



MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, COMMUNITY CENTRE, COMMUNITY WAY,
CROXLEY GREEN, WD3 3PA
ON THURSDAY 27 APRIL 2017 at 8.00pm

Present: Chairman of the Meeting - Cllr Mitchell, David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Chairman of the Parish Council Ryan Bennett – Administrative Assistant

Present – 60

There were no members of the press present.

AP100/17 The Chairman welcomes members of the press and public

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members of the public to the Annual Parish Meeting.

AP101/17 To present the Hazel Seeley Cup to the winning nominee who has improved the lives of people within the Parish or to have provided services to the Community of Croxley Green

The Chairman informed those present that last year the Parish Council had established an annual Civic Award called the 'Hazel Seeley Award' to present to someone who has improved the lives of people within the Parish or provided services to the Community of Croxley Green. The Chairman noted that the award is named after Hazel Seeley who had served on the Parish Council for some 18 years. The Chairman then announced that this year's recipients would be Mrs Pauline Batten and Mr Keith Alford. Their nominator Mrs Candy Sands was invited to say a few words. She spoke about how Keith & Pauline have worked tirelessly for many years to improve the lives of those who live in Cherwell Close & Hanover Court. Between the two of them they maintain the vast gardens, erect all the lights that adorn the close at Christmas, have established an outdoor seating area for residents and organise day trips & fish and chip suppers.

Keith & Pauline stated that they were extremely thankful to receive the award. Keith added that he had never thought he would ever receive anything like this and thanked his nominators and the Parish Council in choosing him and Pauline in being the recipients of the 2017 Hazel Seeley Award.

AP107/17 To receive a verbal report from Croxley Green's Police Community Support Officers

PCSO Daisy Jenkins and PCSO Steve Jacob gave a report on the number of reported crimes in Croxley Green. PCSO Jenkins informed everyone that although there had been a rise in the number of reported crimes this was partly down to a change in how crimes were recorded. For example, if a resident informed the police that they had lost their phone, this would now be recorded as theft. The PCSOs spoke of the successful Plate Safe and Property Marking Event that was held outside the Parish Council office and that they had plans to hold similar events in Croxley Green over the year.

- AP102/17 Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 28 April 2016
 Those present were advised that in accordance with good practice, the Minutes of the last Parish Meeting had already been signed off on 30 June 2016 (CC1608/16), that being the first full Council meeting following the preparation of the Minutes after the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting. The minutes were published on the Council's website on 31 May 2016 & had been available to view since that time.
- AP103/17 Matters Arising
 There were no matters arising.
- AP104/17 To receive the Parish Council Chairman's Report
 Cllr Mitchell, as Chairman of the Council, delivered the Chairman's Report for the year, see attached.
- AP105/17 To receive the following Parish Council Committee Reports
AP105.1/17 Planning & Development Committee
 Cllr Bains, Chairman of the Committee, had been unable to deliver his report and instead was read by Cllr Gallagher, Vice Chairman of the Committee – see attached.
AP105.2/17 Environment & Amenity Committee
 Cllr Wynne-Jones, as Chairman of the Committee, delivered his report for the year – see attached.
AP105.3/17 Finance & Administration Committee
 Cllr Hollands, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, delivered his report for the year - see attached.
- AP106/17 To receive updates on:
 AP106.1/16 The Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Gallagher updated those present on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. He spoke of how the plan had now been formally submitted to Three Rivers District Council, who would then consult an outside advisor to judge the plan and potentially sign off on it. He mentioned how Croxley Green Parish Council was the first Parish Council in the district to have submitted a neighbourhood plan to the district authority.
 AP106.2/16 The Community Plan/ Parish Council Strategic Business Plan: Cllr Cole updated those present on the progress of the Community Plan/ Parish Council Strategic Business Plan. Cllr Cole spoke about how the Council was beginning to create a working party responsible for the creation of a strategic business plan, which would use the Council's Community Plan as its foundation. He informed residents that there would be a consultation period in which local businesses would be able to submit any thoughts and ideas they had for the project.
- AP107/17
 This item was discussed above.
- AP108/17 Abolition / Retention of Croxley Green Parish Council
 The Chairman introduced this item and invited Cllr Ridley who put forward the proposal to say a few words.
 Cllr Ridley informed those present that this proposal was about allowing residents to have a vote on whether to retain/abolish Croxley Green Parish Council.
 The Chairman informed residents that this was not the proper way to try and abolish a parish council, that any result from the potential poll would be entirely

non-binding and that this whole matter was a complete waste of everyone's time. The Chairman went on to explain that this poll would cost upward of £6000 and that CGPC had no budget set aside for such an expense.

The Chairman then invited any comments.

Speaker 1 praised the Parish Council for the work it does and the services it provides to the community. He added that he could find no legal basis in Robert Ridley's proposals and asked if Cllr Ridley had any plans of resignation if he failed to gain enough support for his proposal.

Speaker 2 informed the room that they believed that for £1 a week, Croxley Green Parish Council was incredible value for the services they provide to residents. They added that Cllr Ridley was an embarrassment to Croxley Green and that they supported Speaker One's suggestion that Cllr Ridley should resign from Croxley Green Parish Council.

Speaker 3 asked Cllr Ridley to end his vendetta against the Council and informed him that there was no fuel to his proposals.

Speaker 4, a Three Rivers District Councillor, stated to Cllr Ridley that they had had this same discussion in 2012. He informed Cllr Ridley that since then Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) have had their Budget significantly tightened and that Cllr Ridley's idea that TRDC could theoretically take over the responsibilities of Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC) was nonsensical. Furthermore, he said that if CGPC was abolished then TRDC would even have to take steps to remove litter bins from around Croxley Green as they would simply not have enough money to cover the expense of emptying them.

Speaker 5 advised Cllr Ridley that his allegations against the Council were nothing more than personal opinions. He informed Cllr Ridley that CGPC had not acted in an unlawful manner or outside their remit.

Speaker 6 stated to Cllr Ridley that he had been to many meetings at Hertfordshire County Council and that Cllr Ridley was wildly out of touch with the changing nature of council's in Hertfordshire. He added that it was unfortunate that we keep having this discussion.

Speaker 7 felt that the Parish Council has and continues to do an excellent job for the community. They added that it is run by local people for the locality and that they do everything they can to keep it special.

After residents had been given the opportunity to speak, the Chairman asked way by a show of hands if there was any support for Cllr Ridley's proposals.

Zero people raised their hands to support Cllr Ridley, and as there was not the support of ten electors a poll could not be called for.

AP109/17

To consider any other interest in the Parish

The Chairman asked if anybody had any matters they wished to raise.

A resident spoke on behalf of all those who use the Community Bus provided by Croxley Green Parish Council on Friday's. He stated that it is a fine service and appreciated by many older residents in the Community.

AP110/17

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.26pm.



Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 27 April 2017

Chairman's Report

Intro

Thank you all for coming.

As I have said every year I have done this, I believe that Croxley Green is a very special place to Live, work and play.

It is down to the many organisations and people who make things happen. Also we are on the edge of the greatest city in the world, near Watford Fc and surrounded by green belt.

The Parish council supports many of these organisations through mainly one off help on projects and also organise events and provide services to improve our village and community.

I am going to run through them;

- Who are we and What we do
- The events
- Grants

Main report

Who are we and what we do.

- We are 16 councillors. All volunteers and we do not get any allowances or expense for the work we do.
- At the moment we have 9 elected and 7 co-opted councillors. All people who give up their spare time for the good of Croxley green.
- By elected I mean stood for election. There was not an election as there was not more than the number of seats. The rest co-opted. They have applied to be councillors and then elected by the existing ones.
- Please make yourselves known and I thank you for your time and efforts.
- The staff;
 - Our clerk David Allison
 - Administrative assistant Ryan Bennett
 - Two rangers, Senior is Phillip Hinton and James Townley. These two people keep Croxley Green looking great, and we get a lot of compliments from the public. Thankyou.
 - We also pay for one Police Community Support Officer, and then we get another provide by the Herts police. They help to help keep a feeling of security
- We hold monthly Full council meetings. We also have committees, the Planning and development, E and A. All these the public are welcome. We also have a HR and resources committee which is confidential and a number of working parties for specific projects.

- **So What do we do???**

- Community Bus for the elderly, I have been told that it is often the highlight of the week for many. 2165 passenger trips last year
- Annual seaside trip for the elderly. Last year 119 went to Eastbourne.
- Rangers work on the extra Green (Buddlia Walk) and Croxley Hall woods.
- Ranger's work with local schools.
- Building and installation of 45 bird boxes along with Bird Box Trail leaflet/worksheet.
- We distribute 30,000 dog bags free every 6-8 weeks, which is enough to cover the field of play at Wembley over the course of a year.
- Neighbourhood plan, more later.
- Strategic business plan working party created.
- Installed and maintain three defibrillators. Thank you to the Baptist Church and All saints for hosting one each. The other is outside our office.
- Provided the financial support for the Creation of a Citizen's Advice Bureau service in the Library once a month.
- Grants to local groups
- Meetings to try and take forward the land transfer, but this will take time.
- P&D committee considered 146 planning applications in the year.
- Opposed the ascot road development.

Events

- Sponsors of the Revels and Croxfest through a subscription
- Dog show, for the fifth year?
- Remembrance day – we booked the Brass band for the procession and also on the Green.
- Christmas tree at the Library and the Christmas lights and carol singing.
- Second festive market
- Fireworks. Still so popular and this year being one of the best!!
- Wassail. Now becoming a tradition!!
- Raised over £1000 for charity, this year for the scouting and guiding groups and New hope Trust..

All events are free to join in with, and they are open for all. I really consider that these are the things that contribute towards CG being a community, and making it a great place to be.

Maintenance

As already said, the two excellent rangers who keep the village looking great.

- They look after the Green, Stone Orchard, the footpaths in Croxley Green,
- clear many of the litter bins and carry out woodland maintenance in part of Croxley Hall woods and Buddleia walk.
- they also work with Flowers of Croxley, and this brings a lot of colour into the village, and many thanks to them.

Issue that affect us

- **MLX.** Now on back burner due to costs. They have gone very quiet on us, but basically it has gone over 50m over budget.
- **Neighbourhood plan.** This has now been submitted to TRDC who are going through their own consultation on it. The latest version is on our website. Cllr Gallagher will update this, and many thanks to him for all the work he has put in and to the rest of the working party.

Other issues

- I and Cllr Hollands and the Clerk have attended a meeting with the other parishes in TRDC. This is to see what common issues we have and work together, especially in dealing with TRDC.
- **Land Transfer.** We did have a meeting with an officer from TRDC who was very supportive and helpful. However that person has now left and we are told to go through a long process for each parcel of land.

Read an extract for the CEO of NALC, National Association of local government. From a meeting I recently went to.

The Parish Sector

The Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government has recently stated that the Parish Sector plays an important role in democracy and local decision making. The Prime Minister, in a speech about Brexit, reported that global Britain is made from strong foundations including Parish, Town and Community Councils. This gives a huge opportunity locally now with Brexit, austerity and devolution. The Parish Sector is changing rapidly. There are 10 thousand Local Councils in England covering 40% of the population with 80 thousand councillors raising £500 million in precepts. A further 50 communities are working towards emparishment supported by their Principal Authority, mainly in urban areas. Neighbourhood Planning is changing how Parishes are perceived. Devolution from Principal Authorities means that local Councils are absorbing local services.

The journey is not complete; DCLG are working towards a better relationship but are not there yet. But it has greatly improved; 15 years ago there were serious proposals to abolish the Parish Sector. Eric Pickles was giving very different messages. Neighbourhood Planning necessarily means listening to and strengthening local communities.

NALC needs to continue to work to encourage District Councils to take Parishes seriously and offer better support.

NALC is pushing to make parish polls more difficult to call as these are vexatious and costly. There was a consultation about this 2 years ago, and the feedback was to do this.

Finally

The next few years are going to be very interesting as I do believe that powers will continue to be pushed towards the Parish Councils for many different reasons.

My thanks to our Clerk, Admin assistant, the rangers, the PCSO's. Also great thanks to the Councillors for their time in attending meetings and making the decisions etc.

Also, a great thanks to all the volunteers to who directly help us deliver our services, and to all of you who do something to help Croxley Green.

Summary

I hope you support the work that we do for all of you.

- Provide extra services
- Support events
- Maintain the village to a high standard

By doing this and working together with others, we help keep Croxley Green a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Thank you.

Chairman,



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Planning & Development Committee Report

The Planning and Development Committee met 24 times between 6th April 2016 and 5th April 2017. One meeting (5th October 2016) was cancelled because it would have been inquorate.

The main business of each meeting has been to review planning applications recently submitted to Three Rivers District Council from within the Parish and comment upon them. Much development is allowed under Permitted Development Rights and the Council's comments on planning applications are limited to matters contained within the national planning policy framework and the local development planning framework (the TRDC Local Plan).

In total we have reviewed 146 planning application, the majority of which have been for comparatively minor residential extensions, and most have been commented as “no grounds for objection” (NGFO). We receive reports on recent decisions by TRDC, applications approved, refused or withdrawn, and on any appeals. We have only specifically objected to 6 proposals. Of these four were approved by TRDC, one was withdrawn, and one is still pending. There was one appeal reported this year on application 16/1366/FUL Greystone Works, The Green regarding the demolition of existing workshops and construction of three storey building containing six one bedroom flats and associated car parking and landscaping.

We also receive notification of applications for prior approval, for certificates of lawfulness, for discharge of planning conditions, and for non-material amendments to planning applications, and noted 43 within the year.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the Parish Council's proposals for additional planning policies that would apply to all development within Croxley Green. If approved, this will have a significant impact on planning matters within the Parish for anyone who wants to build, alter, extend or add to their property.

An initial consultation draft was sent to nearly 90 organisations and other interested parties in June 2016. Written responses were received from twelve organisations and seven individual respondents. The draft Plan was revised and the Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement required to accompany it were prepared later in 2016.

The documents were submitted to TRDC in January 2017 for Regulation 16 Consultation and independent examination of the Plan. After the formal submission additional comments were received from Hertfordshire County Council, the Education Funding Agency, and TRDC. In order to fully respond to these additional comments the Parish Council temporarily withdrew the submitted Plan and associated documents which were re-submitted in April 2017.

In addition the P&D considered Highways and Road Safety matters in the first meeting each month. Thanks to the individual efforts of Cllr Dudley Edmunds, TRDC reviewed the issue of speeding on Community Way and has installed speed control measures (“thumps”), additional signs and marked a pedestrian way along the edge.

Although just outside the Parish, we felt it absolutely necessary to raise our objections to the proposed massive development at Ascot Road. The matter was first discussed in December and we wrote to Watford Borough Council in February 2017 to express our concerns about the impact of the size and height of the seven proposed buildings on the character of the area and neighbouring areas, the skyline and the landscape for miles around and the impact of the intensity of development within the small site, with provision for 485 dwelling units, on the demand for local services and facilities, including education, recreation, health and parking.

The future of the proposed Metropolitan Line Extension is now unclear and the lack of information concerning its progress is worrying.

The specific proposals for the development of the proposed new school site at the bottom of Baldwins Lane have not yet been revealed and the lack of information about development of the site is a matter of concern, for both local residents and the families of prospective pupils.

Cllr Andrew Gallagher
On behalf of the Planning and Development Committee



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Environment & Amenity Committee Report

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be the Chairman of this committee. I have been walking through the bluebell woods recently and down the Buddleia Walk and in early Spring it seems totally rural - it's amazing to think that we are only a dozen miles from Piccadilly Circus. Your committee is dedicated to maintaining this stillness and calm. We owe a great deal to the enthusiasm and initiative of our Senior Ranger Philip Hinton and to our second Ranger James Townley for the truly excellent work they have done in maintaining the Green, Stones Orchard and all the paths and nooks and cranny's which make our village such an environmental paradise.

We can help our Rangers by ensuring that we do not drop litter and by reporting and if possible photographing those selfish people who indulge in fly tipping. Remember to search for any old document with a name and address for the all-important evidence.

Over the last year your Rangers have been building and installing a total of 45 bird boxes which have been placed around Croxley Green. Our Admin Assistant Ryan has produced a Bird Box Trail leaflet so that you can get out and about around the village and identify the trees and spot as many birds as you can.

We had a very successful dog show in Stones Orchard last September - the number of entrants seems to go up year by year and it is a real community event and this year we raised a magnificent £327 for charity. This year's event is scheduled for September the 24th.

Our Wassailers gave us a lot of pleasure in January and seem to have been remarkably successful in bringing on all blossoms and the crops in this remarkable Spring and the event was very well attended. The meadow areas which the Rangers so carefully preserve on the Green and Stones orchard are full of the most interesting moths and insects. We had a meeting with Countryside Management Services and Three Rivers District Council regarding a new Management Plan for Stones Orchard but we are still awaiting draft details from them. As usual I would like to thank the members of the E and A committee for their time, interest and for the number of topics they bring up for discussion. I look forward to our meeting each month.

This year we were instrumental in the installation of a set of new steps leading down from Buddleia walk to Common Moor Lock. This is a fine example of how we are working for you to open up our village and making its environment more accessible so that it can be enjoyed by all.

This year we reported 16 faults to Hertfordshire highways which concerned Croxley Green. The vast majority of these were brought to our attention by members of the public and we are always willing to help. So if you see a street light not working, a fallen tree blocking a footpath, a dislodged manhole cover or anything you think is slightly out of the ordinary then get in touch with the office and they will be able to take it up for you.

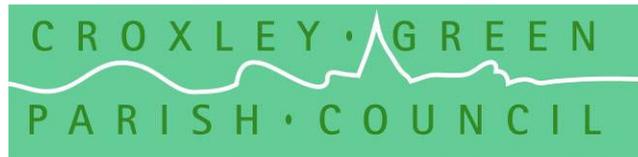
Also, if you have something that is worrying you about our environment, or have any ideas on how best you think it could be improved, then contact the Clerk and he will be able to advise on

how best the matter can be taken forward by the our Committee. Our Clerk is his usual efficient self and many thanks to our new Admin Assistant Ryan Bennett for his helping with the various GREEN projects he has prepared.

Don't forget to come and visit sometime at our meetings, you are always welcome!

And finally I'd like to once again thank our parish Rangers Phil and James who keep Croxley Green a very special place to live. You can also now follow them on Twitter to keep updated on the work they do each day around Croxley Green.

Cllr David Wynne-Jones
Chairman of the Environment and Amenity Committee



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Finance & Administration Committee Report

The remit of the Finance & Administration Committee (F&A) is to ensure the finances of the Council are managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Committee Members are myself as Chairman of the Council, Cllr Jeremy Hollands the Vice Chairman of the Council, the chairman and vice chair of the E&A Committee Cllrs Wynne-Jones & Edmunds and from the P&D Committee Cllrs Bains & Gallagher. Like all meetings of the Council the meetings are open to all councillors who wish to attend along with any members of the public and press who are always welcome.

Each month the Committee meets to review and examine the Monthly accounts prepared by the Clerk which shows the exact monthly expenditure, monies spent to date versus the budget for the year. These monthly meetings allow us to make sure that your money is being spent in the right way to help benefit the residents of Croxley Green.

The Parish Council is funded by you the residents and with approximately 5,200 houses in Croxley Green in 2016/17 this cost on average approximately £54 per household per year. (£280,000+). In addition we received the last of the Tax Support Grant from TRDC which compensated for the reduction in the tax base following the changes made by HMG to the Council Tax benefit system. (£4,277). We also received for the first time income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of £4,104 which is a planning charge made by TRDC on new developments. At the moment the allocation to the Parish Council is 15% but with a Neighbourhood Plan this increases to 25%.

In overall terms our income was £299,000 and our expenditure was £252,000. In addition £19,000 was put into earmarked reserves and £27,000 in General Reserves. This brings our Reserves to just over the recommended level.

A number of Grants were awarded to local organisations during the year including the Citizens Advise Bureau to set out a monthly session in the Library for residents, to the Croxley Green Bowls Club, to the Guild of Sport and to the Croxley Green Home and Produce Show. The Council was pleased to be able to assist them and welcome any appropriate applications for the upcoming financial year.

Between October and January, the Council considers its budget at all its meetings to which all members of the public are welcome. This is time when the Councillors scrutinize the Council's budget in detail at both Committee and at Council level to ensure that there are sufficient funds to sustain the services and facilities which the Parish Council provides. As there is no tax support grant this year, the Council finalised this year's budget in January with a very small increase of about 8 pence on a Band 'D' property.

On Tuesday just gone, the Council had its end of year internal audit and I'm very pleased to report that once again the Council has received a 'clean' audit.

Cllr Jeremy Hollands
Vice-Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee