

# PARISH OF RADNAGE

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011 IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL AT 8 PM

Present: Councillors: Ms E Fynn, Ms C Nellis, Mr L Perring, Mr W Pilbeam, Mr R Pitcher and Parish Clerk: Mrs G MacKenzie.

Also present: 9 members of the public.

Apologies for non attendance had been received from Cllr M Blakstad (away on business), Cllr A Gardner (ill health) and Cllr F Downs (prior commitments).

### **1. Welcome and Chairman's report.**

Cllr Fynn welcomed everyone present and explained that she would be chairing the meeting in the absence of Cllr Blakstad who was away from home on business. Cllr Fynn introduced the members of the Parish Council and the Clerk. She then read the report received from Cllr Blakstad (copy attached to these minutes).

### **2. Presentation of the Financial Statement.**

The Clerk gave an overview on the financially busy year which had been mainly as a result of the start of several major improvement projects, not least being that of the Village Hall.

The budget had been designed for general maintenance however, some unexpected expenditure had also been necessary. Over-expenditure against the budget occurred in most of the areas of interest, including salaries, subscriptions and open spaces however, administration did not exceed the budget, nor did that of the Village Hall so overall expenditure was within budget. Income had benefited from a grant from the District Councillors' Ward Allocation (£530) and more use of the burial ground than had been allowed for. Anticipated income in other areas did not come to fruition as the budget had catered for far more interest than is currently available on deposited funds. Income from the valiant fundraising efforts had resulted in the major kitchen refurbishment being started in earnest, providing more than £15,000 to fund this venture.

A new, regularly produced financial summary was introduced to allow councillors sight of expenditure against their budget. This is produced monthly and appears to be beneficial and informative.

### **3. Individual reports from Parish Councillors.**

#### **a. Village Hall.**

Cllr Fynn 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).*

Radnage Village Hall is the biggest asset managed by the parish council. A great deal of time, energy and money is spent both by councillors and by volunteers on keeping the hall in reasonable repair, and carrying out improvements as and when money is available.

The hall is used every day of the week. Regular hall hires include karate, fitness training, pilates, women's Institute, mothers and toddlers, the winter lunch and friendship clubs, and of course parish council meetings. The hall is also hired for major functions and fundraising events.

During the past twelve months much work has been done. The parish council prioritised its wish list and chose projects which would protect the fabric of the building, keep the hall open and safe for hiring, reduce future running costs where feasible, and make the hall more attractive to future hirers. The new kitchen is virtually finished, the new bar is operational and a storage area created. Work is almost complete on replacing the old flat roof over the entrance hall with a well insulated and much more

attractive pitched roof, and much safer loft access. A grant from Veolia Environment Trust has been much appreciated, as has the continued efforts of the small band of fundraisers led by Ian and Kay Brown.

#### **b. Open Spaces.**

Cllrs Pitcher, Perring and Pilbeam reported that the Open Spaces around the village were managed jointly between them. Cllr Pitcher advised that the grass cutting contract had been renewed for a 2 year period with the previous contractor and that he had continued to receive compliments about the standard and periodicity of the cutting. He reported that most of the allotment plots were now taken with 21 tenants in place over the 4 separate sites. There was no waiting list at present. Grazing licences on 3 allotment fields were in place.

Cllr Perring reported that he continued to regularly inspect and sweep the bus shelters and that he was pursuing a replacement programme for the community notice boards. He also reported that he continued to carry out minor repairs to the Village Hall, including the replacement of light bulbs. The Village Hall had benefitted from a new fence at the entrance gates and the provision of a new reflective sign and plans for the future includes improvements to the security of the oil tank.

Cllr Fynn added that the contribution to the Village Hall maintenance by Cllr Perring should not be underestimated and that his practical skills had saved the village a lot of money in this capacity.

Cllr Pilbeam reported that he would be retiring from his role at the end of this term. He advised that work to improve the lettering on the War Memorial was soon to be started and urged future councils to continue their efforts to improve the village ponds and to retain open spaces for the benefit of the village. He wished particular thanks be recorded for the work that Ian Blaylock has done over the years towards the retention and registration of common land within the village.

Cllr Fynn thanked Cllr Pilbeam for his contribution to the Parish Council and the village over the years.

#### **c. Playground.**

Cllr Nellis reported that regular inspections of the Children's play area continued to be made and existing equipment maintained. The annual ROSPA inspection was carried out and recommended action followed up and signage replaced where appropriate and applicable. The Playground Action Group had not formed as was reported last year and that a new leader was required to take the fundraising forward. She hoped that maybe someone with young children might be interested in coming forward to take this on in the future. Cllr Nellis thanked everyone for making her term of office an enjoyable and interesting experience.

#### **d. Common Land Project.**

The Assistant Responsible Financial Officer, Mr Ian Blaylock gave a comprehensive report on the Common Land Project work that he was undertaking on behalf of the Parish Council (*this being a précis of his report – a full copy of which is available on request to the Parish Clerk*).

It was agreed that urgent action was needed to protect the land that remained and that is why the Common Land Project came into being. The objective has been to register the land in the name of Radnage Parish Council, for the general benefit of all parishioners.

The project can be explained in three stages:

**Stage One** involving the registration of the Village Hall, the Recreation Ground and the Allotment Land adjoining Green End Road / Radnage Common Road, including the Childrens' Playground

**Stage Two** involving the registration of eleven smaller parcels of land and two Village Greens (Radnage Common and Bennett End Common) all previously recognised as areas of Common Land

**Stage Three** involving the identification of any other land which should be classified as Parish Land. The War Memorial site is a prime example.

*Stage One* was the easy bit and the work was completed by 2004. *Stage Two* has proved to be an incredibly 'fiddly' and time consuming task. There were numerous boundary queries most of which have now been resolved and a number of 'lost causes' where it was discovered that small areas of parish land had already been registered at the Land Registry by third parties who had claimed the land as belonging to them! *Stage Three* however, proved to be comparatively easy. The War Memorial site was successfully registered as Parish Land in June 2009 and a number of other pieces of land, currently unregistered, have been identified for further consideration.

The project is now almost complete and it is expected to finish the task by the end of this year.

#### **4. Open Forum and reports from other bodies.**

Cllr Fynn invited prospective councillors present the opportunity to introduce themselves. Robin Fawell, Malcolm Glenn and Sue Jones each gave a brief report on their wish to stand for election to the Parish Council.

Ian Brown, a resident of 30 years offered his congratulations to the council of the last 2 and a half years for their enormous contribution to the village and a 'job well done'. He gave particular thanks to Cllr Fynn for her tireless work connected with the Village Hall.

Ian Blaylock endorsed this comment and stated that he felt that the current team had done much to restore the credibility of the Parish Council to the community.

Ian Blaylock asked for an update on the traffic speeding survey. Cllr Perring reported that the local police representative had asked for, and been provided with, a copy of the very comprehensive report which included some interesting and informative statistics. Cllr Fynn advised that the suggestion for an automatic speed sign had been considered along with other options however, this was being looked into with costs being of concern. The various speed and de-restriction signs around the village continued to be the subject of criticism.

Margaret Blaylock, on behalf of the Radnage Friendship Club, asked if Village Hall meetings were held where users could attend. Cllr Fynn advised that it was hoped one would be set up soon in the near future and encouraged attendance at Parish Council meetings. Mrs Blaylock asked if instructions for the use of the dishwasher and the cooker could be made available and Ian Brown concurred with Cllr Fynn that this was in hand and that it was intended to provide written instructions for all newly installed appliances.

Phil Channer commented that it was good to see the newly installed football posts in use. These had been provided using money donated by the Radnage Youth Group. He suggested that the use of low energy light bulbs be considered for use in the Village Hall and was advised by Cllr Perring that the current bulbs are of low voltage (12v) and to change the bulbs would require the cost of replacing the existing fittings.

#### **5. Viewing of Displays and Improvements to the Village Hall.**

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 21.10 hours with an opportunity for attendees to view the improvement work to the Village Hall and to look at displays of work being undertaken. There was also an opportunity for attendees to meet and chat with the prospective councillors.

Cllr Pilbeam advised that a locally produced map of Radnage showing common and charity land had been produced and was on display at this meeting. Copies could be made available for purchase on request.

Cllr Fynn thanked everyone for attending the meeting and Phil Channer proposed a vote of thanks to the current Parish Council members - which was agreed unanimously, by all in attendance.

Minutes of this meeting will be considered for approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council.