

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 24 APRIL 2008

Present: Cllr Norman in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs Bennett, Birch, Brading, Brand, C Jefford, Martin, Seeley, Shafe and Wynne-Jones

Not Present: Cllr Seabourne

Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllrs Bains, Dann, Hollands, Saxon and Cllr Vassiliou.

In Attendance: There were 4 members of the public present.

AP27/08 The Chairman welcomes members of the press and public

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present to the Annual Parish Meeting.

AP28/08 Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 26 April 2007

The Clerk advised those present that in accordance with good practice, the Minutes of the last Parish Meeting had already been signed off on 28 June 2007, that being the first full Council meeting after the 2007 Annual Parish Meeting.

AP29/08 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

AP30/08 To receive the Chairman's Report

Cllr Norman delivered the Chairman's Report for the year, see attached.

AP31/08 To receive the following Committee Reports

AP31.1/08 Planning & Development Committee

Cllr Wynne-Jones, as Chairman of the Committee, delivered his report for the year, see attached.

AP31.2/08 Environment & Amenity Committee

Cllr Seeley, as Chairman of the Committee, delivered her report for the year, see attached.

AP31.3/08 Finance & Administration Committee

Cllr Norman, as Chairman of the Committee, delivered the report for the year, see attached.

AP32/08 To receive the Parish Council's Accounts for year ending 31 March 2007

The Clerk advised that the Annual Accounts for 31 March 2007 were signed off by the Parish Council at their meeting of 12 July 2007 (Agenda item CC425/07/S). The Clerk continued that the Annual Return Statement from the Internal Auditors was signed on 18 June 2007 and the external Auditors statement signed on 22 November 2007. The Clerk stated that the Audit Certificate was therefore issued by Lubbock

Fine (External Auditors) thus closing the Accounts for 2006/07. There were no questions raised regarding the accounts.

The Clerk concluded that as at 31 March 2007 the Income was £227,320 and the Expenditure was £175,323. The Earmarked Reserve balance was £137,480 and the General Reserve balance was £90,294 - £227,774 in total.

One Councillor stated that he believed that 50% of the annual expenditure which is held in General Reserves may be too large a sum of money, and several other Councillors agreed with him. The Clerk advised however, that this figure is recommended by both the Council's Accountants and Internal Auditors.

AP33/08

To consider any other interest in the Parish

No items were raised.

It was pointed out that the Minute numbers on the Agenda ended in /07 when they should have read /08. The Clerk stated that on the Minutes, the numbers would end in /08.

AP34/08

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.



The Chairman's Annual Parish Report Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 24 April 2008

I would like to welcome all our Councillors to this, the 2008 Parish Council Meeting. Likewise I welcome Mrs Amanda Taft, our new assistant clerk who has added her valuable presence to the workings of the Council.

During this last year, the Council has worked towards establishing a formal Management Plan by building in provisions for future projected ideas of the Council. To act as a conduit, a Management Team was created to firstly brain storm any ideas for a foundation by which the Council can communicate with the residents within the Parish on an informal basis to research into what they felt that the Parish precept should contribute towards. The budget proposals for 2008/09 gave the Councillors the opportunity to put forward new ideas for the benefit of the community, which, I am sure, will be represented in the respective Committee Chairpersons' reports. Likewise to review existing projects, particularly the funding of the PCSO's which will have to be debated during 2008.

As a means of cohesion within the community, the Council embarked on inviting and gathering information towards entering this Parish into the Hertfordshire Village of the Year competition. A small management team have now taken on the task of processing the information, gathered from the community, prior to submission to the judges. A benefit that has been gained from the project is that we now have further information to add to the local register of interests. Also, the Council has agreed to the investigation of information in respect of potential grants that could be used to assist future projects or external activities within the Parish.

As the current Chairman, I feel that it is important that the Parish Council is positive in its objectives and wherever possible to encompass the community.

Our latest project, which emanated from a local resident was an initiative to consider trying to place floral displays around the village. A small, select team including one of the Rangers, together with a small approved budget, have already put the idea into reality. The involvement of the Rangers goes to endorse the reliance that the members require from the expertise that they have gathered and been trained in.

I have mentioned but a few of the activities that we, as Councillors, have been involved in over the past year, but we must not lose sight of the background work and management that enables us to be a progressive Council. Our thanks must firstly go to our Clerk, Mr David Allison, who is now being admirably assisted by Mrs Amanda Taft for their work in preparing the stage for these events.

Finally as your incumbent Chairman, my wife and I have been pleased to be able to represent this Council as ambassadors to local functions thereby hopefully endorsing the Council's commitment to become more fully integrated with the community's' aspirations and concerns.

Last but by no means least, I wish to thank you, the Council, for your work and support that has been put into the last twelve months as Parish Councillors. A proud office to behold.

*Cllr Norman
Chairman*



Environment & Amenity Committee Report
Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 24 April 2008

We tried two new projects last year, both of which were very successful and enjoyable. A day trip to Brighton for residents from the local sheltered accommodations and an afternoon tea for senior citizens in the Community Centre. A similar event is planned for June 18th this year, so any help on the day would be very much appreciated. If you cannot help with the setting up, then perhaps any Councillors who have a spare half an hour would like to come along, just for a chat.

The Garden Competition was delayed by about a month last summer, due to the Parish Council elections which delayed the Parish Pump containing entry forms. However, despite bad weather, as usual the gardens looked as good as ever. Thank you to everyone who helped with the judging.

We have another project this year which will tie in with the Village of the Year Competition. This is Flowers in Croxley, suggested by Mrs Grant. We have a small budget which hopefully will be increased gradually, so that other areas of Croxley can be made more colourful.

This year's Quiz raised nearly £900 which will be split between the Chairman's Charities; Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Prostate Cancer. The success of the evening is due to the organisational abilities of Cllr Jefford ably assisted by Amanda Taft. Thanks also to all the Councillors who made such light work of helping to get the hall ready. The raffle was an enormous success, so thanks for all the donated prizes and thanks to our Clerk, David Allison for MC'ing the evening.

David Allison, Amanda and our two Rangers have been, as always very supportive and helpful during 2007/08.

Thank you to all the Members of the E & A Committee for their help and support.

Cllr Seeley
Chairman



**Finance & Administration Committee Report
Annual Parish Meeting - Thursday 24 April 2008**

Councillors and members of the public.

I have pleasure in presenting my Report as Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee of the Croxley Green Parish Council in what has been a very successful year for this Council.

New Members of the Council were elected last May and all have settled in well and contributed enormously in looking after residents' interests in Croxley Green.

This Council, yet again, has all of its accounts up to date which have been externally audited and we are grateful to the hard work of our Clerk in making this be the case.

The precept for the last year had decreased by 7.7% from the 2005/06 year and this in the main was due to using monies held in our Reserves to fund the Police Community Support Officers. However, as these monies were taken from Reserves it has resulted in the current years Precept (2008/09) being increased to fund the PCSOs. The Accounts for the 2007/08 financial year will be published shortly in line with the external Audit procedure.

The Council scrutinised all expenditure during the course of the year to ensure that residents were receiving value for money and we made appropriate decisions on expenditure, which in terms of quality, may not necessarily be the cheapest option. The Clerk has introduced new Monthly Management Accounts information towards the end of the year just past which has helped considerably in monitoring our financial position on a regular basis.

I would like to thank the members of the F & A committee for their hard work during the year.

*Cllr Brian Norman
Chairman, Finance and Administration Committee*



Planning & Development Committee Report
Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 24 April 2008

Your Planning and Development committee has had an extremely busy year.

We meet twice a month throughout: mainly to examine planning proposals put forward by businesses and the public. The change in social attitudes of ownership in our country away from 'starter homes' and then moving has meant that house owners now wish to extend, improve and change their present and permanent property. This means that a lot of time is spent in vetting applications to ensure that they are appropriate for the varied ambience of our village.

The number of applications each month is large and requires careful consideration. In this we are helped by the up to date electronic equipment which the council has acquired which enables details of each application to be projected in detail onto a screen. This reflects the decision by Three Rivers District Council to go paperless as far as circulation of planning applications upon which we comment.

The large gardens at the back of many of the houses abutting the Green lend themselves to opportunistic backland development and we have been careful to 'fine tune' these appropriately. We are also glad to report that we liaise with community groups, particularly in South Croxley who are dedicated to preventing inappropriate development, on derelict industrial sites.

The ever changing business application profile of our village is continually monitored by us in particular to maintain the multi-faceted character of our village where small shops still prosper. This means careful vetting in conjunction with Three Rivers District Council of applications for large retail outlets which alter the character of a community. This entails skilful consideration as at least one applicant is an international conglomerate.

Street maintenance has been expanded to include the planting and maintenance of roadside trees when and where appropriate and discussion of applications made by members of the public. We are responsible for two bus shelters adjacent to All Saints' Church and highway work and mobile phone transmitters have all been dealt with satisfactorily during the year. We have received requests from two schools for the installation of puffin crossings so that children can cross the A412 safely on their way each day. This is under active consideration in conjunction with the Highways Committee.

We continue to work together to maintain a pleasant accident free uncluttered leafy environment in our village.

Finally, I would like to thank Cllr David Bains for standing in as Chairman while I was away. Our multi-faceted committee has done sterling work and the state of the carefully thought out continuing development of our village reflects this.

Cllr Wynne-Jones
Chairman