

RODINGTON PARISH COUNCIL Council Meeting

Minutes of Rodington Parish Council meeting held at 7.00 pm in Longdon upon Tern Village Hall on Wednesday 5th September 2007.

Present:

Cllr Janet French (Chairman), Cllr David Johnson (Vice Chairman), Cllr Brian Ashton, Cllr Claire Broderick, Cllr Tim Osborne, Cllr John Perkin, Cllr Liz Tudor.

Borough Cllr Jacqui Seymour.

In attendance:

One member of the public was in attendance.

Clerk:

Michael Ward

1010/00 Discussion on the Aqueduct at Longdon led by Richard Bifield:

Mr Bifield informed the meeting that he had visited the site of the Thomas Telford Aqueduct on 4th September with an engineer from Telford and Wrekin in order to investigate improvements to the signing. While there is a footpath to the aqueduct, which is a right of way, it does not lead directly to it. There is already a DEFRA sign indicating a permissory path and Mr Bifield would be pleased to see the addition of a finger post but only if the car parking could be improved. Some money might be forthcoming from the engineer's budget and Councillors were prepared to make a small contribution from their own budget.

Mr Bifield also suggested that an interpretation board would be useful in the location. There had been English Heritage involvement in the past when it had been suggested that the aqueduct be moved to Blists Hill Museum, a move that had been strongly resisted by the Parish Council, but Mr Bifield promised to look into the possibility of further English Heritage involvement with regard to the improvements under discussion. The content of an interpretation board could be provided from local sources. Cllr Broderick asked about the chances of obtaining a grant and again Mr Bifield agreed to investigate this possibility. In addition he suggested that the Institute of Engineers might be approached given that their leadership has links to Shropshire and he agreed to look into this option.

Cllr French thanked Mr Bifield for his time and his helpful suggestions, which if carried forward would undoubtedly lead to improvements at the site of the aqueduct.

1011/00 Chair's Welcome and Announcements:

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the formal part of the agenda and extended a welcome to the one member of the public in attendance.

1012/00 Public Session and Matters of Concern:

The member of the public raised the issue of the location of the post box at Rodington Heath. The Clerk outlined the correspondence he had initiated with Royal Mail over this issue all of which had failed to produce a response. Discussion took place as to how this problem could be overcome. Cllr Johnson suggested that a direct telephone call to the Manager at Shrewsbury might be helpful and the Clerk promised to try to make telephone contact in the next few days. The member of the public explained that she and her husband had requested that the post box be removed as it was directly outside her house window and it was on her boundary. An early suggestion that it be relocated on the opposite side of the road with Mr Whittingham's agreement had been dropped after scanning had confirmed the presence of a water main. Mr Whittingham's agreement to this idea had subsequently been withdrawn. Cllr Johnson said that the Council still needed convincing that the present location was the best siting of the post box but the real issue for the Council was the failure of Royal Mail to reply to correspondence and enter into any discussion.

1012/01:

Discussion also took place on the application to turn the unrecorded route from Flanders Farm to Somerwood Farm made into some kind of highway. The application has been made with regard to a process under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 based on the presumption that the route has been used as a right of way for 20 years or more. Telford and Wrekin will have to make a decision on this matter based strictly on evidence but due to a backlog in applications this is not likely to come under active consideration for at least a year. The Parish Council would be consulted during this process but some disquiet was expressed at the meeting as to the possible motives requiring a change but there was no suggestion that the lane should be closed.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council to monitor developments closely in the future

1013/00 Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1014/00 Declarations of Interest:

There were no interests declared.

1015/00 Royal Mail Post Boxes:

No further discussion took place given the debate under item **1012/00** except that concern was further expressed about the state of the wall which held the post box at Longdon upon Tern.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to ensure that this matter is kept on future agendas for further discussion and inform Royal Mail about the state of the wall

1016/00 Traffic Calming:

Cllr Broderick reported that an accident had taken place on the bridge in Longdon upon Tern due to excessive speed through the village. The Clerk was asked to write to the Rural Policing Team asking them to be aware of the concerns and to carry out some speed checks in the future on a regular basis. There was a similar concern expressed over speeding at Somerwood and the need for similar police action. The Clerk reported that Telford and Wrekin had decided to locate battery operated Speed Indicator Devices at Rodington Heath and attend to 30 mph repeater signs through the village. The council felt that the use of these devices would be helpful in Longdon in an effort to reduce speeding.

RESOLVED: The Clerk was asked to archive the data from the recent traffic census at Rodington Heath and investigate the possible use of Speed Indicator Devices in Longdon upon Tern.

1016/01:

Potholes were reported in Sunningdale in Somerwood together with a blocked ditch opposite the Old Vicarage at Rodington Heath

RESOLVED: The Clerk was asked to report the potholes and the blocked ditch to Telford and Wrekin for repair

Cllr Tudor reported that the finger post at the crossroads at Rodington Heath had been repaired and was now in excellent condition.

1017/00 The Planting of Bulbs:

The Clerk reported on conversations he had had with Mr Jeavons of Telford and Wrekin regarding the planting of spring bulbs. Mr Jeavons indicated that he could supply the bulbs if the planting could be arranged by the Parish Council. This was agreed and discussions took place regarding suitable sites including the centre of Rodington, the area around the cemetery and around the village name signs. Councillors agreed to provide a list of suggestions.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to liaise with Mr Jeavons and ensure the planting proceeded and trees which were overhanging the traffic priority sign approaching the bridge from the direction of High Ercall in Longdon were pruned.

1018/00 Allscott Sugar Beet Site:

The Clerk distributed an email received from the Clerk of Wrockwardine Wood Parish Council regarding concern over the future development of the Allscott Sugar Beet site following its closure earlier in the year. Various possible developments were raised in the email, some of which would be of considerable concern to local people. Cllr French pointed out that a number of proposals were likely to be aired in future months as a way of testing public opinion and advised that the Council should wait to see what specific proposals were being suggested for planning before forming any clear opinion.

RESOLVED: The Clerk was asked to contact Wrockwardine Parish Council and assure them that Rodington Parish Council would monitor the situation carefully and provide a considered response when actual proposals were put forward.

1019/00 Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th July 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1020/00 Finance:

The Clerk distributed the bank reconciliation statement and associated spreadsheet for current spending for the period from June 6th 2007 and 3rd July – 14th August 2007. The information relating to 6th June was additional to normal requirements as a bank reconciliation statement had not previously been available due to the changeover of Clerks.

1020/01:

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts previously circulated be approved for payment. RESOLVED: The Clerk was asked to provide an internal invoice for cheques for signing by members to assist in future audit trails.

1020/02:

The Clerk outlined problems being encountered with Barclays Bank with regard to the change of address for correspondence and statements. The procedures had still not been finalised and revisions to the paperwork previously submitted were made in order that the changeover could be satisfactorily completed.

1020/03:

The Clerk reported on his investigations regarding the moving of the Parish Council account to another bank/building society in Wellington in order to gain interest on the account. The various options were discussed. Cllr Johnson felt it was important that any new account should be internet based so that the Clerk could act as the operating officer and all Councillors could have internet access. The account that proved to be the most attractive to Councillors was the HSBC Business Money Manager account which currently paid 2.61% interest, payable either on a monthly or quarterly basis and offered access via the internet, telephone or one of the HSBC branches.

RESOLVED: That the Barclays account be closed and funds transferred to the HSBC Business Money Manager account in Wellington with full Internet access as soon as the present administrative difficulties were overcome.

1021/00 All Planning Matters:

The Clerk updated Councillors with regard to planning decisions made by Telford and Wrekin regarding applications made within the Parish. The Chairman explained that she had submitted comments on one application regarding temporary accommodation for a twelve month period in the absence of the Clerk who was on holiday.

1022/00 Clerk's Report:

The Clerk distributed his report for the period since 6th July 2007. The issues of CiLCA training and the cemetery were given particular attention. The Clerk reported that the initial CiLCA meeting he had attended at Shrewsbury had made it clear that the process involved possible development for the Council as well as for the Clerk and that there could be initiatives highlighted by the compilation of the portfolio that needed to be taken at Council level. Councillors agreed that this would be a healthy development and Cllr Perkin outlined the model of an amateur based Council being advised by a professionally trained Clerk that was in the process of being developed.

The Clerk reported that the state of the cemetery administration was a cause for concern and he had uncovered a number of errors that had proved worrying. He had already embarked on an attempt to regularise matters, with particular reference to reserved plots and with regard to the maintenance of the cemetery. He was currently in discussion with two families regarding plots that they had reserved some years ago. He had agreed to meet the Chairman at the cemetery some time before the next Parish Council Meeting in order to try and consolidate the plans with the identified graves so that future developments could proceed with confidence.

1023/00 Parish Council Website:

RESOLVED: Cllr Johnson to review the Council website in order to update it with regard to the Clerk's details including his telephone number.

1024/00 Cemetery:

The Chairman suggested that a Hawthorn tree that was self set should be removed and said that the grass cutting had been left over the cemetery instead of being collected and placed under the hedges. She also said that the hedges needed trimming and some were now overhanging the graves making access difficult Cllr Perkin agreed to remove the green bin in order that Mrs Sankey no longer needed to sort the rubbish which could all go into the black bin.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to contact Mr Roberts to discuss the present concerns and ensure the submission of an estimate for a suitable foundation for an additional bench.

1025/00 Environmental Maintenance Issues:

The repair of potholes at Somerwood had already been referred to in item **1016/00**.

1026/00 Report on Meetings attended by Members and Ward Councillors:

Cllr Tudor reported on her meeting with the police who were anxious to find someone who would act as coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch in the Somerwood area.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Seymour who attended following a meeting of the Borough's Scrutiny Committee. She outlined the proposals that were under discussion with regard to investing in health and the consultation paper that was under discussion. This could have repercussions for general hospital services and see the growth of specialist hospitals. She had also been involved with a presentation on the West Midlands ambulance service where important changes were being considered which could see the closure of some local centres. Cllr Seymour reported that the post of Rural Officer was being advertised with internal applicants being given the first opportunity for appointment leading to the interviewing of external candidates if no suitable internal applicant could be identified.

1027/00 Correspondence:

Cllr Johnson agreed to produce the next newsletter in October. Two articles were proposed, one concerning a new cycle way crossing the parish and one concerning the recruitment of foster carers in the area.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to contact the fostering agency and provide details for them to submit an article to be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

1027/01:

General correspondence was considered and items for the black bag distributed. A letter from the Worthy Causes Group was considered outlining their work in the Parish with particular reference to the cemetery and details of possible improvements in play facilities in the Parish. RESOLVED: A cheque for £130.00 be drawn up for the Worthy Causes group to cover their costs for cemetery work.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to provide details of funding for possible play improvements in the area and place the matter on the next agenda.

1028/00 Date of Next Meeting:

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd October 2007 at 19.30 hours in Rodington Village Hall.

As the business of the meeting had been completed the meeting concluded at 10.05 pm

Signed.....**Dated**.....
Chair