

PARISH OF RADNAGE

A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th DECEMBER 2016 AT 8 PM IN RADNAGE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Councillors: Chairman Mrs Sue Jones, Vice-Chairman Mr Robert Nikiel, Mr Peter Turner, Mr Graham Wass and Clerk Mrs Gill MacKenzie and 2 members of the public.

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Addison (business). A special welcome was made to 1 member of the public who was interested in finding out more about the work of the Clerk. The other member of the public attended for the public session only.

MEETING CLOSED FOR PUBLIC SESSION

Mr Andy Bailey asked the council to refer to his previous emails and asked that councillors consider the usefulness of the Parish Plan prepared in 2004. It was advised that this document had been scanned and sent electronically to all councillors who would consider its content in due course.

Mr Bailey also advised that he had obtained photographic evidence of Bella Vista campsite exceeding its licensed numbers and would forward these to councillors for their information.

MEETING REOPENED

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

Cllr Nikiel declared a personal interest in Item 10.

3. Acceptance and signing of minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th November 2016.

The minutes of the meeting on 9th November 2016 were approved as proposed by Cllr Nikiel, seconded by Cllr Ryan and agreed by all 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.

a) The Clerk advised that the Casual Vacancy had been formally notified and recorded and that she anticipated the opportunity to Co-Opt a new councillor would arise in January once WDC had confirmed no election was required.

b) Councillors were mindful that the Parish Plan which was produced in 2004 as part of an initiative by the Stokenchurch and Radnage Community Action Forum which took the form of a questionnaire was now considerably out of date but thought the content might still be useful for historical purposes. The Clerk advised that this plan had not been registered by WDC and with the introduction of the Localism Act there was new legislation surrounding the production of Neighbourhood Plans (the term relevant for parishes) and the current procedure was more consultative and was a reasonable costly exercise.

Councillors agreed that they should aim to seek a wider view of what the residents considered important to them and thought that they would need to include a point in their Action Plan to agree a process to do this.

5. Planning Applications.

There are no planning applications to be consulted upon.

6. Finance

a) The Clerk had circulated the latest budget summary and no questions arose from this. She advised that as at end November 2016 the Treasurers Account held a balance of £15,071.78 and the Business

Account a balance of £31,036.77 representing interest of £1.23 for the last month. Mandate forms had been distributed to Cllrs Wass and Turner for the purpose of adding them as signatories to the account.

ACTION:GW/PT

b) The payments for November 2016 were approved as proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Ryan and agreed by all. Cllrs Nikiel and Ryan undertook the signing of cheques.

c) Councillors discussed and approved the annual budget and Precept for 2017/2018.

A working group meeting had been held to make preparations for deciding on the Precept request for the financial year 2017-2018. 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 strategic plans for the forthcoming year which form the Council's Action Plan were also taken into consideration.

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 £25,200 against known income, anticipated income and anticipated expenditure. This level of Precept had been an increase of 5% to allow the council to continue to provide and maintain services to the village, without any project work, other than that already planned. The council had made some progress in keeping costs to the minimum but inevitably, utilities and maintenance requirements throughout the parish had been necessary. It was noted that apart from the Clerk who was employed as the Proper Officer of the Council, all councillors were unpaid volunteers.

Councillors recognised that year to date (30 November 2016) they had spent £30,029.92 and anticipated expenditure at the year-end to be in the order of £42,875.

As at 30 Nov 2016 the Treasurers Account had £15,071 and the Business account had £31,036 in it – which included the dedicated 'reserves' of £15,842.

For Fin Yr 2017/2018 calculated income of approx £47,000 was estimated and requirements for expenditure and reserves thought to be in the order of £58,000 so a shortfall of £11,000 additional income was required to meet the Council's needs. Councillors were also aware of the anticipated reduced funding coming into WDC who were due to receive 48% less funding from government (a shortfall that could only be made good with future increases in council tax and a 'push' for more devolved services to town and parish councils). It was also noted that Council Tax Support would also become zero by 2020 when the full cost would be expected to be met locally.

It was therefore council's belief that a small increase to the Precept was necessary to allow them to continue to provide services to the village and to continue to meet with legislation.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Jones seconded by Cllr Turner with all in favour, to request a Precept of £26,460.00 which represented a 5% increase to that of the current financial year. **ACTION: Clerk**

d) Discussions to review and agree the Clerks hours and salary for both the retiring and incoming Clerk were deferred to the closed part of the meeting following this ordinary meeting.

e) Discussions to consider the annual payment of working from home allowances to the Clerk was deferred to the closed part of the meeting.

7. Risk Assessment

a) The Clerk confirmed that the monthly playground inspection report had been received. Cllr Ryan advised that repairs to the boards alongside the hard court were outstanding. **ACTION: AR/RN**

8. Village Hall

To receive an update on Village Hall matters including:

- b) An update on the Village Hall landscaping project was deferred to the next meeting due to the absence of Cllr Addison.
- c) Councillors agreed that the redundant old chairs in the hall could be offered to residents for a small donation. Approx 80 chairs were available (leaving 30 for use during the larger village functions e.g. carol service) and Cllr Turner offered to co-ordinate requests. The Clerk was asked to place an article in Contact magazine advertising the availability of chairs. **ACTION: PT/Clerk**

9. Open Spaces

- a) The Clerk advised that to note no response to date from Camping and Caravanning Club – re: Bella Vista and that she had sent a follow up letter on 6th December seeking a reply. Councillors considered the possibility of writing once again to the governing body Natural England but agreed to await the anticipated response from the Camping and Caravanning Club until the January meeting before considering this further.
- b) The allotment improvement project was briefly discussed and it was agreed to include this item in the next Agenda for further updates. Fencing posts between the grazing paddocks and City Allotment were in need of replacement – and those which are part of the allotment site would need to be funded by the council. It was agreed that Glyn Spratt would be asked to provide a quote for the work. **ACTION: RN**
- c) Cllr Nikiel advised that he had been canvassing tree surgeons to obtain information and to assess costs and any tree work recommended. This was an ongoing project and he would update councillors at future meetings.
- d) BCC had asked for a response to a short Winter Preparedness questionnaire. Councillors considered decision was that neither of the statements currently applied to them therefore the response was agreed as:

“Radnage is a very rural village with 4 different access roads through narrow, winding and hilly lanes. During periods of bad weather when ice and snow are experienced, access into and out of the village is impaired and can result in no access at all. We have little or no ploughing or gritting services so even the not-so-remote areas are completely inaccessible and there is concern for those requiring the emergency services and those requiring access to health facilities in neighbouring villages or town.”

10. Clerks Matters – including correspondence.

To note any correspondence received after the Agenda had been produced.

- a) The Clerk advised that a response had been received from Radnage Poors Charity regarding the appointment of a new Parish Representative. With the exception of Cllr Nikiel councillors all agreed that Cllr Nikiel’s personal interest did not constitute a large conflict of interest and in the absence of seeing other applicants’ details and their for wishing to be considered for the role, which the Charity had withheld, the councillors had no objection to the Charity appointing Mr Nikiel. **ACTION: Clerk**
- b) The Clerk advised that in response to questions raised by the council, a reply had been received from the Green Lane Residents Association (GLRA).
- Further details regarding the matter of the SSE request to bury cables on Green Lane was requested. As all information known by council had already been shared with the GLRA, councillors suggested that the GLRA should seek further clarification from SSE.
 - The suggestion of having road markings at the junctions on both ends of Green Lane would be subject to further consideration by the GLRA.
 - A request to invite a representative from the Parish Council to future meetings of the GLRA had not been agreed although it was noted that Cllr Nikiel had offered to represent the council as he was already a resident. Councillors agreed that the original request to invite a representative from the Council together with copies of meeting minutes should be reiterated and that Council would like the option of agreeing who would represent them at future meetings. **ACTION: Clerk**
- c) The Clerk advised that the Oxford Diocese had passed the decision of the Boulton Memorial back to the Parish Council – with some legal advice and updated Churchyard Regulations to support this. As the Council had already agreed to the Memorial in their July meeting, the Clerk had responded

accordingly to the stonemason to authorise the memorial with some minor amendments which concur with the revised Regulations.

d) The Clerk reported that a challenge on the ownership of a small part of Radnage Common had been received and that this would be likely to result in the loss of this parcel of land from the Parish. She asked for a councillor to make themselves aware of the Common Land project and to appraise the council accordingly in future. A request to consider a Deed of Easement had also been received and the Clerk advised that as a precedent had already been set with this, that she recommended council consider this request favourably. All agreed that this matter should be formally raised at the next meeting for a decision on the way forward. Cllr Wass agreed to take the documentation and act as a focal point for matters concerning Common Land.

Action: Clerk/GW

11. Forthcoming Meetings and Attendees.

The Clerk advised that she would produce the diary dates for 2016 at the January meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting:

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 11th January 2017 at 8pm**, to be held in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:45 hours.

A Closed meeting of the Council followed.

Chairman's Signature:

Date:

Appendix 1

Payments to be approved:

Cheque number 2957	Radnage Royal British Legion – Poppy Appeal £50
Cheque number 2958	Admans and Bryant Ltd – electrical contractor £173.31
Cheque number 2959	G MacKenzie – clerks salary and expenses £446.40

Cheques to cover Village Hall deposit returns :

Cheque number 2960	cancelled - duplication
Cheque number 2961	J Higgerson £50
Cheque number 2962	J Pitcher £50
Cheque number 2963	S Hussain £107.50 (hirer paid in cash and bookings clerk had no change to added the difference to his deposit).

Electronic transfer	Debbie White – Village Hall cleaning – November 2016 £284.90
Standing Order	C Eden – Village Hall Bookings Clerk – September 2016 £216

Direct Debit	Southern Electric monthly payment £52
Direct Debit	Suez – waste £36.28
Direct Debit	BT – bill issue dated 8 Dec 2016 £71.23

CLOSED MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 14TH DECEMBER 2016

TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE SALARIES FOR INCOMING AND OUTGOING CLERKS AND THE ANNUAL PAYMENT OF A WORKING FROM HOME ALLOWANCE.

It is recorded for the minutes that 4 candidates had applied for the role of Clerk. 3 of the potential candidates had been interviewed by Cllrs Nikiel and Addison, 1 candidate had been interviewed by Cllrs Nikiel and Jones. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that one candidate had more experience in the likely work involved and it was decided to invite Mrs Linda Freeth to accept the appointment with effect from 1st January 2016.

The Chairman agreed to write to the other applicants to thank them for their interest and to provide feedback. A letter of appointment and a contract would be drafted and sent to Mrs Freeth at the earliest opportunity.

It was agreed that the draft contract provided by the Clerk should be amended to include the agreed salary against the NALC recommended Spinal Column Point (SPC) 21 during a probationary period of 6 months and subject to successful completion of the probationary period this would automatically increase to SCP 22.

The hours worked would be retained as 10 hours per week.

An annual review in January of the salary and hours worked would be included with a note that any variances to hours would need to be agreed by council.

The current Clerks pay and allowances was discussed with the Clerk being present.

It was agreed that the Clerk be given backdated pay to April 2016 representative of the increase in the salary recommended against SCP 27 – an increase of 3%. This would apply until March 2017. The Clerks pay would therefore be the sum of £13.27 per hour.

Councillors agreed to the £700 working from home allowance (paid annually in arrears) and to £100 for telephone and internet usage.

An additional sum of £530.80 (gross) was also agreed for the additional 40 hours to contract that the Clerk had worked over the past year.

Chairman's Signature:

Date: