



MINUTES OF the 296th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2014 at 8.00PM

Present: Cllr Mitchell in the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council

Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Brand, Dann, Edmunds, Getkahn, Isard-Brown, Shafe and Vane (part meeting)

Not Present: Cllr Ridley

Voting Members: 11 reducing to 10

CC1346/14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Jordan, Martin, Seeley and Wynne-Jones

CC1347/14 Declarations of Interest by Members

There were no declarations to note.

CC1348/14 Representations from the Public

There were no members of the public present.

CC1349/14 Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the 295th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 24 April 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1350/14 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1351/14 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk advised that in accordance with good practice the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting should be signed off at the earliest opportunity following the meeting. The Clerk added that any matters arising will be addressed at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes and the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 24 April 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1352/14 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Clerk advised that in accordance with good practice the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting should be signed off at the earliest opportunity following the meeting. The Clerk added that any matters arising will be addressed at the next Annual General Meeting.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes and the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 8 May 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1353/14 Matters Arising
The Clerk advised that Matters Arising from the AGM should be addressed at the next AGM and apologised for the item appearing on this Agenda.

CC1354/14 Committee Reports

CC1354.1/14 Environment and Amenity Committee held on 4 March 2014

It was noted that the Environment and Amenity Committee meeting scheduled for 1 April 2014 was cancelled.

CC1354.2/14 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 2 April, 7 May, 21 May 2014 and to note that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 16 April 2014 was cancelled.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 2 April, 7 May, 21 May 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting and it was noted that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 16 April 2014 was cancelled.

CC1354.3/14 Any matters arising

A Councillor raised the matter that a number of meetings had been cancelled. It was pointed out that this was not a matter arising from the Minutes of the meetings but for information meetings had been cancelled as they would have been inquorate.

CC1354.4/14 Finance and Administration Committee held on 10 April 2014 and to note that the meeting scheduled for Thursday 12 June 2014 was cancelled.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 10 April 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting and it was noted that the meeting scheduled for Thursday 12 June 2014 was cancelled due to the Clerk being unwell.

CC1354.5/14 Any matters arising

A Councillor asked whether any new arrangements had been made for alternative garage maintenance for the Land Rover. The Clerk advised that this will be undertaken but a new account would need to be set up first with the garage.

CC1355/14 Election Expenses

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk referred to the supporting paper circulated with the Agenda and stated that Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) had, with no prior warning, advised that they would be recharging the Parishes for the election expenses in May 2011 and for the Croxley Green South Ward by-election in July 2011. The Clerk continued that the total cost had been advised as £11,619.62 and although the Parish Council had been putting monies into reserves for election costs there was only £8,750 available leaving a shortfall. The Clerk added that since the initial costs were advised both he and the Clerk at Watford Rural Parish Council had identified errors. He continued that the initial costs for Croxley Green had been based on the assumption of the current two Wards whereas in fact in 2011, Croxley Green had three wards. Accordingly the revised costs to the Parish Council including the bye-election would be £13,887.10 which a shortfall in the reserves for this matter of £5,137.

The Clerk advised that since the initial notification from TRDC of the impending

recharge, the TRDC Officer had apologised for not dealing with this matter in a timely manner and that he would revisit the costs and provide further precise detail of all the costs involved including copies of invoices. The Clerk emphasised that TRDC had not issued an invoice to the Council and the purpose of the Agenda item was to ensure that Members were fully aware of the current situation.

A short discussion ensued. It was noted that TRDC had stated that any future payment in regard to this matter could be paid in quarterly instalments over a two year period.

Resolved:

- That no action be taken until further information is provided by TRDC and brought back to Council for debate.

CC1356/14

Village Hall Budget

The Chairman introduced this item and advised that he and the Clerk had met with the Chairman of Croxley Green Community Association to discuss this matter and to progress discussions and expectations in regard to a potential revised Agreement with the Association for the Village Hall.

The Clerk advised that the budget submission from the Association was comprehensive and for the first time showed the detail of costs against specific accounting headings with percentage proportions shown between the Parish Council, the Community Club and the Association itself. The Clerk added that the submission was within the framework of the extant Agreement with the Association.

A Councillor had noted the approximate hourly hire cost that the Council was paying for the village hall provision and asked how this compared with other hall hourly charges. The Clerk advised that establishing set hourly charges elsewhere are not usually openly stated but by comparison other hourly charges varied from £12.50 to up to £20 per hour and therefore the rate which the Council were paying represented very good value.

Resolved:

- That the Council's budget for the Village Hall be increased by £1,442 from £7,100 to £8,542;
- That £1,442 be vired from within the Council budget to accommodate the increase in the Village Hall budget provision.

CC1357/14

Internal Audit Report (Final) for the year ending 31 March 2014

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk was pleased to report that yet again the Council had received a very good internal audit report. The Clerk added that the internal auditor had made three recommendations, one of which (R3) had been addressed at the time of the auditor's visit as the auditor had noted that the recommended action was being undertaken.

The Clerk added that the internal auditor had noted the views of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting of the 13 February 2013 regarding the review of journals and had referred to Appendix 11 sections 15 – 17 of the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A practitioners Guide. The Clerk specifically drew Members attention to Section 15 which states that "Local council members are responsible for putting arrangements in place to safeguard public funds. Councils may delegate the role of protecting money to individuals, for example to the Clerk or the RFO, but the legal responsibility always remains with the council and its members".

A discussion ensued in which a Councillor pointed out that any Councillor

would need to have a very deep undertaking of the accounting systems in order to make any worthwhile assessment of journal transactions and that this is a matter that is dealt with by the Clerk in his capacity as Responsible Finance Officer. It was suggested that the matter be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee to look out further.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for what was a very positive internal audit report.

Resolved:

- That the recommendations made by the internal auditor be reviewed by the Finance and Administration Committee.

CC1358/14

Annual Accounts 2013/14 – Annual Return and External Audit Report for the year ending 31 March 2014

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk was very pleased to report that yet again there were no matters which came to the attention of the External Auditors which gave cause for concern. For clarity, the Clerk read from the Annual Return Section 3 which stated “On the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met”.

The Clerk continued that the External Auditor had drawn attention to a matter which, as stated in the Annual Return, does not affect their opinion as stated above regarding the comments made by the internal auditor from their 26 November 2013 audit. The Clerk added that this was the same subject matter as had been discussed earlier in this meeting under Agenda item CC1357/14 which the Finance and Administration Committee will review.

Members thanked the Clerk for his efforts in achieving another good External Report.

Resolved:

- That the Council noted that the External Auditors had signed off the Annual Return for 2013/14 and that the Council noted the content of the supplementary Auditors Report.

CC1359/14

Neighbourhood and Community Plan

The Chairman introduced this item and stated that he and Cllr Jordan had recently met with Claire May, Principal Planning Officer TRDC, to discuss the next steps in progressing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman continued that the Community Plan will be completed and from that the Neighbourhood Plan can be drawn up. The Chairman added that as the Neighbourhood Plan is a much more planning orientated document, external professional help will need to be procured to ensure that the correct and appropriate wording is used within the document which, when completed, will become part of the statutory development plan for the area.

The Chairman added that there is likely to be a section on a Village Centre which will include the area around Community Way and the Library. The Chairman stated that the Community Association were currently developing their own ideas for their area and it was unlikely they would be further involved with the Village Centre Project Group at this time but it was hoped that their ideas will become a valuable contribution and input to the Neighbourhood Plan in developing a vision for land use and design for the area. The Chairman continued that a meeting will be arranged with HCC regarding the library area to discuss the future. A meeting will also be arranged with the British Red Cross as well.

The Chairman concluded that in drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan as much help as possible from Members would be required and indeed if Members knew of others in the community whose skills the Council could benefit from in preparing the Plan, such help would be very much welcomed.

CC1360/14

Parish Council Charities 2014-15

The Chairman introduced this item and referred to the paper circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman stated that in 2013-14 nearly £2,200 had been raised to be split between The Stroke Association (Croxley Green) and The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre and he thanked Members who had during the year organised events to raise money for the charities. The Chairman said that in the supporting paper a few possible suggestions for the Charities for 2014 -15 had been put forward namely NSPCC, Help the heroes, New hope trust, Herts young homeless and the Peace Hospice, Watford but invited Members to suggest others. Other suggestions were the Sea Cadets in Croxley Green and the Waterways Trust in Rickmansworth.

The Chairman suggested that Members have two votes each to vote for the charities mentioned.

Resolved:

- That the Council Charities for 2014-15 are the Peace Hospice and Sea Cadets in Croxley Green.

CC1361/14

Council Projects 2014 – 15

The Chairman introduced this item and referred to the supporting Paper that had listed the projects the Council had agreed to fund in the budget together with the sponsoring Councillor.

The Chairman asked for an update on each item:

Project	Budget £	Proposer / Supporter
Neighbourhood and community plan	2000	Cllr Jordan, Cllr Mitchell
Report: The Chairman advised that he had provided an update on this matter earlier in the meeting under Agenda item CC1359/14.		
Village centre project	2500	Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Jordan
Report: The Chairman advised that he had provided an update on this matter earlier in the meeting under Agenda item CC1359/14.		
Cycle Hire	500	Cllr Bennett
Report: Cllr Bennett advised that this is very much an exploratory budget item to see if anything could or should be considered and as soon as his time permits he will be taking the matter forward.		
Producers market	250	Cllr Mitchell
Report: The Chairman advised that he would like to re-visit the idea of the Producers Market and will seek advice from other sources where they have been successful in getting a market going. Cllr Edmunds volunteered to assist with this project.		
Stones orchard	1000	Cllr Edmunds
Report: Cllr Dann advised that the Report and Management Plan which had been prepared and funded by the Council will be discussed at the next Environment & Amenity Committee meeting (1 July). Cllr Dann added that it was hoped that in addition to the Parish Council's Rangers undertaking		

limited maintenance on the trees, it was hoped that two signs could be installed one dealing with the history of the orchard and the other showing what can be found in the orchard.

Dog Show	250	Cllr Edmunds
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Report: Cllr Edmunds reported that in conjunction with the Clerk a date was being sorted out with TRDC for the hire of Stones Orchard.

Wassail	250	Cllr Edmunds
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Report: Cllr Edmunds reported that no date for 2015 had been set yet but TRDC had invoiced the Council for the hire of Stones Orchard for 2014. Cllr Edmunds added that it was hoped that this charge from TRDC would be recovered by the licensee at the Sportsman Public House who had previously indicated that they would be prepared to recompense the Parish Council if TRDC made a charge.

Local Travel map	1000	Cllr Brading
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Report: Cllr Brading advised that he would be discussing this matter and taking advice from TRDC staff in the near future.

Cllr Vane left the meeting at this point reducing voting numbers from 11 to 10.

Bird boxes	150	Cllr Wynne Jones
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Report: Cllr Wynne-Jones was not at the meeting but it was suggested that perhaps he could provide a written report.

Pond Survey	1000	E&A committee
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Report: Cllr Edmunds advised that this matter had been referred to the Environment & Amenity Committee for consideration.

Seaside outing	1200	Cllr Seeley
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Report: Cllr Seeley was not at the meeting but the Clerk advised that all necessary arrangements had been made. The draw for seats on the two coaches had been made on the 24 June and successful applicants advised accordingly. It was asked how many applications had been received to which the Clerk advised that there were sufficient numbers to fill four to five coaches.

Curbing parking on the Green	2500	Cllr Mitchell
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Report: Cllr Mitchell reported that there was increasing unauthorised parking on the Green particularly on verges but it is very difficult to enforce the 'no parking' restrictions. It was suggested there were a number of routes which included installation of additional notices and/or further installation of posts to physically prevent encroachment. It was suggested that this matter be taken up by the Environment & Amenity Committee.

Match funding for volunteer works on towpath	1500	Cllr Mitchell
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Report: Cllr Mitchell advised that he had put something in his column for My Croxley in terms of calling for volunteers but unfortunately My Croxley News did not appear to receive his article and it was therefore not

published. The Clerk advised that there was a similar call for volunteers in the recently issued Parish Pump magazine but there had been little response.

Play area development	7000	Cllr Martin/ Cllr Shafe
Report: Cllr Shafe advised that together with Cllr Martin they were putting ideas together for the provision of new play equipment particularly for the younger children as these seem to be less available in the current play areas.		
Plaques for two trees	2000	Cllr Martin
Report: Cllr Martin was not at the meeting but the Clerk advised that the plaque for the Jubilee Oak Tree had now been ordered and when made will be installed by the contractor. The Clerk added that the Dawn Redwood (<i>Metasequia glyptostrobides</i>) outside the Council office now had a Tree Preservation Order placed on it and Cllr Dann had provided the wording of sample plaque for this tree.		

CC1362/14

Council's Committees Update

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk referred to his email to Councillors dated 19 June 2014 which advised that following Cllr Getkahn's appointment to Three Rivers District Council and his decision to sit on their Planning Committee, he would have to step down from the Parish Council's Planning and Development Committee.

Cllr Bennett advised the meeting that given his circumstances he too would also have to step down from the Planning and Development Committee.

The Chairman under Standing Order 9.1.10 asked Cllr Brand whether he would like to join the Committee or whether any other Member wished to move from the Environment and Amenity Committee. Cllr Brand declined and there were no changes made.

The Clerk advised that consequently, the Planning and Development Committee would consist of Cllr Jordan (Chairman) and Cllrs Baldwin, Isard-Brown, Martin and Wynne-Jones.

CC1363/14

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm.