

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 230th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 8.00pm

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

Cllrs Bains, Bennett, Birch, Brading, Brand, Dann, Hollands, Jefford, Martin, Saxon, Seabourne, Seeley, Vassiliou and Wynne-Jones

Voting Members 15 – Cllr Norman arrived at 8.36pm increasing voting numbers to 16
There were 3 members of public present

CC466/07 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence although Cllr Norman had informed the Clerk that he may be late.

CC467/07 Declarations of Interest by Members

No declarations of interest were received.

CC468/07 Representations from the Public

There were no representations from members of the public.

CC469/07 Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Wynne-Jones and seconded by Cllr Saxon that the minutes of the 229th Monthly Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 October 2007 be accepted. The proposal was agreed and the Chairman signed the minutes.

CC470/07 Matters Arising

An update of item CC454/07 (Representations from the Public) was sought. This item concerned the cutting of a hedge of a house on the corner of Barton Way and New Road by the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that that he was still investigating this matter but would give Councillors a copy of his response to the member of the public who raised the issue.

CC461/07 (Replacement Office Fencing). The Clerk explained that the cheaper quote received for the fencing did not include 2mm steel over open fencing and when this quote was adjusted to include this, it increased the cost to £3160 + VAT. This meant that this quote was actually the more expensive of the two. The Clerk will therefore instruct the company who provided the now cheaper quote to begin work.

CC462/07 (Maintenance Contract with TRDC for The Green and Stones Orchard). A Member queried the minutes stating that a resolution had not been made for the Parish Council to offer to maintain The Green and Stones Orchard free of charge. It was confirmed that the minutes were accurate and Council had agreed that the Clerk and Chairman take whatever actions are necessary for the Parish Council to retain maintenance of The Green and Stones Orchard.

CC471/07 Committee Reports

CC471.1/07 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 November 2007

It was proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Bennett that the minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 November 2007 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.

- CC471.2/07 Any matters arising
Under item EA396 (Matters Arising; EA388/07 Active Works List), the Clerk informed Members that a reply has not yet been received from the Parish Council's insurance company offering guidance on liability issues relating to glass on footpaths being cleared up by the Rangers.
Item EA397/07 (Active Works List) a Member asked if Footpath 7 was actually on The Green to which the Clerk replied that it was.
- CC471.3/07 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 November and Wednesday 21 November 2007
It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Wynne-Jones that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 November and 21 November 2007 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.
- CC471.4/07 Any matters arising
It was noted that the Upper New Road Residents Group gave a good presentation when they made representations at the meeting held 21 November 2007.
- CC471.5/07 Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 11 October 2007
It was noted by Members that the Finance and Administration meeting of 8 November 2007 was cancelled as it was inquorate.
A Member asked the Clerk whether an emergency Finance and Administration meeting should be called as the last meeting was cancelled. The Clerk said that there was no requirement to do so unless the Chairman or Vice-Chairman or a number of Councillors wished to do so. A delay in the preparation for the budget was mentioned but the Clerk pointed out that a budget pack had already been circulated to Members.
- CC472/07 Parish Council Media Policy
The Clerk thanked Cllr Birch for her help in drafting a Parish Council Media Policy for Council to consider.
A number of concerns were raised regarding clauses 3.7 and 3.8 and following a discussion it was generally felt that the Parish Council should have a Media Policy. Members considered however, that the document needed further refinement. The Clerk suggested that this issue be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee but it was decided by Members that this item be referred to the Business Planning Group for further discussion.
- CC473/07 Croxley Green Village Hall
The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the documents that had been circulated with the agenda. A Member asked why this item had been placed on the agenda to which the Clerk responded that as the topic had been put in the public domain without the Council having had an opportunity to debate the matter, it was appropriate to do so. The Clerk added that some Councillors had also requested it be discussed at Council.
As there is no legal definition of the term 'Village Hall', Katharine Birtwistle, Solicitor to HAPTC stated (in an email dated 20 November 2007) that she "cannot see any reason why the Council could not use the offices for the provision of recreation facilities or the provision of buildings for the purposes of public meetings' providing there were no legal impediments.

Some Members felt that these guidelines meant that the Parish Council Offices could be used to provide village hall facilities and this would be save residents of Croxley Green money. These Members felt that hiring out the Council Chamber when it is available, for local groups to hold evening meetings, would be acceptable. The Council Chamber had, in the past, been hired out to groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and as this had happened previously there was no reason why it could not be used in the future. It was acknowledged that the room is obviously not suitable for activities such as badminton etc but it would meet the needs of a meeting room, and indeed this may be preferable to some groups who do not need or want a large hall.

A suggestion was that the Parish Council should be more pro-active and actually find a 'real' village hall.

Those against using the Parish Council offices to provide village hall facilities stated that the space was simply not large enough, health and safety requirements would not be met and there would be security problems relating to who would be responsible for locking and unlocking the premises. The room would also not be suitable for all groups to use.

The Clerk agreed about the health and safety and security aspects and pointed out that the use of the Council Chamber as a meeting room is a totally different matter to that of its use as a village/community hall.

After a very long discussion it was proposed by Cllr Brading that the Chamber be made available for community groups to hold evening meetings in order to fulfil the legal requirements of a Village Hall and this was seconded by Cllr Brand. A counter proposal by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Bains that this matter be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee was then made. There was a majority vote in favour of the proposal. Consequently the Clerk will refer this item to the next Finance and Administration Committee to be held 13 December 2007.

CC474/07

Craft Day

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Martin to brief Members. Cllr Martin reported that the event had been extremely successful; very positive feedback had been received and the Chairman's Charities had benefited from money raised from the raffle. Cllr Martin wished to thank everybody who had helped towards making this day such an enjoyable one for those who attended.

The Chairman stated that she had submitted a proposal for inclusion in next year's budget to encourage more local groups to become involved.

CC475/07

Budget 2008/09 and onwards

The Chairman opened this item and the Clerk informed Members that he had received a number of proposals for Environment and Amenity budget and also one proposal for Planning and Development budget. The Clerk reiterated that he wished to have any proposals as soon as possible.

CC476/07

Fireworks on The Green

The Chairman introduced this item and Cllr Bennett gave a verbal update informing Council that the firework display has now been arranged and requesting that Members volunteer to help. Help will be needed on the night of the display, as well as the following day. It was noted that My Croxley has kindly offered to advertise the firework display for the Parish Council.

CC477/07

Watford Muslim School

The Chairman introduced this matter and advised Members that as the proposed school is to be situated outside of this Parish; we have been notified for information purposes only. It was suggested that out of courtesy the Parish Council writes to the

Watford Muslim School Trust to thank them for notifying us of their proposal but that we have no specific comments.

CC478/07

Correspondence

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred to the supplement of relevant correspondence. The Clerk briefly read through some of the correspondence, pointing out that Cllr Dann had dealt with the complaint by a resident after she tripped and fell over due to uneven paving in New Road.

The Clerk confirmed that as yet no response has been received from Transport for London, even though the issue of the overgrown hedgerow on Watford Road has been followed up. Members authorised the Clerk to ensure that the Rangers cut back this hedge as it presents a serious hazard to pedestrians.

CC479/07

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.41pm.