

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 242nd MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2009

Present: Cllr Norman in the Chair
David Allison - Clerk
Amanda Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs Bains, Bennett, Birch, Brading, Brand, Dann, Hollands, C Jefford, Martin, Saxon, Seeley, Shafe and Vassiliou

Voting Members: 14

There were 3 members of the public present

CC613/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Seabourne and Wynne-Jones

CC614/09 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations be made throughout the meeting as necessary.

CC615/09 Representations from the Public

Representations were made by one member of the public. However, these representations were in the form of questions with no apparent relevance to items on the Agenda. As the meeting progressed some of the points mentioned were touched upon, but by that time the speaker had left the meeting and missed the discussion.

CC616/09 Minutes

The Clerk apologised for the fact that the Agenda incorrectly stated that the Minutes of the 240th Monthly Meeting of the Council held 27th November 2008 were to be approved. These Minutes were actually accepted at the meeting held on 18th December 2008. This Agenda item should have read 'to approve, if necessary to correct and to sign the Minutes of the 241st Monthly Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 18th December 2008'. The Clerk also apologised that the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of 12th January 2009 were not on the Agenda. These Minutes will both be placed on the February Council Agenda for approval.

CC617/09 Matters Arising

Matters arising could not be discussed for the reason explained above.

CC618/09 Committee Reports

CC618.1/09 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 January 2009

It was proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Shafe that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 January 2009 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.

CC618.2/09 Any matters arising

EA529/09 (Budget 2009/2010 and beyond).

4038/203 Maintenance Contracts

The Clerk was asked by the Chairman for an update on the Maintenance Contract for the Green and Stones Orchard. The Clerk read an extract from the 26th January 2009 Executive Committee Minutes of Three Rivers District Council (TRDC):

“EX112/08 CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES AND HEALTH AND LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Environmental and Grounds Maintenance Contract Award

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Grounds Maintenance and Environmental Maintenance Contracts be awarded to Three Rivers Direct Services, to commence on 1 July 2009, based on their submitted combined bid;
- (2) that, following award of the Grounds Maintenance Contract, officers offer an Agreement to CGPC for them to continue maintaining the Green and Stones Orchard, on behalf of the winning Contractor;
- (3) that a report be presented to the Public Services and Health Policy and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the negotiations with the CGPC;"

The Clerk was asked if the £1300 for the cut and bale had been paid to the contractor and if this money could be reclaimed by TRDC. The Clerk answered that this would form part of our negotiations after the outcome of the grounds maintenance tender.

4607/211 Youth Sport Activity

One Cllr expressed disappointment that this had been removed from the budget. The Clerk advised however, that it had come to light that the basketball proposals that had been put forward would not have been able to proceed. This being the case the budget item was subsequently withdrawn.

CC618.3/09 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 January and 21 January

It was proposed by Cllr Saxon and seconded by Cllr Hollands that the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 January and Wednesday 21 January 2009 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.

CC618.4/09 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC618.5/09 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 8 January 2009

It was proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Jefford that the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 8 January 2009 be adopted. The proposal was agreed. The Clerk apologised that any matters arising could not be discussed as this item had inadvertently omitted from the Agenda. Matters arising from the Minutes of 8 January will be discussed at the February Council meeting.

CC619/09 Budget 2009/2010 and beyond

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the draft final budget papers 2009 – 2010 (v10 9 January 2009) which had been circulated with the Agenda. The Clerk informed Cllrs that this year was a very tight budget reflecting the current economic climate and currently the draft precept stood at £242,845 which is a mere 1.6% increase on this year. The Clerk added that there had been a 1.6% rise on employers statutory pension contributions but that no growth had been built into the salary figures. The budget was again discussed page by page and projected onto the whiteboard.

The budget figures were once again discussed by Cllrs:

Cost Centre 101 relates to General Administration

4009/101 Travel £1,200 – The Clerk confirmed that this was his essential car user allowance.

4020/101 Misc Establishment Costs £500 – The Clerk confirmed that this was for

the bottled water and other sundry items that have no specific category.

4046/101 Equipment Purchased £0 – The Clerk acknowledged that an adjustment was necessary in the projected actual expenditure for 2008/09.

4963/101 PCSO Funding £28,500 – the Clerk advised that the Parish Council had now entered into the contract for the PCSO's for a further two years ending 31 March 2010.

Tfr from Reserves re previous pension contribution -£6,000 – The Clerk proposed that this sum be transferred from Reserves as provision had had to be made in the past in the event staff join the Pension scheme. The Clerk advised that one further member of staff had now joined the Pensions Scheme and this needs to be fully funded during 2009/10 at the employers contribution rate of 21.6% of gross salary.

1090/101 Interest Received – The Clerk advised Members that he had been informed that the current interest rate is now just 0.73% which is a significant drop and the budget sum accurately reflects this fact.

The Clerk was asked that if the Parish Council had over £50,000 in the Abbey National bank, would this money be secure if the bank were to succumb to financial problems. Given recent events in the news, this was considered an extremely valid point and the Clerk said that he would need to take further advice on this matter. The Clerk added that he still had an outstanding action from a previous Finance and Administration meeting outstanding and that was to look at accounts and bonds paying higher rates of interest.

Cost Centre 102 relates to Local Democracy

4024/102 Subscriptions/Publications £2,000 – The Clerk was asked what this sum covered and he explained that it was for various subscriptions; £1426.28 was for Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, £182 for Society of Local Council Clerks, £105 for National Association of Local Councils (NALC), £25 for Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire, £27 for Campaign to Protect Rural England, £30 for The Open Space Society, £90 for Direct Information Service (NALC), £92 for Horticulture Week and £10 for Community for Volunteer Services.

Cost Centre 103 relates to Groundworks

4017/103 Health & Safety - £1,500 – The Clerk was asked if he could email a breakdown of this year's health and safety costs.

4046/103 Equipment Purchased £1,600 – The Clerk was asked if the current year included a sum for a tree winch which he confirmed. He was then asked why this was needed and he explained that it was necessary to undertake tree work and aerial rescue.

1061/103 Agency Income – Herts County Council Maintenance £1,400 – The Clerk advised that this is payment received for maintaining the library beds.

1062/103 Agency Income – TRDC Maintenance £0 – The Clerk stated that this figure may well be altered after discussions with TRDC regarding the maintenance contract of the Green and Stones Orchard.

4200/107 Chairman's Charity Expenditure £1,000 – This sum correlates with the Chairman's Charity Income sum of £1,000 (107/1200).

Community Hall Membership Grant £9,100; Transfer from Building Reserves £19,600; 4036/150 Community Village Hall External Decoration £4,000 and Flood Prevention Work £6,500 – Due to the transfer of funds from Reserves, the costs associated with the membership grant and external decoration and flood prevention work has a zero effect on the budget. In addition to the zero effect; Croxley residents will be relieved of paying Special Expenses to TRDC towards Watersmeet. It was

proposed by Cllr Hollands and seconded by Cllr Bains that these sums form part of the budget and the proposal was agreed.

4048/203 Plants, Shrubs & Trees – General £1,000 – The Clerk stated that this sum had been transferred to Reserves as it had been collected but not spent.

4049/203 Dog Hygiene £10,000 – It was considered that the Parish Council spent a great deal of money on dog waste bags compared to Abbots Langley Parish Council but the Clerk clarified that Croxley Green has 42 dog bins which may be considerably more than some of the other Parishes in the District.

4605/211 Christmas Lights £7,400 – The Clerk confirmed that this sum is for the annual rent, installation and removal of the Christmas decoration in Watford Road and Scots Hill.

4042/221 Multi-Sports Court £1,000 – The Clerk advised that the Parish Council are under obligation to TRDC to put £1,000 into Reserves for ongoing maintenance.

4932/299 War Memorial Updating £2,000 – The Clerk was asked if the Parish Council are gathering information regarding any possible updates that may be needed for the War Memorial and he confirmed this was the case.

4934/299 Flowers in Croxley £1,630 – It was asked if this project was the initiative of a local resident and this was confirmed although the matter had been discussed at an Environment and Amenity Committee and taken onboard as a Committee initiative. The Clerk added that the sum of £1,630 would be the Parish Council's contribution towards the Croxley Green Parish Council and Flowers 4 Croxley partnership. It was proposed by Cllr Saxon and seconded by Cllr Vassiliou that this sum be removed from the budget but the proposal failed.

Transfer from Reserves (Development of Play Areas Research) -£5,000 – This sum is to be offset against the £20,000 allocated to the Development of Play Areas resulting in a net effect of £15,000.

Miscellaneous Road Safety Works £35,000 and Transfer from Reserves for Pelican crossing -£35,000. It was argued that if the Parish Council put £35,000 in their budget as funds for road crossings, County would reduce their contribution by £35,000. However, Cllrs considered that this sum should remain in the budget to show a commitment to residents who have expressed strong public feelings about road safety.

The draft budget was looked at page by page and items discussed, however there were no changes to the budget figures and it was finally proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Bains that the budget be set with a precept of £242,845 (a 1.6% increase). A recorded vote was requested and Cllrs Bains, Bennett, Birch, Brading, Dann, Hollands, Jefford, Martin, Norman, Saxon, Seeley and Shafe voted for the proposal. Cllrs Brand and Vassiliou voted against the proposal.

A copy of the agreed final budget has been circulated to Cllrs with these Minutes.

CC620/09

Donation to Croxley Green Red Cross

The Chairman introduced this item which was self explanatory and it was immediately proposed by Cllr Bains and seconded by Cllr Seeley that £500 be donated from the Chairman's Allowance to Croxley Green Red Cross towards a new heart defibrillator and the proposal was agreed.

CC621/09

Correspondence

The Clerk referred those present to the list of relevant correspondence and pointed out that this was now in the new format as requested by Cllrs. As this list had been circulated with the Agenda, Members had therefore had time to read the document and no points were raised. The Clerk was asked by Cllr Vassiliou for a copy of all correspondence relating to the hire of the Green and subsequent charity donations

and he apologised that he had not yet had time to do this but would endeavour to do so as soon as possible.

CC622/09

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.