

# PARISH OF RADNAGE

## A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 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, and Clerk: Mrs Gill MacKenzie.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Pitcher(ill health) and Councillor Raven(family commitments). County Councillor Carl Etholen was also in attendance.

### **MEETING CLOSED FOR PUBLIC SESSION**

Cllr Etholen gave his apologies for not being able to attend the last couple of meetings and gave a brief update on monies being available to make good the potholes and damaged roads, albeit that funding was short of that required. He advised that a secondment of one of the Local Area Technicians had taken place.

### **MEETING REOPENED**

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

No declarations were received.

### **3. To receive statements from councillors confirming their DPI are up to date.**

All councillors present confirmed that their existing DPI were current and up to date.

### **4. Acceptance and signing of minutes of Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014.**

It was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Perring with all in agreement that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on 9<sup>th</sup> July be accepted as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed and dated the minutes.

### **5. Report on progress on items in the previous minutes not otherwise included in this agenda.**

There were no items that are not included in the agenda to be reported on.

### **6. Planning.**

It was noted that the following planning applications were under consideration by the planning team with no comments yet available:

- Land Formerly Part Of Ponds Farm Bennett End Road: Demolish the existing buildings and erection of 1 x 2 bed dwelling with basement (amended scheme to pp 13/05257/FUL)
- Ivy Cottage 5 Horseshoe Road: Householder application for erection of detached 2 bay carport.
- The Old Blacksmiths Radnage Common Road: Householder application for conversion of existing attached garage together with rear dormer to provide additional living accommodation, construction of single storey rear extension and erection of 2 bay car port with storage
- Barley Hollow Bennett End Road: Householder application for construction of 3.58m wide by 2.5m single storey side glassroom.

### **7. Finance**

a) The Clerk reported that at the end of August the Business Account had a balance of £29,958.93 which represented the dedicated funds and interest of £1.23 in July and £1.35 in August. The Treasurers account had a balance of £10,642.28. The budget summary as at the end of August had been previously circulated to councillors and there were no questions arising from this.

b) The payments for July and August 2014 were formally agreed having been proposed by Cllr Perring and seconded by Cllr Fawell with all in favour. Cllr's Perring and Orchard signed the cheques.

## **8. Village Hall**

a) Cllr Jones, in her capacity as Village Hall Manager, provided an update on the Village Hall. She thanked the Village Hall Team for all their support and hard work during the quiet holiday period. A meeting of the Village Hall team took place on 29<sup>th</sup> July to review outstanding matters and discuss the initial specification for the refurbishment of the toilets. Cllr Raven was in the process of obtaining some estimates for Council's consideration. The hall floor had undergone maintenance treatment and the routine 6 monthly check of fire alarm system had been completed. The bar window roller blind had been repaired, many of the hall lights serviced and the front door lock had been adjusted by Cllr Perring. The existing booking forms had been reviewed and updated to better serve hirers and the booking clerk and a revised batch had been ordered from The Print Shop.

The opportunity to purchase 50 mugs and 2 large mirrors from a local Yoga club had arisen and after discussion with the agreement of Cllrs Fawell, Fynn and Orchard these mirrors were purchased and been installed in the toilets in time for the Progressive Supper. Tony Eden had prepared a Village Hall Brochure for hirers and also prepared the advertisement for Chiltern View. He had designed a simple A5 advertisement which, with Revd. Linda's agreement, would be given out to all church bookings, weddings, christenings and funerals in the hope that these measures would increase awareness of halls facilities and increase bookings. An inventory check had also been undertaken. The focus would now turn to the toilet refurbishment plans and revisit the options for improving the acoustics in the main hall.

b) A single LED light had been installed in the main hall which was viewed by all present. The installation of LED lights throughout was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr Fawell, seconded by Cllr Jones that an electrician be employed to replace half of the lights in the main hall (20 lamps) with LED lamps, keeping those replaced as spares for both main and small halls during the interim period until legislation or local requirements resulted in all being replaced. The was agreed by all. A budget of £400 was agreed for this work.

**ACTION: RF**

c) Cllr Raven had provided a written report advising that as part of his investigation into the costs of the planned toilet refurbishments, he had surveyed a few models and designs of urinal and had come to the conclusion that some of the wall-mounted waterless urinals would be the best option. He had identified 4-5 installers to approach for quotes, but asked for councils' feedback on his proposal before proceeding further, saying that he had further information on waterless urinals available. After brief discussion councillors agreed to ask Cllr Raven to provide further information to them all prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council and to defer a decision until that time.

**ACTION: Clerk(NR)**

d) All agreed that the two large mirrors now hanging both gents and ladies toilets were an asset to the facilities and could be re-hung once the refurbishment had been undertaken. Thanks to Simon Mullett for completing this work in time for the Progressive Supper.

## **9. Black Barn.**

Detailed investigations into the future of the Black Barn situated on Radnage Common Road had taken place and the options discussed.

Following a comprehensive report into the investigation into the history of the building carried out by Ian Blaylock in October 2013, the Parish Council had written to all residents on Radnage Common Road to advise them of the contents of this report and concluding that 'it was generally thought that full restoration was not an option and that demolition would be the only option, unless a viable solution was presented to the council for consideration'. A similar article had also been entered into the local church and community newsletter 'Contact Magazine'. Comments or alternative suggestions were requested to be made in writing.

As a result of both the letter and the article, few alternatives were offered:  
If the building were to be demolished, a request to salvage timber had been received.  
A request to build a residential property incorporating the barn.  
A request from a private individual to purchase and restore the barn as storage for garden and photographic equipment with a small workshop and storage for vehicle spares.  
Demolish the barn and replace it with a plaque or tree, clear the space so that parking alongside adjacent properties could be provided and the roadway on the common repaired.

As the timber is known to be riddled with woodworm it was thought unlikely that any salvage would be viable however, this could be reconsidered once a decision on the future was known.

Following some investigation into the legal aspects of owning Common Land, a report was completed by John Hornsey on behalf of the council, offering guidance on the legislation.

As the land on which the barn sits (including the barn itself) is owned by the Parish Council and is registered as common land, any sale of the barn would require an application for deregistration of common land and that such an application was unlikely to proceed.

Planning consent would not be given for new permanent buildings as they would be incompatible with the future use of the land as common land.

There is no formal road on the Radnage Common (other than Radnage Common Road which effectively runs through its' centre), it is vehicle traffic to and from the adjacent properties that has caused the grass area to wear away into tracks. Further investigations undertaken by John Hornsey advised the council to be cautious about granting any legal rights to parking on any common land.

The council therefore considered that they had ownership and responsibility for an out of use building that was no longer maintained and was collapsing/degrading and was thought to be well beyond the ability of the council to repair in terms of cost, has no foreseeable useful future to the neighbouring community, and even if restoration was viable, would require continuing maintenance and a purpose.

It was considered that the emotional aspects of retaining such an historic (but unsafe) building should be weighed against the logical process of evaluating the buildings future. Ian Blaylock had obtained a very straightforward flowchart from the Chiltern Society on 'How to Evaluate a Redundant Building':

- Can the building be restored – Councillors did not think so.
- Does the building have an alternative use – Councillors could not think of any alternative use.
- Record the building and research its history – this was the stage where most present thought the council had reached.
- Demolish or dismantle the building.

The cost of undertaking a full technical survey of the barn at a potential minimum cost of £850 was thought by some to be an unnecessary route as there was no perceived benefit in repairing or restoring the building. Others considered the full technical survey should be carried out to serve as an audit trail and a record for the future.

It was generally thought that the subject had been put to the public and that no real perceivable interest or viable alternatives had been received, therefore the future would seem to be to record the history and dismantle the building, returning the site to grassland.

On behalf of the council, Ian Blaylock had been asked to liaise with the historic section of the Chiltern Society once again, with a view to seeking their advice on how to best record and dismantle the building.

He was also asked to see if the Chiltern Society wished to be involved in this process, what help they would need to undertake this task, and what excavations might be necessary for archaeological purposes.

Ian Blaylock had provided a report which confirmed that the Chilterns Open Air Museum were unable to find a home for the building as funding was currently not available. The Chiltern Society, however, remained keen to be involved with dismantling the building. The first objective would be to carry out a full survey and draw up a schedule for the demolition process and it had been recommended that the floor was carefully excavated and sifted to find any artefacts. It was suggested that the demolition work would best be scheduled to start next spring.

It was proposed by Cllr Fawell, seconded by Cllr Perring with 2 in favour and one against, that the full technical survey (estimated cost £850) was not required.

It was proposed by Cllr Perring, seconded by Cllr Fawell with all in favour that the Black Barn be carefully dismantled under arrangements overseen and in strict consultation with the Parish Council.

All present agreed that Ian Blaylock should be asked to continue his assistance to the council and to make arrangements with the Chiltern Society representative to carry out a full appraisal of the work involved. It was considered sensible to ask Ian to seek assurance from the Chiltern Society that where practically possible, all historical excavation of the floor, be completed prior to dismantling the building. All agreed that there was a need to ensure that the work appraisal included advice on anticipated timescale, what action was going to be necessary, what records should be made and retained, and what the anticipated total cost of the process was likely to be. It was suggested that the co-ordination of a project of this nature should have a council representative included in these discussions and Cllr Fynn offered to undertake this role.

**ACTION: EF/Clerk**

The council wished to record their thanks to Ian Blaylock and John Hornsey for their help and support to date.

## **10. Open Spaces**

a) The Clerk had received a request from the family connected with one of the burial plots that the compost pile be emptied and if possible moved away from the grave area. The family had offered to dismantle and remove the existing facility. This was agreed and an alternative site for a new composting area also agreed at the furthest end of the burial ground. The Clerk was asked to continue to liaise with the family and to make arrangements with a local contractor for a new bin to be created at a cost not to exceed £50. The Clerk was also asked to liaise with the grass cutting contractors for both churchyard and burial ground and to install a discrete notice reminding people to leave only compostable material in the bin.

**ACTION: Clerk**

b) As agreed at a previous meeting, the vacant allotments at City Allotments had been strimmed. The Clerk advised that a potential tenant from West Wycombe had requested a half plot at City Allotments. All present agreed that Mr Newell be offered a plot.

**ACTION: Clerk**

c) The Clerk had received the Playground Safety Inspection Report and prepared copies which were being made available to the Chairman and Cllr Raven at the end of this meeting. In the meantime, Cllr Raven had reported that he considered that the majority of the playground equipment was of considerable age and ideally should be replaced. As suggested at the previous meeting, there was no equipment aimed at adult fitness and Cllr Raven offered an opinion that the call for such a facility would appear to be limited. Cllr Raven had suggested that discussion and feedback on what facilities, if any, would be most welcomed by residents.

Councillors were not convinced that adult fitness equipment would be used and asked that Cllr Raven be asked to circulate further information prior to the next meeting and that the subject of the available playground equipment be deferred to the next meeting to allow the playground safety inspection reports to be studied and the findings shared.

**ACTION: Clerk (NR)**

### **11. Clerks Matters – including late received correspondence.**

a) The Clerk advised that an email had been received from a resident (also copied to WDC) regarding the camp site being sited at Bella Vista on City Road. The majority of the questions raised would need to be answered by WDC as they all related to planning regulations.

The Chairman advised that he had already acted as a private individual (and on behalf of other immediate neighbours) and had written to both the Head of Planning at WDC and his local Member of Parliament to complain about the lack of consultation and democracy that had already given permission for the site as granted by the Camping and Caravan Club, under an exemption clause contained in the current legislation, to the owner of Bella Vista. He stated that he personally wanted the authority for this site to be revoked and urged councillors to oppose the site and to make representation to both Bucks County Council and the Camping and Caravan Club. He asked that this item be placed on the next agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the council.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Etholen advised that a similar situation had occurred in the neighbouring parish of Bledlow Ridge and that the residents there had also complained about the perceived loophole in the current planning laws. Cllr Etholen offered to provide a copy of a letter he had sent in support of the Bledlow Ridge residents case, with the Chairman of this parish council.

b) Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service: 2015-20 Public Safety Plan Consultation  
Councillors agreed that a council return would not be compiled and that they could respond to this individually.

c) The Clerk advised that the hedgecutting contractor had apologised for not getting the hedges cut in the time requested and that he would be available to begin cutting the following week. The Clerk was tasked with asking the bookings clerk to give the contractor access to the village hall car park.

**ACTION: Clerk**

d) The Mayor of High Wycombe was due to be part of a privately organised fundraising event in the village on the forthcoming weekend and had asked permission from the council chairman to wear his chain of office for publicity reasons. The Chairman agreed and the Clerk was tasked with responding to the Mayor's office.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **12. Forthcoming Meetings and Attendees.**

a) A date for the Action Plan working group meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm at the home of Cllr Fynn .

**ACTION: All**

b) A date for the Precept planning working group meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 3rd December at 8pm at the home of Cllr Jones.

**ACTION: All**

### **13. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014** commencing at 8.00pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 22:00 hours.

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

There was no further public session.

Chairman's Signature:

Date: