

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 288th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2013

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

Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Brand, Getkahn (arrived at 8.03pm during item CC1261/13), Martin (arrived at 8.03pm during item CC1261/13) and Ridley

Not Present: Cllr Vane

Voting Members: 8

In attendance: PCSO Steve Jacob

CC1255/13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dann, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Mitchell, Seeley and Wynne-Jones. Inspector Winder had also expressed his apologies.

CC1256/13 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting.

CC1257/13 Representations from the Public

There were no public present.

CC1261/13 Neighbourhood Policing in Three Rivers and Police Community Support Officers' (PCSOs) Report

In accordance with Standing Order 9.1.6 this item was brought to the top of the agenda.

PCSO Jacob referred Cllrs to his previously circulated report and asked if any Cllrs had questions. Several matters were raised including the attendance by members of public at PCSO Surgeries, parking and enforcement (especially outside schools) and the fact that crime hasn't risen since the introduction of street lights being switched off at midnight.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Jacob who left the meeting at this point.

Members discussed the fact that since 12 September 2013, the Parish Council only has one dedicated PCSO when the Service Level Agreement is on a 'buy one get one free' basis. It was suggested that the Clerk notes the length of time we are without a second PCSO and then, at the end of the Service Level Agreement writes to ask if the Service Level Agreement could be extended by this amount of time.

It was also suggested to the Clerk that the Inspector is invited to the next Joint Parish Councils and Council Officers meeting.

CC1258/13 Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the 287th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 July 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1259/13 Matters Arising

CC1249.6/13 (Matters Arising; FA911/13 Monthly Accounts). A Cllr who had queried the costs involved in the bill for the ride on mower said that he was waiting for a company to send a price list but that he believed they would be cheaper. It was suggested that rather than raising matters such as this at meetings, when the Clerk did not have the information to hand, it would be better to make an appointment to come in to the office to see the Clerk.

CC1253/13 (CC1235/13 Review of Bank Signatory Authorisation and Debit/Credit Card for the Council's Bank Account). A Cllr asked whether there had been any further progress. The Clerk advised that he had yet to hear back from the bank.

CC1260/13 Committee Reports

CC1260.1/13 Environment and Amenity Committee Tuesday 2 July 2013

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity meeting held on 2 July 2013 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1260.2/13 Any matters arising

EA975/13 (Active Works List). A Cllr asked if watering the new Jubilee tree on the Green could be included on the Active Works List for the summer months. The Clerk said that he would look into this matter.

CC1260.3/13 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 July and Wednesday 17 July 2013

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 July and Wednesday 17 July 2013 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1260.4/13 Any matters arising

PD2106/13 (Recent Decisions by TRDC). A Cllr asked why the Parish Council keep objecting to planning applications for 23A New Road. The Clerk stated that each application is judged on its own merit and the Chairman suggested that perhaps the Cllr should attend the Planning and Development meetings.

CC1260.5/13 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 11 July 2013

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 11 July 2013 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1260.6/13 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1261/13 Neighbourhood Policing in Three Rivers and Police Community Support Officers' (PCSOs) Report

This was discussed after CC1257/13 (Representations from the Public).

CC1262/13 Annual Accounts 2012/13 – External Audit

The Chairman introduced this matter and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk advised that he had now received the Annual Return for the Council's Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013 duly signed by the External Auditor and he had emailed a copy to Cllrs on 24 September 2013 together with a copy of the External Auditors Report. For those Cllrs without email, a hard copy had been placed in their pigeon holes.

The Clerk continued that the Auditors had raised the matter of Financial Regulations which was also raised in last years external audit report. The Clerk continued that as he had advised at the time, he had contacted NALC to establish whether they had a 'new' set of model Financial Regulations. NALC advised that a draft set was being consulted upon and the Clerk reported to Council that he would bring a revised set of Financial Regulations to Council for approval once the NALC draft had been finalised. The NALC draft has not been finalised as it is dependent on the outcome of the repeal of section

150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and associated Legislative Reform Order by HMG. Approval of the Legislative Reform Order is still awaited and accordingly the Council's revised set of Financial Regulations is still pending as reported to Council as recently as June 2013 when consideration was being given to the Council obtaining a credit/debit card.

The Clerk also pointed out that the Auditors had raised the matter of Minutes; the copy of Minutes submitted for Audit were ones held on computer and used for ease of printing to assemble all the documentary evidence required for the audit. The computer held minutes are not the signed versions. Signed copies are held in hard copy form in a file in the office. Whilst this matter has not been an issue previously with the auditor, the Clerk said that he would in future, photocopy the signed versions for any documentary evidence required.

The Auditors also raised Tenders in their report and the Clerk advised that this matter will be addressed when the Council's Financial Regulations are revised. However, it remains the case that currently under the Council's Financial Regulations para 10.3 (page 25) states that there is a responsibility for obtaining best value for money and that the best available terms are obtained and this is the case. In addition, Standing Order 34.4 (page 20) also states that neither the Council, nor any Committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.

Cllrs discussed the draft financial regulations and the Clerk confirmed that ours were at this stage but had not yet been circulated. It was asked if these could be circulated as soon as possible and implemented subject to the finalisation by NALC.

CC1263/13 Croxley Rail Link

It was agreed that this item would be carried forward on to the next agenda as Cllrs Jordan and Mitchell had expressed their apologies for this meeting.

CC1264/13 Staff Salary Increases from 1 April 2013

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk advised that the NJC for Local Government had agreed a 1% increase and that this had been implemented and backdated to April 2013.

CC1265/13 Council Office and Depot Security Key Holder Services

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the supporting paper. As the Clerk is the only contact for the security call centre (out of hours), it presumes that the Clerk is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and is always in Croxley Green. This is an unrealistic and impractical expectation. Using the services of a security key holder service would be a solution to this problem.

A brief discussion ensued with Cllrs very supportive and much in favour of this proposal.

Resolved:

- that the Clerk contacts Watford Keyholding to act as the Parish Council's Key Holder and that the annual contract is reviewed each year.

It was asked if any incidents could be reported to Cllrs.

CC1266/13 Budget 2014/15 Briefing

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred those present to the previously circulated briefing and advised that blank budget forms were now available. He also advised that it will not be known until early January whether the TRDC grant will be available again this year and so he urged caution. Some Cllrs suggested that if Cllrs have very good ideas for budget submissions they should still put them forward for Council to look at. It was noted that there were now more homes that would be paying Council Tax and the Clerk confirmed that the number would become known in due course.

CC1267/13

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.54pm.