

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY, 9 MAY 2008, AT 7.30 PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, RADLEY.**

Those present included: Cr J Standen (in the Chair)  
Crs Crowley, Davies, Johnston, Rogers, D Standen.  
Wilson, Yorston  
Seven members of the public

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mr Nutt.

**2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 27 April 2007, which had been circulated to the meeting, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**3. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES**

- (a) **TANNOY MESSAGES, RAILWAY STATION:** A further approach had been made to First Great Western about the Tannoy messages, but it had not been possible to get any changes. The previous views on the messages were reiterated, such as the message “any bags left on the station will be confiscated”, as no-one was based at the station to remove the bags. Refurbishments were taking place at the station, and the provision of a real time display would be raised with the OCC. However, it was appreciated that on the bus services real time displays the times shown represented the times the buses should arrive not the real time the buses would arrive.
- (b) **CROSSING PATROL PERSON – RADLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL:** It was noted that the school had been following this up but had not found anyone to undertake the work.
- (c) **VILLAGE GATEWAYS:** There was still a question about the cleanliness of the village gateways, but appreciated that this would continue to be an ongoing problem.

**4. CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT ON THE WORK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Cr Jenny Standen presented the report on the work of the Parish Council for 2007/2008. She indicated that she had been elected Chairman of the Parish Council last May 2007, following an uncontested election. Only nine people stood for the eleven Parish Council seats so one of the first jobs was to fill the two vacancies following consultation with the District Council. Four people expressed an interest in the vacancies and, following interviews, the Parish Council was pleased to welcome Dr Eric Davies and Mr Ian Yorston to the Parish Council. Unfortunately the year had finished with a vacancy as Mr

Mark Wren had resigned, so once again we are in the position of having to fill a vacancy.

Like last year, one of the main items for discussion had related to Radley Lakes. The history of this issue had been well reported in Radley News, on the Parish Web Site and in the local press. Shortly after Oxfordshire County Council granted planning permission to RWE Npower to fill Lake E with pulverized fuel ash, an application had been made by a resident of Abingdon for the area of the lakes to be registered as a Town or Village Green. There was a Public Inquiry into this application and the Oxfordshire County Council delayed consideration of the application following advice that the report of the Inspector was legally unsound. Unfortunately, the OCC did consider the application in due course and decided that the area should not be registered as a Town Green. After taking detailed legal advice, the Parish Council agreed in principle that it was prepared to pursue a Judicial Review, subject to public consultation.

The public consultation of the parishioners of Radley, (where every household in the village received a letter asking them to vote on whether the Radley Lakes ought to be saved, and whether Parish Council should undertake to challenge the decision made by Oxfordshire County Council) showed an overwhelming 88% vote in favour of support for saving the Lakes and 80% in favour of proceeding with the judicial review. The Parish Council also took into account the recent statement by RWE Npower that the lake would not be filled with ash in the immediate future, but did not feel this gave an assurance that the lake would never be filled in. An application to undertake a Judicial Review was submitted to the High Court on the 1 April 2008, which was within the three months deadline.

The Chairman reiterated what she said in a recent press release that the Parish Council had not taken this step lightly and would really like to be able to spend the money in better ways. The Parish Council asked the Oxfordshire County Council and RWE Npower if they would agree to apply for a Stay of Proceedings to allow time for further negotiations with the Power Station, and with the other landowners, about securing the future of these beautiful lakes and beginning a planned restoration for the area. However, this had not been accepted by the County Council, RWE Npower and one of the landowners, and the Parish Council would be meeting shortly to consider its next action. In addition, a meeting with the Power Station was taking place next week.

The anticipated cost of the legal action was in the region of £40,000, and it would be seen from the financial statement that a sum of £10,000 had been included in the estimates for 2008/2009. Save Radley Lakes was actively fund raising to help meet the legal cost, and the Chairman gave an assurance that the Parish Council was keeping the position under very close review at every state of the action.

As can be envisaged, this matter had taken up an enormous amount of time at Parish Council meetings, but the Chairman assured the public that the Parish Council continued to discuss other things and the following summarises the work undertaken by the Parish Council during the year:

1. **Planning Applications:** The Parish Council gave a lot of thought to planning applications and, over the twelve months from April 2007, it had been consulted and responded on 30 planning applications. This compared to 31 in the previous twelve months. The most important of these was an application from Tuckwells and Sons to extend its workings in Thrupp Lane. Thrupp Lane Residents Association had been very actively campaigning against the increased amount of traffic along Thrupp Lane before this application was received, and with their assistance a good case against the application was prepared and submitted. This should be coming up to the OCC Planning and Regulations Committee during May but confirmation of this was awaited.
2. **Highway Matters:** The Parish Council continued to approach Oxfordshire Highways about road conditions in the Parish. There were many problem areas – Stonhouse Crescent, flooding outside Radley College, potholes, etc, but the understanding was that the budget had been reduced and it was difficult to know when some of the work would be undertaken. Catharine Close had been resurfaced, but there was concern about the finish with weeds already appearing, and this has been drawn to the attention of Oxfordshire Highways.

Dropped kerbs were provided at Catharine Close very soon after being requested, despite a warning from Oxfordshire Highways that this would take some time.

There had been a number of meetings with the Thrupp Lane Residents Group regarding the amount of heavy traffic along Thrupp Lane. The Parish Council has had an assurance that when the recycling contract was re-negotiated it would not be based in Thrupp Lane, but at the moment the large recycling lorries were a real problem. The District Council was also following up the legal position in relation to the many businesses along Thrupp Lane to see if part of this could be returned to the Green Belt.

Two new bus shelters had been provided by the Oxfordshire County Council as part of upgrading the premium route services, one at Sugworth Crescent and the second one at Pebble Hill Mobile Home Park. The Parish Council hoped to install two further bus shelters this financial year – outside Radley College on the Oxford bound side, and in Foxborough Road, opposite the Bowyer Arms. An application was being made to the Oxfordshire County Council for a grant towards these two shelters. Real Time Displays had been put up throughout the Parish, and this should give a better service to bus users, although, as already stated, they were not showing the real time.

3. **Station Adoption:** A public meeting had been held to ascertain whether the community would be willing to adopt Radley Station. A number of people indicated that they were willing to consider this further, and the Parish Council would call a meeting of those interested as soon as the major refurbishment work had been completed.

4. **Village Hall:** There were many concerns about the current Village Hall and during the year the Parish Council had undertaken two projects to improve it:
- (a) Soundproofing: The Parish Council had made a substantial contribution towards improving the soundproofing, the District Council also making a grant of £4,000 towards this, and
  - (b) Fencing: New fencing had been erected around the playing field/village hall site, which had made a great improvement to the area.

There was a sum in the Parish Council budget in case it was necessary to subsidize the running of the village hall, due to the likelihood of reduced bookings.

In addition, a Village Hall Working Party, consisting of members from the Parish Council and the Village Hall Management Committee, had been set up to look into the feasibility of providing a new village hall. The discussions were in the initial stages but members of the Working Party had agreed to visit new village halls provided in like sized parishes.

5. **Sports Pavilion, Playing Field and Play Area:** Radley College had helped with grass cutting this year, and the arrangement was working very well. The Parish Council had decided to defer the installation of CCTV equipment at the sports pavilion, although funds had been allowed in the budget for this work.

The Play Area continued to be well used by young children. Glass was a problem, but there was regular cleaning of the area.

## 6. **Police Matters**

PC Sean Delaney had attended a few meetings during the year and kept in regular contact with the Parish Council via the Clerk. At the start of the year there were a lot of problems around the Village Hall/Playing Field which were not associated with the bookings at the village hall, and things had improved.

Two senior police officers attended the Parish Council to discuss the problems caused at Radley Lakes and evidence given to the court when RWE applied for an extension to the injunction. It certainly gave the Parish Council the opportunity to air its unhappiness about a number of matters, and we had the biggest police attendance ever at a Parish Council meeting.

The Neighbourhood Advisory Group (NAG) had been meeting regularly, although it had not always been possible for our representative to attend. Ian Yorston had just been appointed as the representative, with Derek Nutt as the alternate, and hopefully better attendance would be possible in the future. Speeding had been the main focus of NAG, and there had been a lot of speed checks in the Parish with a number of people being given fixed term penalties.

## 7. Conservation

The Parish Council had regular discussions on conservation matters, and the items which came up throughout the year were:

- Conservation Working Party (Nature): The Parish Council had set up a Working Party to support wildlife conservation and biodiversity and to advise the Parish Council as to how it should best meet its obligations under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The Working Party had Parish Council representatives as well as members from the Abingdon Naturalists Society. One meeting had been held to date, and advice was now being sought from the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum before a second meeting was arranged.
- Tree Planting: Three new trees were planted along Whites Lane, although two of these had in effect replaced trees broken down which was not the intention when the new trees were ordered. A rotten tree along Foxborough Road had been cut down and the Oxfordshire County Council had agreed to plant another tree in the Parish to replace this. Each year the Parish Council looked for sites to plant more trees – if the public had any ideas please let your Councillors know.
- Litter: The Parish Council is very pleased with the excellent work done by Mr John Rogerson in helping with litter collection throughout the village. His work is of great benefit to Radley village.
- The Annual Garden Competition was continuing for its twelfth year and was being held on Saturday, 5 July 2008. This had become a very successful event, and was looked forward to each year.
- Village of the Year Competition: The Parish Council was one of the short-listed villages for this event, and received a Highly Commended award for Local Heritage. The Parish Council had decided to enter this competition again this year.
- Village Pond: Further work had been undertaken on clearing the village pond and action was being taken to clear the algae in the pond. The Parish Council had put money in its budget to put new fencing around the area, and the Parish Council was arranging to meet the head teacher at the local school to determine the plans for the fencing which had been moved from the school side of the fence to allow the building work to take place.
- Footpaths in the Parish: The Parish Council had plans to widen Footpath 8, and Radley College and Bill Homewood have indicated that this was acceptable to them. It received a substantial grant of £10,000 from TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) towards this and was currently considering estimates for widening the path by one metre. The Parish Council was also making an application to change the designation to one of footpath/cycle way, although it was understood that the list for footpath changes are such that it would take the Oxfordshire County Council up to ten years to consider this.

A preliminary approach had been made to Oxfordshire County Council regarding registering the footpaths around Lake E. These were the footpaths which the Inspector at the Public Inquiry accepted had been used as footpaths for more than twenty years.

8. **Website:** Some improvements had taken place on the website, and the Forum was up and running. Please use it and let us have your views on matters relating to the Parish. The website address is [www.radleyvillage.org.uk](http://www.radleyvillage.org.uk)

9. **Other Matters**

The Chairman took this opportunity to say how much the Parish Council appreciated the work done, first by the Steering Committee and subsequently by the management team, in achieving such a successful first year for our Village Shop. Although the Council had not been permitted to take an active role in the establishment of the shop, it had welcomed and supported it, for instance by sourcing almost all the ingredients for last summer's garden judges' lunch from there. On behalf of the Council the Chairman congratulated Graham Steinsberg and his team on an excellent first year, and to thank all the volunteers who made it such a happy place to visit.

During the year the Parish Council notice board had been put on the side wall of the shop, and the Parish Council was investigating the possibility of having a community board by the seats at the Lower Radley turn.

Although the Parish Council had no power in the matter of our Post Office, it did send a letter of strongest support to Dr Evan Harris, MP, and was delighted that the Post Office, together with Patrick and Joan Raj, would continue to serve the village in the foreseeable future.

Several reports of noise nuisance had been made this year - on the village hall site, by use of motorcyclists on the field behind Stonhouse Crescent, and bird scarers at the beginning of the planting season (but an explanation by Bill Homewood in Radley News was extremely helpful in relation to the bird scarers).

The Parish Council was very keen to encourage the development of a new Parish Plan and had investigated this fully. However, the approach for funding must come from a Steering Group made up of members of the community not the Parish Council, and a public meeting would be called later this year to see if the community was interested in taking this forward. The Oxfordshire Rural Community Council had marvellous advice on this subject, and the Parish Council was extremely keen that the matter is progressed further.

The Parish Council also had the opportunity to comment on numerous reports (more often than not for Councillors to refer to the web to see the details) and the following are a few examples:

Revised Model Code of Conduct for Members

Vale of White Horse DC:

Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriages/Private Hire Vehicles

Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Vale Community Safety

Licensing Act 2003 – Draft Statement of Licensing Policies

Your Vale – Your Future

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy and a

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

National Standard Planning Application Form

Health Improvement Plan

Community Grants

Oxfordshire County Council:

Minerals Site Proposals and Policies Document – Issues and

Options Consultation April 2007

Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework

2007 Celebrating a Thousand Years of Oxfordshire

Celebration of Millennium of Oxfordshire

Road Accidents in Oxfordshire 2007 Issue

Casualty Report 2006 and Road Safety Strategy and Plan

2007/2008

Your guide to road safety in Oxfordshire 2007/2008

Oxfordshire Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan

ClimateX – monthly updates

Oxfordshire Community Foundation – Report on Activities 2005/2006

Open Spaces Society – Reports

Oxfordshire NHS Primary Care Trust – Various Documents

DEFRA – Ways to tackle climate change

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council:

Housing Needs and Parish Plans

Changes to the Post Office network in Oxfordshire

Review of the Provision of Primary Education in Oxfordshire

The Chairman indicated that she tried to ensure that Councillors were given the time to discuss matters of importance to the Parish and yet ensure meetings were completed by 9.30 pm. But this was a very difficult task, especially when there were so many matters the Councillors which to comment on.

She was very grateful for the support she had had from the Councillors and the Clerk, and would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all the help and assistance they had given during the last twelve months. She also gave a public thanks to Radley Guides for their help with delivering leaflets in the village – this year for the Garden Competition and for the Adoption of Radley Station meeting.

## **5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND REPORT**

A copy of the payment and receipts for 2007/2008 had been circulated to the meeting, together with the audited accounts for 2006/2007. Cr Crowley reported on the Expenditure and Income of the Parish Council during 2007/2008

**Expenditure:** The total expenditure for 2007/2008 was £44,442.67, including VAT, although there were minor accruals to take into account. The main items of expenditure are:

|   | 2007/2008<br>£ | 2006/2007<br>£ |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Administration:                             | 11,736.50      | 10,042.99      |
| Annual Subscriptions:                       | 575.90         | 569.44         |
| Donations (including Section 137 payments): | 2,450.00       | 1,531.00       |
| Playing Field Expenditure:                  | 5,298.71       | 4277.34        |
| Play Area:                                  | 4,508.34       | 183.00         |
| Conservation:                               | 6,137.07       | 2,992.96       |
| Car Park:                                   | 129.32         | 17,194.30      |
| General Maintenance:                        | 562.00         | 3,128.47       |
| Village Hall:                               | 9,020.00       | 0.00           |

**Administration:** Although the cost of administration continued to rise, the increases were mainly in the salary of the Clerk and the cost of insurance. Costs had also risen under the heading of Stationery/Photocopying/Publications, but this includes the purchase of a steel cupboard for storage of the older paper records of the Parish Council records (not the official Minute and Account Books which were stored at the OCC Archives Department at St Luke's Church, Cowley).

**Donations (including Section 137 payments):** The organizations which were given donations were listed on the Parish Council summary – there were a number of new organizations listed, but the Parish Council felt that these were useful to the Parish Council. The Parish Council normally worked to a limit of 2% of the precept, but decided to transfer funds from the balances to be more generous during 2007/2008.

**Playing Field Expenditure:** The playing field expenditure continued to be high. However, as the Parish Council worked on a receipts and payment version of accounting it was noted that two years rental were included in 2007/2008, because the bill for 2006/2007 had not been received until after 31 March 2007. The other costs related to paying for the services used and the value of having a caretaker and cleaner were stressed.

**Play Area Expenditure:** Most of the cost during 2006/2007 was for the purchase of the new fencing which had now been erected along Gooseacre and down one side of the Play Area. The cost of the labour for this work would be met during 2008/2009. The Parish Council continued to put some money aside each year for the new play area which would probably be required in the 2020s.

**Conservation budget:** The spend this year had been higher because major work was needed on the trees on the playing field, along Whites Lane, and more money had been spent on gardening, continuing to improve the Village Green in Lower Radley and the copse area by the car park in Church Road. The village cleaner continued to work in the village, and had been another valuable appointment. A Conservation Working Party (Nature) had been set up and a sum had been allowed in case any funding was required, for example obtaining expert advice on different areas of the Parish in relation to fauna and flora.

**Income:** The main income comes from the precept, and the costs of the Parish Council were mainly met from its precept. This year the precept had been raised to £49,500. The increase in the precept was to meet current and future rises in the costs of providing new facilities for the Parish, while maintaining the Council's ability to meet unanticipated demands on its resources (like the Radley Lakes Judicial Review). On this point, it was reported that the decision to raise the precept had been taken before the decision to undertake the Judicial Review was taken, and was made on the basis of the estimates as they stood at that time. The precept was last raised six years ago, so the recent increase to £49,500 amounts to an annual increase of just 2.8% averaged over that period, and should provide the Parish Council with adequate funds to cover anticipated expenditure over the forthcoming year. It was believed that this was rather less than the average rate of increase of the other Council Tax components.

As could be seen, the Parish Council did continue to hold a large balance. At the start of 2007/2008, the balance in the bank was £77,688.63 and at the start of 2008/2009 £83,067.26. However, the balance in the bank included reserves and in 2007/2008 the reserves were:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Clerk's deferred gratuity:               | £7,000  |
| Play Area – Replacement Fund (£2,000 pa) | £10,000 |
| Provision of Adventure Trail (£2,000 pa) | £8,000  |

By prudence the Parish Council has accumulated a healthy balance, and would be using some of this to provide:

- Two new bus shelters – the two bus shelters provided in 2007/2008 were paid for by the Oxfordshire County Council but any new provision would need to be funded by the Parish Council, hopefully with a grant from the OCC.
- New fencing around the village pond
- Widening of Footpath 8

A total of £29,000 has been included in the estimates for these items. Grants were being sought towards the costs, and the Parish Council had now had confirmation that TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) had given a grant of £10,000 towards the work on Footpath 8.

The 2006/2007 accounts had been approved by the External Auditor. The date for the 2007/2008 external audit was 8 August 2008. The notice would

be displayed 23 June to 6 July 2008, and the records would be available from 7 July to 1 August 2008.

The accounts were accepted by the meeting.

**6. INVOLVEMENT OF VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council considered it would be useful if the Annual Parish Meeting was extended to include reports from other village organizations, and this was accepted by the meeting. It was appreciated that a bigger room might be necessary with an amplification system in place.

**7. ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

- (a) **LITTER BINS:** It was suggested that the Parish Council should review the position and consider putting litter bins by all the bus stops and in the car park. It was also reported that the litter bin by the beagles kennel was very often overflowing.
- (b) **DOG LITTER BIN:** The dog litter bin was not emptied frequently enough, and very often it was overflowing before any action had been taken.
- (c) **POTHoles:** There was concern about the amount of potholes in the Parish.
- (d) **TUCKWELLS:** There was concern about the noise of machinery/bleeping of reversing lorries.
- (e) **BUS PASSES:** The 9.30 a.m. start caused problems with people who have early hospital appointments, and the public asked that this be raised with the DC.
- (f) **CAR PARK:** There were complaints that people were not using the excellent car park and parking in the bus bay in front of the church.
- (g) **VILLAGE SHOP:** It was noted that the shop was appealing for volunteers.
- (h) **DOUBLE-DECKER BUSES:** There was concern at the use of double-decker buses through Radley, and the Parish Council was asked to write to Oxford Bus Company.

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

Date: .....  
Chairman