

PARISH OF RADNAGE

A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2014 AT 8 PM IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Councillors: Chairman Mr Robin Fawell, Vice-Chairman Ms Elizabeth Fynn, Mrs Sue Jones, Mrs Helen Orchard, Mr Lew Perring, Mr Neil Raven and Clerk Mrs Gill MacKenzie.

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Roy Pitcher (ill health). There were 5 members of the public present (Mr S Ball, Mr A Bailey, Mr H Freeman, Mr A George and Mr S Watts).

MEETING CLOSED FOR PUBLIC SESSION

All members of the public present were interested in Item 5 on this agenda.

Mr Watts gave a presentation explaining the process he had undergone to gain authority from the Camping and Caravanning Club (herein referred to as 'CCC') to open a Certified Site, addressing concerns already expressed online as a result of his recent planning application for his property at Bella Vista. Mr Bailey read a pre-prepared statement asking the Parish Council to reconsider an earlier decision not to write to the CCC to challenge their consultation procedures and to oppose further development on the site which he believed to have an adverse impact on the rural area.

Mr Freeman advised that his major concern was that the CCC had not followed due process and had authorised the site without consultation of neighbouring property owners. He stated that his property overlooked the camp site and was requesting the Parish Council to ask Wycombe District Council to investigate further.

MEETING REOPENED

2. To receive any disclosure of pecuniary interests by Members relating to items on the agenda.

Following nil declarations being received, the Clerk strongly recommended that the Chairman declare a personal interest in Item 5 (Bella Vista). The Chairman did not agree to do this as he explained that he had a public (albeit passionate) interest and not a personal one.

3. Acceptance and signing of minutes of Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th November 2014.

It was proposed by Cllr Perring, seconded by Cllr Raven with all in favour that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November be accepted as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed and dated the minutes.

4. Report on progress on items in the previous minutes not otherwise included in this agenda.

No items to report.

5. Planning.

To consider and decide on a response to the following planning applications:

- Bella Vista: Construction of operational development comprising toilet/shower utility tent, sheltered wash-up area, area for refuse and chemical waste and 4 x electric hook-up points (part retrospective).

This planning application was the subject of considerable discussion amongst councillors. Having viewed online responses, together with the views expressed in the open session at the start of this meeting, councillors entered into a lengthy debate.

Cllr Fawell stated that he had already been active in his own right and had written to both his MP and Wycombe District Council and presented an extract from the internet <https://www.gov.uk/camping-and-caravanning-site-exemption-certificates-know-the-rules-and-how-to-apply> refers. This link gives the guidelines for applicants (in this case the CCC) as prepared by Natural England. Mr Fawell stated that clubs must consult neighbours and the local council before issuing a certificate and that his response from Wycombe District Council advised that the matter was out of their hands. He also advised that the initial response he had received from MP David Lidington was to say that the MP had written to Wycombe District Council so this had not achieved any progress. He considered there to be a lack of democratic process as he and other neighbours had not been consulted and neither had the Parish Council. He stated that his view was that this planning application could not be viewed on its own and that an investigation should be made on the whole matter at the same time. He urged councillors to support him in asking Wycombe District Council to reverse the decision to allow the camping site.

Cllr Orchard commented on the apparent processes that she believed had resulted in Wycombe District Council sending out an enforcement officer who had advised the owner of Bella Vista to submit a planning application under this agenda item. She considered there to be two issues facing the Parish Council, one being the authority to grant exemption to planning for a Certified Site without apparent proper consultations, and secondly to consider the planning application on this agenda. Whilst in principle she had no objection to all the provisions for a Certified Site (providing all due processes had been followed), there was no requirement for some or all of the retrospective planning application details to support a Certified Site.

Cllr Raven and Cllr Perring commented that in their opinions, no effective consultation had taken place prior to certification being given for the campsite. Cllr Jones asked for clarification on the legislation and suggested that this was expected in a response to the Parish Council's letter to the local MP (dated 18th November 2014) which had not yet been received.

The Clerk advised that the MP's office had telephoned her on 8th December advising that a response would be sent to the Clerk at the Parish Council email address and despite being told that the Parish Council were meeting 2 days later, this response was still awaited.

At the request of the Parish Council, the meeting was adjourned for a few moments whilst Mr Watts was asked to advise the route he had taken in his initial preparations for the site and he clarified that he had dealt with the CCC from the outset and he was aware that the CCC had consulted with Wycombe District Council who had given their agreement prior to CCC giving him the certificate of authorisation.

Cllr Fawell proposed that an urgent and strongly worded letter of complaint be sent from the Parish Council to the Chairman of Wycombe District Council requesting that the decision on this planning application be deferred, point out to them their obligation to accept responsibility for this matter and to express the disappointment of residents and councillors that the due process had not been followed. He suggested that this letter should be copied to the planning case officers involved in this subject and seek to remove the original authority granted for the campsite.

To conclude, councillors considered that there had been a lack of democracy and complete disregard of any consultation process for this site and that a planning application after this site had been authorised, without public knowledge or consultation, was inappropriate. The agreement was that this matter be split into two definitive decisions; one to answer the planning application, and one to consider the content of a letter of complaint to be drafted by the

Chairman which would be sent to Wycombe District Council expressing the views of the Parish Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Fynn with 5 in favour and 1 abstention that the Parish Council objected to the part of this planning application referring to the toilet/shower utility tent as it was considered out of keeping with the area and was clearly visible from the public highway.

Cllr Fawell undertook to draft a letter of complaint to the Chairman of Wycombe District Council and for all councillors to have sight prior to it being sent. The Chairman stated that he would draft the letter with the full consultation of all councillors and that it was his intention to do this within the next couple of days. The Clerk recommended that once drafted, the letter should be sent to her so that she could arrange for it to be sent to each of the councillors individually to allow each to express their agreement privately on the content, prior to being sent out.

- Ashridge Farm: Householder application for construction of detached two bay garage and two storey front and side extensions. The planning team had considered this application and it was agreed to object to this application as councillors considered that this property was increasing in size incrementally as was not in line with the expansion within the Chilterns AONB.
- Ashbrook, Bottom Road: Householder application for construction of part two storey, part first floor rear extension, including 2 Juliet balconies to rear. As the planning team had not all been able to prepare a comment on this application, it was agreed that they would agree a response to WDC the next day.

Sec's Note: The decision was to object to the planning application as it would appear to increase the size of this property outside of the current limitations in planning rules, particularly relevant in the Chilterns AONB and within the Green Belt.

- A planning application to increase the height of the low branches on an Oak Tree within the boundary of The Three Pigeons (TPO1) was not considered contentious and it was agreed to support this application.

6. Action Plan

It was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour to agree and adopt the Action Plan for 2015/2017.

7. Finance

a) The clerk reported that as at 27 November the Treasurers Account had a balance of ££19,000.89 and the Business Account a balance of £29,962.66 representing interest of £1.31 in the past month. The monthly budget summary had been circulated and there were no questions arising from this. The bank had confirmed that the bank Mandate removing Cllr Blakstad had been actioned and the bank Mandate for Cllr Raven was presented for completion.

b) It was agreed by all present that a donation of £10 towards the cost of maintaining the village website would be sent to Robert Green.

c) The payments for November 2014 were approved as proposed by Cllr Fawell, seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour. Cllrs Orchard and Jones undertook to sign the cheques.

8. Precept

The Clerk presented a report summarizing the findings of the council following a recent working group meeting to discuss the Precept requirement for 2015/2016.

She explained that Precept is calculated annually in November and requested of WDC in the January of the following year, thus it was the task of the council to agree the Precept request at their December meeting each year. Precept was then agreed during the spring and implemented at the start of the

financial year beginning in April, and paid in 2 equal parts – during April and September of the year in question.

Precept for this current financial year had been set at £24,000 against known income, anticipated income and anticipated expenditure. Income during the year had been slightly higher than expected and the council had made some progress in reducing costs in some areas, whilst utilities and maintenance requirements throughout the parish had increased in cost. Some additional unexpected income had also been generated with Village Hall bookings and income from the burial ground and donations from Ward councillors. Councillors had been through the details of the current income and expenditure for this financial year and made justified statements against each budgeted line. This process had been carried out outside of the council meeting to ensure that the figures were well understood and challenged for each cost 'code'.

The Dedicated Fund currently stood at a total of £29,841.75 – which is represented in the business account total (as at 27 Nov) at £29,962.66. These funds were sourced from fundraising and donations and as well as holding a statutory reserve they had been bolstered as a result of some careful money management during the year. Councillors proposed that the funds held outside of the Reserves should be used to carry on the work to refurbish the toilets and the lobby of the Village Hall; all part of the Village Hall improvement project. This would inevitably reduce the balance in the business account, ensure that the Hall improvements were continued, but would also have an impact on the amount of Precept requested for fin yr 2015/2016. An expenditure budget had to include an anticipated insurance premium, Council Tax for the hall (currently benefitting from small business rates which end in 2015), election costs, the cost of dismantling the Black Barn on Radnage Common and the training and admin costs related to a new council.

It was this councils' belief that they could complete the work required of them with a nil increase in Precept. This would be for the third year running. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Fynn, seconded by Cllr Perring with all in favour to request a Precept of £24,000, which represented no increase to that of the current financial year.

ACTION: Clerk

9. Village Hall

a) In her capacity as Village Hall Manager Cllr Jones reported that work had begun on replacing the hall lighting with LED lamps. The contractor had come to sort out the front door bottom seal and it was discovered that the seal had not been correctly installed. A second set of covers had been purchased for the purple "V" sweeper for the floor so it would be available for every hire.

She advised that the Village Hall team was back in action and a proposed new set of hire charges had been produced. A copy of these new prices was made available to all councillors and comments welcomed prior to the item being formally presented at the next meeting for consideration. If agreed, it was proposed to advise the regular hirers in January/February and implement the new rates from 1 March 2015.

ACTION:All

Cllr Jones reported that work continued in collecting quotes for the refurbishment of the toilets and the damaged basin in the Ladies has been removed and the pipes capped off. This should prevent further damage and possible flooding. She was also exploring the possibility of using the catering kitchen for the preparation of local school meals for schools without kitchen facilities. If there was some common ground she thought it could be beneficial to our local schools and also to the council.

b) Cllr Raven reported that further investigations on the toilet refurbishment were continuing.

c) Cllr Fawell requested that reporting an update on proposed acoustics measures within the hall together with further quotations for costs be deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk/RF

10. Open Spaces

a) Cllr Raven had received some proposals to replace items in the Childrens Playground however, councillors decided not to pursue this initiative at this time and agreed that quotations be sought for the provision of some seats/benches for use by those visiting the playground. Cllr Raven undertook to arrange for quotes to be available for consideration at the next meeting. Cllr Raven was asked to send outstanding copies of his monthly inspection report to the Clerk. **ACTION: NR**

b) Cllr Fynn advised that Ian Blaylock had provided a report following the recent inspection of the Black Barn which took place on Thursday 6th November, attended by Barbara Wallis (Heritage Group, Chiltern Society), Marian Miller (Bucks Archaeological Society) and himself. A further inspection of the barn had been carried out and a number of photographs had been taken. He advised that the ladies had been visibly 'taken aback' after considering the full extent of the task they'd taken on. It was not the 'dismantling problems' which they found daunting; but the lack of support for the professional survey previously arranged by Martin Andrew (Conservation Officer, WDC) which, from their point of view, would have provided a lot of information to assist in the formulation of a dismantling plan. They had discussed the possibility of applying to the Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust (BHBT) for a grant to pay for the survey. Martin Andrew has previously advised that BHBT would only consider an offer of funds if the likely outcome was refurbishment and restoration. Mr Blaylock suggested that any application was unlikely to be successful particularly if it involved a building's obsequies! Whilst Martin Andrew wasn't a trustee of BHBT he was their advisor for buildings in the Wycombe district and it was believed that his views carried a lot of weight.

It was concluded that in the spring a team would be put together from Bucks Archaeological Society and the Chiltern Society. They would spend the winter months deciding on a plan of action.

It was anticipated that there would be cost implications in the dismantling project and Ian had advised that he fully supported the council's decision to budget for a sum of £1,000 in next year's Precept.

c) Grasscutting and hedgecutting contracts.

Following receipt of quotations for grasscutting and hedge trimming, and in line with the current Financial Regulations previously adopted by council it was proposed by Cllr Fawell, seconded by Cllr Perring with all in favour to invite the existing contractor to undertake the job for the next two years. **ACTION: Clerk**

11. Clerks Matters – including late received correspondence.

There was no correspondence to receive.

12. Forthcoming Meetings and Attendees.

All present agreed that a date to review the Risk Schedule be scheduled at the January meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

13. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on **Wednesday 14th January 2015** commencing at 8.00pm in the Village Hall.

PUBLIC SESSION

Members of the public were given a further opportunity to raise any matters of concern. Thanks were expressed to councillors for a robust debate regarding Item 5 and wished to state that their complaint was procedural and by no means personal to the owner of Bella Vista. Thanks were also given to councillors for their time and commitment to their roles.

Payments approved:

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| Cheque number 2725 | J Wesolowski – VH windows and inside doors and window frames £60 |
| Cheque number 2726 | G MacKenzie – clerks salary and expenses £484.45 |
| Cheque number 2727 | V H Refund – R Oliphant £50 |
| Cheque number 2728 | VH Refund – J Scales £50 |
| Cheque number 2729 | VH Refund – L Smye £50 |
| Cheque number 2730 | VH Refund – L Chisnell £50 |
| Cheque number 2731 | Woodridge Cleaning Supplies £24.98 +VAT + £1.10 +VAT |
| Cheque number 2732 | A Eden – for purchase of fridge shelf clip £29.22 |
| Cheque number 2733 | Community Impact Bucks – annual subs £50 (increase from £30) |
| Cheque number 2734 | R Green – annual contribution towards cost of village website |
| Electronic transfer | Debbie White – Village Hall cleaning – November 2014 = £ 336 |
| Standing Order | C Eden – Village Hall Bookings Clerk – November £216 |
| Direct Debit | Southern Electric for month of November £68 |
| Direct Debit | Sita UK - £tba |