

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY, 14 MAY 2004, AT 7.30 PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, RADLEY.

Those present included: Cr B C Mott (in the Chair)
Crs Crowley, Henderson, Wilson, Wyatt
10 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Messrs Blanks, Johnston, Nutt, Standen, and Mrs Standen.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 14 May 2004, which had been circulated to the meeting, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES

- (a) **DEAD TREES – CHURCH ROAD:** A considerable number of trees had been removed and the copse had been cleared. Dumping of garden rubbish had stopped.
- (b) **FENCING AROUND POND:** There had been delay in replacing the fencing along the roadside edge of the pond as it was not clear who was responsible for the supporting wall, which appeared to support the road. This was being investigated.
- (c) **ELECTRICITY CUTS:** The Parish Council had received an assurance from Southern Electric that Lower Radley was on the map it used.
- (d) **SEWAGE SYSTEM – SHAW’S COPSE:** The problems being experienced by the residents of Shaw’s Copse was followed up with Thames Water, and the reply had been forwarded to the residents.
- (e) **ATTACK ON ELDERLY LADY:** The Parish Council was asked to press for details on the police investigations into this case.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND REPORT

A copy of the payment and receipts for 2003/2004 had been circulated to the meeting, and Cr Crowley, as Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, presented the report. The following points were made:

- (a) At the start of the financial year there was a balance of £40,106.97, but that with the precept of £42,000, the interest, VAT refund, and other items, the Parish Council’s total income was £88,916.15.

- (b) The total expenditure in 2003/2004 was £50,053.42, the main items of expenditure being:

Administration:	£9,477.97
Annual Subscriptions:	£456.41
Donations:	£542.55
Playing Field Expenditure:	£4,787.39
Play Area:	£22,346.40
Conservation:	£2,903.21
Bus Shelter, Foxborough Road:	£2,505.00
Commemoration – Mr David Buckle:	£876.05
General Maintenance:	£991.65
Loan repayment/Interest:	£7,456.50

- (c) The largest payment by far is that for the new play area. The total cost was in the region of £43,000, and the outstanding payments were the penultimate payment to Playdale, the 5% retention to Playdale, which would be due in six months after the play area is handed over to the Parish Council, the fencing, and the notice. Claims had been made for the grants from TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) and WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd).
- (d) The Parish Council was not renewing the lease for the second playing field as it considered that the proposed rent was far too high. This meant that the playing field expenditure would reduce next year.
- (e) Although the expenditure on the bus shelter was £2,505, the Parish Council received a grant of 50% (£1252.50) from the Oxfordshire County Council.
- (f) The cost of the commemoration to Mr David Buckle was £876.05, plus the hidden cost of postage and photocopying. The cost of the majority of this was met from contributions (£845), plus the very generous donation from Radley College of allowing use of the rooms for the presentation free of charge.
- (g) The Parish Council has slightly changed the layout of the accounts in that any expenditure unlikely to be spent in a financial year is set out under Accruals at the end of the accounts. For example, we are building up a gratuity fund for the Clerk on her retirement, we have started to build up a replacement fund for the play area – its life should be in the region of 20 years, and this will make its replacement a far less painful experience, and we are building up a fund to have a new surface on the car park in Church Road.
- (h) The accounts now have to go to the Internal Auditor before submission to the External Auditor so the process is longer and more expensive. The 2003/2004 accounts will shortly be with the Internal Auditor. I am glad to say that the External Auditor has approved the 2002/2003

accounts, with the comment that the Parish Council needed to prepare a Register of Risks as requested by the internal auditor – this has been done and a register is now available assessing the risks the Parish Council faces and how it covers these. This document is available should anyone wish to look at it.

The accounts and estimates were agreed by the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT ON THE WORK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cr Mott presented the report from the Chairman of the Parish Council, indicating that the Parish Council year started in May 2003 when seven Parish Councillors retired, including the chairman, David Buckle. Only five nominations were received to form our new council; nominations from two former councillors were received late and they were subsequently co-opted. A further six members were co-opted during the first two months to complete the council.

He reported that one Parish Councillor, Dr Brian Wade, passed away in March 2004. Also the council recorded the death of former parish councillor Mrs Margaret New. There has recently been one resignation, so the council currently had two vacancies.

In June 2003 the Parish Council embarked on the seventh annual front garden competition where it was helped by some of the previous councillors including the founding working group chairman, Paddy Drysdale, to host the team of judges on a glorious day, the judging culminating over a very welcome tea at Wick Hall.

Towards the end of last year the Council was pleased to make formal recognition of the work of the previous chairman, David Buckle. A splendid reception was held in the mansion at Radley College, and many former councillors attended. More recently a seat was installed on the Village Green in Lower Radley. All these arrangements were made by a small hardworking working group, ably led by the Vice-Chairman, Brian Mott.

The bus shelter at the railway station entrance which, because of continued misuse and rental increase by Greene King, the brewery owners of the Bowyer Arms who took over from Morlands, was finally removed in 2003, and had now been replaced by a new cantilever construction; the concrete bus stop sign adjacent had yet to be removed to allow more pavement width.

A small management group, consisting of a representative from the Primary School and Radley College as well as the Parish Council had been set up to look after the Pond in Church Road. Much of the work, such as clearing the undergrowth, had been undertaken by Radley College pupils, but the management group was working to the advice given in the ecology report, and

provision of bird nests and feeding tables, and planting was being undertaken in accordance with this.

On the planning front the Council considered a total of 49 planning applications. It objected to 15, and the planning authority objected/or applications were withdrawn in nine cases. We had a battle to retain the Village Shop. A developer on behalf of the new owner proposed redevelopment of the site, initially without respect to continuity of tenure. The Council was satisfied that the application which had now been accepted was an improvement on that originally submitted.

The Parish Council continued to be concerned about the condition of roads and footways in the Parish, and was continually in touch with the OCC Highways Department. It had had one meeting with the Deputy Engineer, walking around the village, and another one was planned. New markings had been put at the Whites Lane/Thrupp Lane/Foxborough Road junction, and this had been a marked improvement.

The working group that looked after public footpaths was walking all the footpaths in the Parish to ensure signing is correct and the paths were passable. There was concern about the safety of the footpath/cycle path along Thrupp Lane, and again the Parish Council was in touch with the OCC Highways Department with suggestions how this could be improved.

The police had attended Parish Council meetings on a few occasions. Radley was a very low crime area, but there has been a particular problem with motorcyclists on the towpath at Lower Radley. A new Area Beat Officer, PC Jeff Wheble, had been appointed to Radley and Kennington, and was fully aware of the problems being experienced.

The play area in Gooseacre was now almost complete. The play equipment and safety surface were installed and the Parish Council were awaiting for the provision of fencing and for the substandard surrounding tarmac path which was laid by a subcontractor and would be re-laid to specification before the one year guarantee period started. Antisocial behaviour around this space was being experienced, and the Parish Council had been assured that our new local policeman was alerted to this problem; even dog walkers were not all aware of the bylaw denying their pets access to the recreational facilities.

During this year the Parish Council knew that its lease on the Thrupp Lane field was to expire, and that the Council had consciously not fulfilled the requirement to provide a permanent car park surface at the Thrupp Lane entrance because this could change the status of this agricultural land to a brown field site and thus more readily available for later development permission. The owner was determined to raise the rent upon the start of a new lease, to which the Council could not agree on financial grounds, but the Parish Council had agreed to look at alternative arrangements. The Council felt that it should provide recreational facilities within the village, but the fact that both clubs attract its members from a much wider catchment area than the

Parish, influenced the decision not to renew the lease for the second field. The lease ended in March 2004 and the search for a satisfactory solution was currently ongoing. The District Council and Abingdon Town Council had been asked to help.

One exciting development which occurred within the last few weeks had been a grant from the Oxfordshire County Council for a Parish Council website. This would be developed as a Radley Village Web Site, www.radleyvillage.org.uk. Many thanks to Councillors Martin Wilson and Basil Crowley, John and Joyce Huddleston and Stan Baker for the hard work they had put in to get this off the ground so quickly.

There was a lot of talk about Quality Councils and how these could be achieved. Radley Parish Council fell at the first hurdle as 80% of its Councillors had to be elected, and Radley Parish Council got nowhere near this figure at 44%. However, it was conscious of this initiative, and the Clerk has embarked on the Society of Local Council Clerks “Working with your Council” course.

With so many new Councillors this has been a difficult year, but the Chairman indicated that he was extremely grateful for the support of the Councillors and the Clerk during this period.

6. ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- (a) **PROVISION OF THRUPP LANE PLAYING FIELD:** There was a lot of discussion on the need for this provision and the Parish Council’s decision not to renew the lease. The Parish Council agreed to consider meeting the cost of grass cutting on the Thrupp Lane field.
- (b) **OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP:** The work to be undertaken by the Oxfordshire Community Partnership was outlined.
- (c) **THAMES VALLEY POLICE FORCE:** It was noted that this was being restructured.
- (d) **TRANSPORT:** It was noted that there was going to be a bus service directly from Abingdon to the John Radcliffe Hospital.
- (e) **AFFORDABLE HOUSES:** Housing was one of the major issues, and the Parish Council was asked to watch the position carefully in case affordable housing was proposed in the Green Belt.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for attending the Annual Parish Meeting.

Date:

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Chairman