grounds which has an impact on other users, especially the Radnage Raiders FC. This matter is regularly discussed within the Parish Council meetings and reminder notices included in Contact. New and additional signage is planned and will soon be displayed.

Radnage Charity – This has been in existence in Radnage since the late Elizabethan period and is a landowner of 25 acres in the village which is tenanted. The Charity, which is one of only very few still in existence, gives to 3 main areas of our community – the Church, School and the ‘Poors’ branch, which is for the benefit of villagers who are in need, hardship or distress. It also considers donating to other worthy causes within the village.

8. Discussion and Questions.

a. Facebook.

It is suggested that the forming of an RPC facebook page could be considered to reach members of our community that may not access information via other sources, especially our younger residents. This has been recently discussed within a regular meeting of the Parish Council and is something that will be revisited. In the meanwhile RPC will post items via the Radnage Community page as and when appropriate.

b. Mudds Bank.

The arrival of a large container at the layby, Mudds Bank, and the moving of a caravan onto the Berry Farm site, was raised. This matter was reported via the online portal. Transport for Bucks were also alerted and the enforcement team at WDC were contacted. The new owner/occupier at Berry Farm has been visited by an enforcement officer regarding a breach of planning control and the requirement for the removal of both the caravan and the container.

The new signage, provided by the Dept of Transport, has been well received and the removal of foliage / undergrowth to clear the area is a wonderful improvement to the site.

c. Thank You's – There are many individuals, associations and businesses that offer their time, assistance and support to the Parish Council for which we are extremely grateful. There are those who regularly pick up litter, empty the dog poo bins, tend the village hall planters, assist with insurance advice and offer consultancy, tend to the noticeboards and bus shelters keeping them clear and tidy, and many more unsung helpers. We thank all of those people who do so much.

Minutes of this meeting will be considered for approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council to enable any matters arising to be dealt with.

The meeting concluded at 22.25 hours and was followed by more informal discussions while refreshments continued to be offered.

Chairman's Signature:

R. Nikiel

Date: 12th June 2019