

MINUTES OF the 302nd MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2015 at 8.00PM

- Present: Cllr Mitchell in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Administrative Officer
- Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Ridley, Shafe and Vane
- Not Present: Cllr Dann
- Voting Members: 10
- Public: 2
- CC1437/15 Apologies for Absence
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Getkahn, Jordan, Martin, Seeley and Wynne-Jones.
- CC1438/15 Declarations of Interest by Members
The Chairman recommended that any declarations be made at the time.
- CC1439/15 Representations from the Public
Regarding item CC1446/15 (External Christmas Tree outside the Library), representations were made by one person who considered the proposal to stop the funding of the Christmas tree to be objectionable, pointless and spiteful. The speaker felt that the Parish Council does a fantastic job supporting Christmas and asked why, if the Cllrs who proposed the motion wanted to see carols at the Christmas tree they didn't organise it rather than relying on somebody else to do it.
- CC1440/15 Minutes
Resolved:
- That the Minutes of the 301st monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 18 December 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.
- CC1441/15 Matters Arising
CC1433/14 (Budgets 2015/16). A Cllr reminded the Clerk that he had asked for a copy of the tender documents for the Village Hall. The Clerk apologised for this oversight and said that he would arrange this.
- CC1442/15 Committee Reports
- CC1442.1/15 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 2 December 2014
Resolved:
- That the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 2 December 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting.
- CC1442.2/15 Any Matters Arising
EA1093/14 (Stones Orchard). The Clerk was asked if there had been any further developments to which he replied that the Minute clearly stated that there had been no further developments.

CC1442.3/15 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 December 2014 and Wednesday 17 December 2014

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 December 2014 and Wednesday 17 December be adopted as report of the meetings.

CC1442.4/15 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1442.5/15 Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 11 December 2014

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 11 December 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting.
- That the Confidential Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 11 December 2014 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1442.6/15 Any matters arising

FA1042/14 (Monthly Accounts – 4966/399 Neighbourhood Plan (CDF) (£1,500)). A Cllr stated that there was no breakdown for this amount. It was pointed out that if Cllrs would like further information about a particular invoice, they can come into the office and look at the invoices or request a copy from the Clerk. Another Cllr pointed out that the Clerk draws attention to anything out of the ordinary. The Chairman gave a brief update on the work of the architect in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan.

CC1443/15 Budget and Precept 2015/16

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk reminded those present that the budget of £286,632 and the precept of £273,174 had been unanimously agreed by all Cllrs at the December Council meeting. He added that this was a £2.57 increase per household for a Band D property which means an increase from £47.62 last year to £50.19 this year meaning a year on year increase of 5.43%.

A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Mitchell and Shafe voted for the proposal and Cllrs Brand, Ridley and Vane voted against the proposal. The motion was carried.

Resolved:

- That Council agree to a precept of £273,174
- That Council agree to a budget of £286,632

CC1444/15 Invoices Over £500

This item was introduced by the Chairman and Cllr Vane seconded Cllr Ridley's motion that Council agree that all invoices over £500 are issued to Cllrs as supporting papers with the Agenda and are also published on the website.

The Clerk advised that all invoices are available for public inspection adding that all expenditure over £1 is on the monthly schedule of accounts which is published on the website. Cllrs felt this proposal was wasteful of time and resources and they did not see the point of this proposal. Cllrs also felt that as the Internal and External Auditors have not suggested there is anything wrong with the way the Council manages its finances, they should be left to the Clerk and scrutinised by the Finance and Administration Committee. It was argued that there was no pre-issue of anything to be agreed upon at the Finance meeting but it was explained that if the monthly accounts were prepared earlier, they would be at least five days out of date and would not include invoices due for payment but received after the date of preparation.

A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Mitchell and Shafe voted against the proposal and Cllrs Ridley and Vane voted for the proposal while Cllr Baldwin abstained from voting. The motion failed.

Resolved:

- That Council agree that all invoices over £500 are issued to Croxley Green Parish Councillors as supporting papers and are attached to the relevant agenda and posted on the website in the supporting papers section was not agreed.

CC1445/15

Submission of Motions or Proposals to Meetings

This item was introduced by the Chairman and Cllr Brand seconded Cllr Ridley's motion that Council agree to rescind the current policy of only allowing a Cllr two motions to be presented at any Council / Committee meeting after the April 2015 Council meeting and allow the incoming Council the right to determine their own policy.

Cllrs were reminded that this policy had been put in place because a certain Cllr had tried to put 39 agenda items on one Council agenda. In general, Cllrs felt that this paper was a complete waste of time and it was farcical to try and pre-guess what the next Council would like to do.

A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Mitchell, Shafe and Vane voted against the proposal and Cllrs Brand and Ridley voted for the proposal. The motion failed.

Resolved:

- That Council agree to rescind the current policy of only allowing two motions to be presented at any Council / Committee meetings after the April 2015 Council meeting and allow the incoming Council the right to determine their own policy was not agreed.

CC1446/15

External Christmas Tree Outside the Library

The Chairman introduced this item and it was considered that as the cost of the Christmas Tree was in the budget that Council had just agreed, this matter should not be discussed. However, it was also considered that whilst the budget had been agreed, the money does not have to be spent.

Cllr Brand stated that he was bringing this item to Council with a recommendation that Council do not finance a Christmas tree outside the library in future because for the second year, nobody has sung Christmas carols around it. He added that the cost for the one-off electricity supply installation was £2,916.20 yet he had spoken to local electricians who could have undertaken this work for £20.

The Clerk clarified that Cllr Bennett's original budget proposal for 2012-13 was for a joint venture with the Croxley Green Residents' Association. It was not until the end of November 2013 that the supply and installation of the electricity for the lights on the Christmas tree was completed. Therefore it was too late for any groups to sing around the tree and this year the Clerk had not been approached. He added that he found it incredibly frustrating as Cllrs Brand and Ridley could have organised the carol singing or they could have contacted the Clerk before Christmas rather than in January to complain after the event. A Cllr pointed out that it was unfortunate that carol singing around the tree had not been organised but all were equally responsible for this. The Clerk was asked if there had been any complaints and he replied that there had not. He added that dates have already been put in the diary for the lights to be switched on on Monday 30 November 2015 and carol singing around the tree will be coordinated by the office.

A heated exchange then took place between two Cllrs to which the Chairman & Clerk responded by calling for order.

A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Mitchell and Shafe voted against the proposal and Cllrs Brand and Ridley voted for the proposal and Cllr Vane abstained. The motion failed.

Resolved:

- That Council agree not to finance a Christmas tree outside of the library in future was not agreed.

CC1447/15

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm.