

Radwinter Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES

21st May 2025

Present: Chairman of the Parish Council and 6 parishioners

1) Welcome

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) was opened at 7pm by the Chairman of the Parish Council who welcomed all attendees. Seven parishioners were in attendance.

2) Apologies

Apologies were received from Radwinter Cubs, Radwinter Recreation Ground, Radwinter Village Hall and Radwinter Bowls Club; all had provided reports.

3) Approval of Minutes

The meeting noted the Minutes of the APMs of 22nd May 2023 and 28th May 2024, and approved them as a true record.

4) Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman noted that Luke Brown had stepped down as Clerk at the end of May 2024, but that Julie Pledger was appointed as the new Clerk in January 2025. He wished to record his thanks to Luke, and to welcome Julie to her new role.

The Parish Council finished the 2023/24 financial year with an underspend on budget caused mainly by the late dissemination of grants, itself the result of the disruption caused by the change of Clerk. To maintain the level of services to the village, the 2025/26 precept has been increased by 5% (an increase of about 11p per week for a Band D Household).

Grants made included £1380 to the Radwinter Bowls Club, £3500 to the Recreation Ground (plus financial support to acquire picnic benches), £2000 support to repair the village clock, £1000 support for new graveyard paths and £1000 for the upcoming graveyard fence renewal. A grant was also given for £1400 to assist the school to acquire a new cycle shed and further grants were made to help the WI, and to pay for additional grass cutting, to plant daffodils and to support the VE 80th anniversary event.

Parish Council meetings in 2024/25 have been dominated by discussions on traffic and the state of local roads. The Parish Council has no direct control over these issues but is an important voice speaking to Essex County Council (ECC) and to Essex Highways (EH), agitating for improvement. With the help of ECC Councillor Foley and UDC Councillor Taylor, a visit was arranged in mid-June 2024 for EH to look at issues around speeding and parking and the effectiveness of existing control measures. The EH representative recognised the poor condition of the traffic calming at the West end of the village and has reported it as needing action although noting that the EH budget is very limited and early action is unlikely. A number of other reports were made by members of the public on potholes and the need for vegetation to be cut back but again budgets make it difficult to see much action being undertaken in the near future. The Parish Council eventually took

matters into their own hands and have spent £6000 to replace speed signs in the village in a bid to reduce traffic speed.

A number of pathways through the village (for example Gillon Way to the school) are the responsibility of ECC to keep clear. Unfortunately the cutting programme is too late to be effective, with paths becoming overgrown well before the cut in September. Accordingly the Parish Council has stepped in to do this and keep important paths clear. The Parish Council also ensured that all local salt bins were kept 100% full through the Winter months.

5) Reports from County and District Councillors

No reports received.

6) Reports from Parish Council Representatives

The Parish Council appoints representatives to a number of village bodies, and has a sub-committee developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

i. Radwinter Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The first public consultation event was held in late May / early June 2024 and useful feedback obtained from those who attended. A Housing Needs Assessment has been undertaken with consultant support (funded by Locality) and a draft of the recent Landscape Character Assessment (again consultant led and funded by Locality) has been received. The Steering Group would like to acknowledge the support of Nicky Joshua at RCCE, and hope to produce a draft Plan in late summer 2025.

ii. Radwinter Recreation Ground Charity (RRGC)

The RRGc has held numerous events over the last year which include regular 'Repair Cafes', fitness and strengthening classes, Pilates and yoga, Christmas wreath making, and jewellery making events. A number of Village Quiz Nights have been held, and also monthly 'Drinks at the Pavilion'. The Oktoberfest event was a great success. The RRGc have also refurbished the playground swings and with support from the Parish Council provided colourful new benches. The meeting noted the importance of the Recreation Ground to village life, and that the children's play area is particularly good.

iii. Radwinter Village Hall Charity (VH)

The VH stage the Radwinter Village Show in August 2024, which was as popular as ever. In addition regular Village Cafés are held every month, together with Yoga classes, a Theatre Group and the Quilters, as well as a number of other organisations' meetings. The VH extends reduced rates (sometimes free) to appropriate village organisations. Also during the year repairs were undertaken to the VH cupola and the rental cottages; yearend reserves remain healthy.

7) Reports from Village Organisations

i. Radwinter Bell Ringers

Radwinter Bell Ringers are now part of a wider group of ringers representing Thaxted, Ashton and Hempstead (and some other local towers). There is no regular practice in Radwinter but they join others in the group rotating round the towers, practicing on average once a month at Radwinter. There is a regular email to alert Radwinter locals to the times of ringing at the Church, which includes the services. The bells are extremely popular with ringers, and many local and non-local groups continue to visit.

ii. Radwinter Bowls Club

Rob Gunn reported that last year Radwinter Bowls Club 'A' team won both of their area leagues and the 'B' team only just narrowly got beaten to winning their area league. The 'A' and 'B' teams also progressed to 5 cup finals. Members of the Club (of whom 5 come from the village) can play friendlies and internal club competitions or play league games, and benefit from reduced process at the club bar. The Club is happy to give coaching to those wishing to learn the game.

iii. Radwinter Christmas Trees

Tina and Caryl reported another successful year for the Christmas Tree Festival despite dreadful weather. Many people donated prizes, decorated the 21 trees on display around the church and ran numerous stalls as well as baking cakes, and running the tombola. Everyone loved the Angora rabbits & the visiting dogs, and there was a special thank you to Radwinter Cubs for all their help, and to Wendy Rowley & Sue Bright for all the support & advice. £1,936 was raised and shared equally between the church & RSPCA Danaher.

The meeting wished to record their thanks to Tina and Caryl for taking on the organisation of this event three years ago (without their leadership there was a danger that it would have folded) and also asked the Parish Council to consider doing a tree for the 2025 event.

iv. 1st Radwinter Cubs

The Cubs meet in Hempstead Village Hall on Wednesdays during term time from 18.00 to 19.30. They have grown in the last few months and now have 20 children in the pack, all but one of whom attend St Marys Primary School in Radwinter. The pack has been involved in a number of activities in the last year including kayaking, archery, the Active Reality zone at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre, and helping to plant daffodils around Radwinter. The Cubs have also learned how to light fires safely without matches, and then toasted marshmallows to make 'smores, a popular activity. They are involved this evening (21st May) on a litter pick around the village, and will soon be off to their first 3 night camp since COVID.

v. Radwinter Shed

The Shed group offers a place where members share the tools and resources they need to work on projects of their own choosing at their own pace. During the year the shed (the Old Pavillion) has continued to be upgraded and is now freshly painted thanks to the hard work of the members and a grant from the Radwinter Parish Council. The Shed group help out at the RRGRC Repair Cafes and are available to undertake small projects for local organisations.

vi. Radwinter WI

The WI has 35 members and an extensive programme of events through the year. In 2024 this included talks of an introduction to British Sign Language, the perils of 'fake news', artists in Great Bardfield, paper crafts, 'travels with a VIP', and gardening. More recent events have included willow weaving and burlesque!

vii. The Radwinter Society

The Society has been very quiet of recent years, but is hopeful that it will be able to re-launch during 2025. Plans include a small village museum in the old post office within the Village Hall (using material gathered by Michael Southgate over many years). Books published by the Society continue to be available in the Church, including the History of RAF Great Sampford.

viii. St Marys Church PCC and the Friends of St Marys

Since the departure of Father Gerwyn, the ensuing interregnum has been challenging, with a significant burden falling on the Church Warden (Wendy Rowley), her assistant (Harvey Orrock) and the PCC. However the PCC is delighted that a new Priest has been appointed to the Benefice and Father David Shephard will be installed by the Bishop on 7 July in Thaxted Church. Church finances continue to be stretched but are for the present manageable, with the support of many people in the village, both regular church goers and others.

The Friends organisation, chaired by Sir Jonathan Parker, has again provided outstanding support, especially in the restoration of the cobbles outside the South Porch (due to happen in the near future). The Church PCC is also grateful to the Parish Council for their donations to enable work to be completed on new paths, and the clock to be restored.

ix. Radwinter St Marys School

St Marys School seeks to provide a caring, happy and secure environment where every child feels valued and can flourish. It reflects a Christian understanding that God's love is for everyone recognising that every child has individual talents, needs and a worthy contribution to make. The school provides a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum where every child is seen as a unique learner able to make exceptional progress from their starting points, thoroughly enjoying their time at our school.

The recent VE 80 Celebration involved the entire school taking part in a street party style lunch on the playground. The children (all dressed in red, white and blue) enjoyed the British classic of fish and chips followed by VE day decorated biscuits and ice cream, accompanied by 1940's music playing outside on the large speaker. Robin Class had organised 1940's playground games for the younger children to participate in including hoop and sticks, skipping games and hopscotch. Each class contributed something towards the party such as handmade bunting, collage posters and fabulous Union Jack hats!

The school recognizes that one of the most pressing issues is the traffic congestion and parking challenges around the school during peak drop-off and pick-up times; this not only poses a safety risk to the children but also contributes to increased air pollution and disruption to the local community. In response, the school has implemented a series of initiatives aimed at alleviating these concerns and promoting more sustainable practices including a free breakfast club, running from 8:00 am to 8:30 am every day providing a

longer drop-off window, supporting working families, and helping to reduce the number of cars arriving at the traditional 8:30 am peak time.

In their efforts to encourage alternative modes of transport, the school have taken significant steps to improve facilities and their thanks go to Radwinter Parish Council for a generous donation to enable the school to provide a new bike shelter.

8) Comments from members of the public present

The meeting noted the tremendous work down by Tina, Caryl and all the volunteers to organise and undertake the daffodil planting around the village. The Parish Council was asked to continue to support this effort (as it had done this year) in order that planting could be extended even further across the village next year.

The Chairman noted that this year's APM had been organised at very short notice, and many village organisations had to send reports rather than be present in person. For 2026 he committed that the Parish Council will try to publicise the APM plans much earlier and increase the level of village attendance.

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 1945.