

PARISH OF RADNAGE

A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER 2015 AT 8 PM IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Councillors: Chairman Ms Elizabeth Fynn, Vice-Chairman Mrs Sue Jones, Ms Tamsin Addison, Mr Frank Coggrave, Mr Robert Nikiel, Mrs Helen Orchard and Clerk Mrs Gill MacKenzie.

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including Cllr Shade Adoh, District Councillor for Stokenchurch and Radnage. There were no members of the public present.

MEETING CLOSED FOR PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Adoh advised that a proportion of the Ward Grant available to her would be allocated to Radnage Parish Council. Further details would be available in the new year.

MEETING REOPENED

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

Nil declarations were received.

3. Acceptance and signing of minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th November 2015.

It was proposed by Cllr Nikiel, seconded by Cllr Orchard with all in favour that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2015 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 of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council not otherwise included in this agenda.

There were no items reported on.

5. Planning Applications.

- Bennett End Farm - Building application for demolition of existing garage and construction of replacement 3-bay garage. Council agreed a decision of no objection to this application.
- 3 Rose Cottages - Householder application for construction of first floor rear extension. Council agreed a decision of no objection to this application.

6. Finance

- a) The monthly budget sheet had not been prepared due to the recent ill health of the bookings clerk. The Clerk reported that at the end of November the Treasurers Account had a balance of £20,583.87 and the Business Account a balance of £37,979.35 including £1.61 of interest.
- b) Payments for November 2015 were approved as proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Addison with all in favour. Cllrs Coggrave and Orchard undertook the signing of cheques.

7. To adopt a new Action Plan.

A revised and updated Action Plan had been discussed by councillors outside of this meeting and there were no suggested amendments or further comments on this. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Nikiel, seconded by Cllr Fynn with all in favour that the Action Plan dated Dec 2015 be adopted. The Chairman signed and dated the Action Plan.

8. To agree the Precept request for the next financial year.

A working group meeting had been held to make preparations for deciding on the Precept request for the financial year 2016-2017. Councillors had been through the details of the current income and expenditure for the current financial year and made justified statements against each budgeted line. This process was done outside of the council meeting to ensure that the figures were well understood and challenged if necessary.

The Parish Council always aimed to calculate the Precept request by the December council meeting so that this could be 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 annually. Precept would then be agreed by District Council during the spring and implemented at the start of the financial year beginning in April, and would be paid in 2 equal parts – during April and September of the year in question.

Precept for the current financial year had been set at £24,000 against known income, anticipated income and anticipated expenditure. This level of Precept had been maintained for the past four years and was the same as the request for fin yr 2010/2011. The council had made some progress in keeping costs to the minimum but inevitably, utilities and maintenance requirements throughout the parish had been necessary. In addition, acoustic panels had been installed in the Village Hall which had improved the sound quality in the Hall considerably, and the light fittings were replaced in the main hall to meet revised requirements to upgrade to LED lighting.

The Dedicated Fund currently stood at a total of £35,908.84 – which was represented in the business account total (as at end Nov) at £37,979.35 and included statutory reserves. These funds were raised from previous fundraising and donations however, no grants had been received or fundraising been carried out during the past year and the majority of existing capital funding had already been earmarked for major refurbishment projects within the village hall and already been committed under contract. This would inevitably reduce the balance in the business account and ensure that the Hall improvements were continued to meet customers' expectations and up to date legislation.

Calculations and forecasts which would allow the council to continue to provide and maintain services to the village, without any project work (with the exception of works already authorised), the anticipated income and expenditure would balance only if the Precept were to be raised by a small percentage. It was therefore council's belief that having kept Precept constant for four years, it was now necessary to add a small increase to the next Precept to allow them to continue to provide services to the village.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Coggrave, seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour, to request a Precept of £25,200 which represented a 5% increase to that of the current financial year. **ACTION: Clerk**

9. Village Hall

a) Meetings had been held with the toilet refurbishment contractor to identify and agree some of the detailed work and colour schemes. A quotation for the hall flooring chosen was awaited. It was anticipated that the contractor would begin work early in the new year. It had been agreed to move the new hot water system to the nearest position possible to the ladies toilet for practical reasons. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Lew Perring for installing the BAR sign above the serving hatch.

10. Open Spaces

a) Cllr Fynn advised that she was making progress in obtaining quotations regarding the demolition of the Black Barn and that she would prepare a report outlining all the quotations for the next meeting of the council. **ACTION: EF**

b) Cllr Nikiel advised that he was planning to install the sleeving to the climbing poles within the playground over the next few weeks, and also to remove the broken bench in the recreation ground.

ACTION: RN

c) Cllr Addison reported that the contractor who was going to dredge Wards Pond would like a site visit prior to work commencing. Cllr Fynn agreed to undertake this task.

ACTION: EF/TA

d) The Clerk advised that a new 'Next Plot' marker had been manufactured by Cllr Perring at no cost to the council. A vote of thanks was given to Cllr Perring.

e) Cllr Fynn remarked that some hedge cutting along an overgrown hedge had been carried out along Bottom Road. Cllr Coggrave undertook to identify and map out other areas that needed cutting back in time for the January meeting.

ACTION: FC

11. To adopt a Complaints Procedure.

A document detailing the process for handling complaints to the council had been drafted by the Clerk and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed that a separate process identifying any complaints regarding Village Hall hire arrangements would be added to the hire conditions rather than be specifically included in this document. It was proposed by Cllr Addison, seconded by Cllr Nikiel with all in favour of adopting the Complaints Procedure. The Chairman signed and dated a file copy.

12. To consider options for Devolution of services from BCC.

The Clerk had circulated detailed information made available by Bucks CC regarding the proposal to devolve services to the parish under Tranche 2 of the Devolution process. In brief this would include:

Grasscutting – for areas not privately (or PC owned) and are within the 30 mile per hour limit. Areas outside this limit are not covered.

Hedgetrimming – where not the responsibility of the landowner.

There are no identifiable areas of hedgetrimming currently managed by BCC within the 30 mph and a small amount of money would potentially be available to cover the administrative task of dealing with this matter.

Siding Out – where not the responsibility of the landowner.

Rights of Way Clearance. The need to keep public rights of way accessible to walkers and horse-riders as appropriate.

Road Signage Cleaning - for traffic 'warning' signs within the 30 mph speed limit and is therefore a small requirement for Radnage as the area affected would seem to be the triangular signs approaching the school area only. This did not affect the speed restriction signs nor include road name signs or any other kind of sign.

There was potentially a sum of £1,069 per annum available to devolve the above services to Radnage Parish Council for a period guaranteed for 3 years only. After this time, council would be given the option to continue to manage these services (with no guarantee of funding) or to return the responsibility to BCC.

Councillors debated the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal and considered that the process would result in:

- Opening up a challenging and difficult requirement in a small rural community.
- That Radnage was too small and didn't have the relevant resources.
- That there was no real incentive to the council to take on this responsibility.
- Rights of Way clearance might prove problematical with so many paths leading in and out of other parishes' areas.

- There was uncertainty in the legal aspects of public liability and any requirements to changes in council insurance.

Councillors did not feel comfortable in changing the existing arrangements and it was proposed by Cllr Fynn, seconded by Cllr Addison with all in favour that there was no change in their original decision not to take on devolved services at this time. The Clerk was asked to advise BCC of this decision. **ACTION: Clerk**

13. Clerks Matters – including late received correspondence.

Cllr Coggrave had advised that a resident had approached him to ask if the council could do something about winter weather – saying that Radnage could get snowed / iced in and there are at least four pinch steep points that effectively blocked access. The question was whether there was something the council should look after via a contract with a local farmer or suchlike to clear the snow / grit the roads. Cllr Coggrave agreed to investigate this possible initiative further and report back to council with his findings.

ACTION: FC

14. Forthcoming Meetings and Attendees.

The Clerk advised that notes from the latest NAG meeting were available on request by councillors.

15. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 13th January 2016** commencing at 8pm in the Village Hall.

PUBLIC SESSION

A further public session was offered and Cllr Adoh asked for clarification on bus services into the village. It was confirmed that there had been no public bus service into the village for approx. 2 years and that this had been stopped due to lack of passengers. Villagers made use of the Stokenchurch Community Bus and Dial-a-Ride and that contact details of both services had been distributed to all residents within the last year using a grant made available via the LAF.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:55 hours and councillors then met socially as this was the last meeting prior to Christmas.

Chairman's Signature:

Date: