

MINUTES OF the 301st MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER 2014 at 8.00PM

Present: Cllr Mitchell in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Administrative Officer
Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Martin, Ridley and Shafe
Voting Members: 9

CC1427/14 Apologies for Absence
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Baldwin, Dann, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Seeley, Vane and Wynne-Jones.

CC1428/14 Declarations of Interest by Members
The Chairman recommended that any declarations be made at the time.

CC1429/14 Representations from the Public
There were no public present.

CC1430/14 Minutes
Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the 300th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 27 November 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1431/14 Matters Arising
CC1419/14 (Matters Arising; CC1404.2/14 Matters Arising; EA1067/14 Ponds and S137 Grant Application). The Clerk was asked if he had heard back from TRDC regarding land ownership to which he replied that he had not.

CC1432/14 Committee Reports

CC1432.1/14 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 4 November 2014
Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 4 November be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1432.2/14 Any Matters Arising
EA1085/14 (Budgets 2015/16). The Clerk was asked about the Management Plan for Stones Orchard and it was clarified that there is a Management Plan in place but an updated, professional plan is needed.

CC1432.3/14 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 5 November 2014 and Wednesday 19 November 2014

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 5 November 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting.
- It was noted that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 19 November 2014 was cancelled.

CC1432.4/14 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1432.5/14 Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 13 November 2014

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 13 November 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1432.6/14 Any matters arising

FA1033/14 (Monthly Accounts; 4038/103 Maintenance Contracts (£1,085)). The Clerk was asked what work the contractors carried out and he confirmed that they cut the hedge on the Watford Road by Mayfare and also undertook some work on footpath 11. The Clerk clarified that the only ranger (at that time) was on leave for two weeks. The Clerk was asked if the bins were emptied during these two weeks but he did not have that information to hand.

[Post meeting note: the bins were emptied and the waste was disposed of by the contractor].

The Chairman proposed under Standing Order 9.1.6 that Agenda item CC1423/14 be moved forward on the Agenda. The proposal was agreed.

CC1434/14 Future Village Hall Arrangements

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk reminded Members that during a Part 2 session of the Finance and Administration meeting held on 11 December (the confidential papers for which had been circulated to Members with the F&A agenda) it was resolved that the proposal submitted by the Croxley Green Community Association for an initial fixed term of 3 years reviewable annually with the cost of £8,425 for the fiscal year 2015/16 be recommended to Council for acceptance.

There was some discussion about the fact that the fixed term was three years but the cost would be reviewed annually. The Clerk responded that the detail of a new agreement would need to be arranged.

A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Martin, Mitchell and Shafe voted for the proposal and Cllr Ridley voted against the proposal.

Resolved:

- That the recommendation from the F&A Committee that the proposal submitted by the Croxley Green Community Association for an initial fixed term of 3 years reviewable annually with the cost of £8,425 for the fiscal year 2015/16 subject to contract be ratified.

CC1433/14 Budgets 2015/16

The Chairman introduced this item and referred Members to version 8 of the budget which had been circulated with the agenda. The Clerk informed Cllrs that he had attended a meeting at TRDC recently where he had been advised that the grant likely to be forthcoming from TRDC will be less than would have been expected. He added that the figure is likely to be £8,428 although this will not be confirmed until early February as TRDC will be reviewing the figure in January with a recommendation to go to full Council in February. The Clerk also informed Cllrs that the grant will be reducing to £4,277 in 2016/17 and there will be no grant given in the year 2017/18.

The Clerk then amended v8 of the budget to reduce the £10,657 to £8,428 and he advised that if the grant is £8,428 this means a 6.01% or £15,496 increase in the

precept.

The Chairman suggested that the Clerk went through the budget page by page.

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101/4001 Salaries and Wages £73,000. The Clerk was asked why this amount was in the budget but the projected amount for this year was only £58,704 and there was some discussion about this.

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The Clerk had included a transfer for reserves sum of £5,000 due to the potential under spend on this year's salaries due to the fact that we were without a ranger for some time.

[Post meeting note: the projected actual figure for 2014/15 did not include months 6 and 7 salaries and therefore the £73,000 is appropriate.]

101/1080 Miscellaneous Income (TRDC Grant). The sum of £10,657 had been reduced to £8,428 earlier in the meeting.

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102/4251 Election Expenses. The Clerk pointed out that the sum of £5,000 may be insufficient and he added that TRDC may look at their recent invoices for election costs to see if any reduction could be made and they are going to try and work out a formula to make budgeting for these expenses easier.

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4001/103 Salaries and Wages. The Clerk said he would review this but the sum of £52,000 includes provision for pensions should the rangers wish to join the scheme.

4012/103 Water Rates. It was asked if £400 was sufficient as there had been overspends in the previous to years and so this amount was increased to £700.

103/4037 Groundworks. £2,100 was reduced to £1,500.

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Cllr Bennett declared a non-pecuniary interest in his budget submission for a grant for All Saints' Church.

107/4711 Grants. The Clerk said that there was £1,500 for S137 or equivalent grants and £5,000 for the stained glass window or doors at All Saints' Church.

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211/4619 Local Travel Map. The Clerk pointed out that the £1,000 is offset by 211/4878 Transfer from Reserves (Local Travel Map) of £1,000.

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299/4932 War Memorial. The Clerk stated that the £200 is offset by 299/4831 Transfer from Reserves (War Memorial).

299/4961 Commemorative Plaques on oak trees. The Clerk again pointed out that £1,460 is offset by 299/4831 Transfer from Reserves (Tree Plaques).

299/4933 Information Board – Stones Orchard. The Clerk advised that £1,000 is offset by 299/4831 Transfer from Reserves (Information Board).

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301/4043 Salt Bins / Salt. This amount of £500 has been taken from reserves.

301/4047 Footpath Maintenance. The £1,000 has been offset by a £1,000 counter provision from CMS.

301/4056 Street Trees £2,000. This amount was questioned as street trees are the responsibility of Herts County Council but the Clerk advised that there are some street

trees we look after. The Chairman stated that he submitted this proposal following comments by the architect, in his dealings about the Neighbourhood Plan, about missing trees. It was asked if the street tree types are recorded and the Clerk clarified that we have records listing the varieties. He added that as a Parish Council, we have powers to provide and maintain street trees and verges subject to Highways consent.

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399/4965 Neighbourhood Plan Development £20,000. The Clerk advised that it would be prudent to take £15,000 from Reserves to contribute to the Neighbourhood Plan development but in taking funds from Reserves, it would be important in future years to positively budget to replenish the funds taken from Reserves.

399/4968 Carbon Footprint Reduction / Sustainability. The sum of £250 was increased to £300.

Following these adjustments, the precept is currently £273,174 which is a 5.43% or £15,196 increase which means a £2.57 increase per Band D household.

Following the budget discussion the Council's Reserves were reviewed. The Clerk stated that taking into account the potential election expenses that will have to be taken from Reserves and other monies taken from Reserves to support the budget, the year 2015/16 would be showing a potential shortfall from the recommendation of our accountant / auditors of approximately £48,000 and in 2016/17 a projected shortfall of approximately £75,000.

Resolved:

- That Council agree in principle to the budget figures submitted and reviewed at this meeting namely a potential precept of £273,174 and a potential budget of £286,632 subject to the TRDC grant clarification and clarification of the salaries.

CC1435/14 Car Parking on The Green

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Getkahn to elaborate. Cllr Getkahn showed Members a mock up of the proposed signs for no parking on The Green. He added that there would be 8 or 9 signs placed in strategic locations. Cllrs considered that the top should state 'NO PARKING' in larger letters with the byelaw information in smaller letters. It was also felt that the third block of text was repeated and therefore was not necessary. Finally, Cllrs thought that a white border would make the signs stand out more. Cllr Getkahn stated that he would report these comments back to TRDC.

CC1436/14 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.36pm.