

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 268th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2011

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

Cllrs Baldwin, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Martin, Mitchell, Ridley, Seeley, Shafe, Vane and Wynne-Jones

Voting Members: 14 raising to 15 after Agenda item CC964/11.4/11 Matters Arising P&D Minutes.

Public: 2

The Chairman drew Members attention to the new rear emergency exit arrangements from the Council Chamber.

CC959/11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Dann and Cllr Martin had advised that she may arrive late.

CC960/11 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting. Cllr Brading declared an interest in Agenda item CC968/11 Brown Bin Caddy Liners given that he is Portfolio Holder for this area of activity at Three Rivers District Council (TRDC).

CC961/11 Representations from the Public

The following Representations were made:

CC975/11 Submission of Motions or Proposals - A member of the public stated that he supported the proposal to limit the number of Agenda items Councillors can put forward for any one meeting. It was stated that some 58 items had been put forward so far by one Councillor and that the Agendas should allow time for quality discussion rather than being rushed through.

CC970/11 Direct Funding of Activities - A member of the public stated that he did not understand what was being proposed on this matter. If it was intended to offset funding of a proposed budgetted matter, there would be no guarantee that the funding would be forthcoming and therefore the item would not be able to proceed as there would be no funds available. The member of the public continued that if the propoals was suggesting some form of sponsorship this was an entirely different matter although there would have be some very clear rules and guidelines as to who would be considered appropriate and who not appropriate to accept sponsorship from.

CC972 Consideration of Introducing an Any Other Business Agenda Item - A member of the public stated that he did not support this matter as such an item would not make it clear to the public what matter was to be discussed at any meeting. He continued that in the event of urgent or important business that might arise between meetings, this could be dealt with by the calling of an Extraordinary Meeting. He continued that such an Any Other Business item would conflict with the new Standing Orders 8.1 which states the no motion can be moved unless it is included in the Agenda. The member of the public conducted that the information in the supporting paper that TRDC have an AOB item was incorrect.

CC962/11

Minutes

Resolved

- that the Minutes of the 267th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 28 July 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC963/11

Matters Arising

CC946/11 Matters Arising – (CC926/11 Matters Arising CC912.2/11 Matters Arising; EA750/11 British Waterways Adopter Scheme). The Clerk was asked for an update. He replied that the walk along the stretch of waterway concerned had taken place and some 12 matters had been identified that could be undertaken by volunteers. The Clerk added that he would be contacting British Waterways to move these matters forward.

CC946/11 Matters Arising (CC926/11 Matters Arising; CC912.2/11 Matters Arising; EA751/11 Posts on the Green). The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that TRDC have now agreed to the wording of a letter that would be distributed to residents on the Green advising of the impending post renewal programme and added that the letter had now been delivered.

CC946/11 Matters Arising – (C938/11 Former Yorke Road School Site – Part Demolition). The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that a response had been received from the Charities Commission and had been circulated to Councillors.

CC950/11 Dog Waste - The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised it was important there would be a seamless change in the company supplying this service and he was finalising detail with the supplier. The Clerk emphasised there would not be a contract put into place and that the service would be covered by means of a Works & Service Order. In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that there were currently 41 dog bins which are emptied via the Parish Council's arrangements.

CC964/11

Committee Reports

CC964.1/11

Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 5 July 2011

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 5 July 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC964.2/11

Any matters arising

EA786/11 (Earth Mound in Baldwins Lane Park). A Councillor advised that from her knowledge and inspections of the area, the mound is mainly inhabited by foxes and that the youths are leaving litter all over the park rather than just in the area of the mound.

CC964.3/11

Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 6 July 2011, Wednesday 20 July 2011, Wednesday 3 August and Wednesday 17 August 2011.

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 6 July 2011, Wednesday 20 July 2011, Wednesday 3 August and Wednesday 17 August 2011 be adopted as a report of the meetings.

- CC964.4/11 Any matters arising
PD1626/11 (Street Lighting). An update was requested and the Clerk advised that the P&D have subsequently discussed this matter and their comments have already been past to Three Rivers District Council with a copy to County Cllr Steve Drury.
Planning Applications/Decisions – general comment. A Councillor stated that it did not appear to be the case that reasons for refusal of planning applications were forthcoming from TRDC. The Clerk advised that all refusals were annotated with the reasons of refusal in the Minutes. It was also pointed out that all planning applications and decisions are available on the TRDC website.
- Cllr Martin arrived at this point increasing voting numbers from 14 to 15.
- CC964.5/11 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 14 July 2011
Resolved:
- that the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 14 July 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.
- CC964.6/11 Any matters arising
FA739/11 Monthly Accounts. A Councillor asked whether all Councillors had signed up to their new Cllr@ email address. The Clerk reported that 3 Councillors had. It was asked whether this was compulsory to which the Chairman stated it would be good practice. It was pointed out that having a separate email address for Council business rather than using a private email was a recommendation from a TRDC Standards Committee enquiry. The Clerk stated that although it was a recommendation, the recommendation itself was not compulsory to enact but the Council had decided that this would be good practice.
- CC965/11 Annual Accounts 2010/11 – External Audit (carried forward from 28 July 2011 Council meeting (CC951/11 refers)
The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk advised Members that there were no matters which came to the attention of the External Auditors which required attention. The Clerk did add that a matter of having to restate the Council's Assets for 2009/10 in cost value rather than insurance value had arisen during the Audit but this was dealt with at the time.
Councillors congratulated the Clerk on a clean audit.
- CC966/11 Budget 2012/13
The Clerk referred Members to the Briefing Paper circulated with the Agenda which drew attention to the process and procedures that will be used to undertake the preparation of next years budget.
The Clerk pointed out that hard copy budget proposal forms were available at the meeting and further copies can be obtained from the office. The Clerk confirmed that an electronic copy would be circulated to Members.
The Clerk emphasised that if Members have any queries on the process or wish further advise then they should contact him.
The Chairman added that whilst the Budget has to be agreed at the latest at the Council's January meeting, there is nothing to prevent the Council from agreeing to it earlier - at the pre-Christmas meeting for example.

CC967/11

Staffing Committee

The Chairman introduced this matter saying that this new Committee was being introduced through the new Standing Orders which requires two Councillors other than the Chairman and Vice Chairman to be members.

The Chairman called for volunteers for the Committee and Cllrs Isard-Brown, Jordan, Ridley and Wynne-Jones put their names forward. All candidates were proposed and seconded. The Chairman stated that as more than two Councillors had volunteered a ballot would be held and it was suggested that it would be helpful if each candidate could give a brief resume of their background and experience in this sort of area. Following the resume by each candidate ballot papers were circulated and subsequently collated and counted by the Clerk.

Cllr Isard-Brown received 10 votes, Cllr Jordan received 12 votes, Cllr Ridley 5 votes and Cllr Wynne-Jones 3 votes.

Resolved

- That Cllr Isard-Brown and Cllr Jordan be appointed to the Staffing Committee in addition the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

CC968/11

Brown Bin Caddy Liners

Cllr Brading declared an interest in this matter. The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk referred to the supporting paper issued with the Agenda and summarised that TRDC were making suitable brown bin caddy liners available to outlets at a cost of £1.60 for a roll of 52 bags and that outlets could resale at £2.50 per roll retaining the 90p difference as an incentive to act as an outlet.

In response to a question about whether commercial outlets will be offered the facility, Cllr Brading stated that this was work in progress and that other Parish Council's had already offered to be an outlet.

It was suggested that if the cost price was £1.60 then perhaps the Council should sell them on at that price rather than retaining 90p on the sale. This was debated further but it was concluded that if commercial outlets were to be invited to sell the bags as well the pricing structure should be the same because if the Parish Council charged a lower price this would disadvantage the commercial sector.

A discussion ensued as to whether there would be a minimum order particularly as the Parish Council does not have much storage space and also whether excess stock could be returned. Cllr Brading having declared an interest as Portfolio Holder at TRDC stated he was willing to answer any questions if they arose and he indicated that there would probably not be a problem in returning unsold stock.

The proposal that the Council becomes an outlet for the sale of brown bin caddy liners was proposed and seconded. A recorded vote was requested. Cllrs for the proposal were: Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Edmunds, Getkahn, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Martin, Mitchell, Seeley, Shafe, Vane and Wynne-Jones. Cllrs against the proposal were Cllr Brand and Ridley. Cllr Brading abstained.

Resolved:

- That the Parish Council becomes an outlet for the sale of brown bin caddy liners.

CC969/11

Village Hall Arrangements

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that at the time of setting up the village hall arrangements other halls may not have been contacted to establish their availability or willingness to act as a village hall.

It was pointed out that other halls may not have the capacity to accommodate the regular activities of those now benefitting from the existing Village Hall arrangements without the other halls sacrificing their regular usage and income to provide the necessary operational requirements.

It was suggested that Cllr Ridley should prepare a Village Hall Tender including the associated full specification for the Village Hall and bring that to Council to consider.

One Councillor asked whether there was a problem with the existing arrangement to which he was advised there was not. Another Councillor stated that if the existing arrangements are working well then there is no need to consider change. It was pointed out that the existing Village Hall arrangements also allows residents who have completed their application form to use the bar facilities at the Community Centre which is a good benefit to the community.

Cllr Ridley proposed that other halls in Croxley be contacted. There was no seconder for the proposal.

Resolved:

- No further action required.

CC970/11

Direct Funding of Activities

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that he had been in contact with the owner of New Road Service Station who had indicated his willingness to fund/part fund a Parish Council's event or activity of some sort.

The Chairman stated that the Council may need to take advice about sponsorship but pointed out that irrespective of sponsorship the Council would need to budget for all of its activities and events just in case any sponsorship or part funding of an activity was not forthcoming which would result in the activity not taking place.

It was generally agreed that the principle of external funding/sponsorship was a good one but the mechanics were much more difficult to address. It was also generally considered that the matter of sponsorship was a very difficult area and that the Council would need to be extremely cautious about the philanthropic objective of potential sponsors.

The Clerk advised that he had sent an email to Cllr Ridley about this matter and that any external contribution to an activity could be addressed through forthcoming budget proposals for Council to specifically review during the budget round.

Resolved:

- No further action required.

CC971/11

Welcome to Croxley Green Letter

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that he thought to provide a Welcome letter from the Parish Council to new residents in the area would be a good idea.

The Chairman stated that he did not understand what was being proposed particularly in respect of how details of new residents of the area would be captured, how the letter would be distributed and the cost benefits of such a proposal. It was pointed

out that TRDC would not necessarily have such information other than those who are added to the list of those who are paying Council tax and that this information would not be in the public domain. It was also pointed out that the effort to administer such a proposal would not be cost effective.

It was also pointed out that the house/flat rental market in Croxley Green would also need to be considered and this would further add to the administrative burden of this proposal.

Resolved:

- that Cllr Ridley should review his proposal and if he still thought there was benefit in having such a Welcome letter then he should flesh out the detail and bring the matter back for further discussion.

CC972/11 Consideration of introducing an Any Other Business Agenda Item

Cllr Ridley withdrew his proposal.

CC973/11 Web Site Committee

The Chairman introduced this matter and drew attention to the Supporting Paper circulated with the Agenda which set out the notes of a meeting that had taken place between Cllrs Martin and Ridley.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee meets again with all members present to turn matters identified in the notes of the meeting into potential actions.

Members noted the meeting notes.

CC974/11 Draft National Planning Policy Framework

The Chairman introduced this matter and asked Cllr Jordan to elaborate. Cllr Jordan referred to the Supporting Paper circulated with the Agenda and emphasised that this matter is extremely important and that the Council should be responding to the consultation in a timely manner.

Cllr Jordan continued that whilst the Planning & Development Committee would have the authority to respond to the consultation, it was considered appropriate that Council endorse that the Planning & Development Committee can send a corporate response to the new draft planning proposals.

A discussion ensued about the potential risks to Croxley Green on the matter of future development within the area under the draft national policy being proposed particularly with the emphasis being placed on economic reasons and why development should not be allowed to proceed.

Cllr Brading pointed out that TRDC were also under the same time pressure to respond given the timing of their meetings and that officers had been charged to draft a response. Cllr Brading therefore suggested that the Clerk contacts TRDC officers to obtain a copy of the TRDC response which may help the Planning & Development Committee in its response.

Resolved:

- that the Planning and Development Committee prepare and send a letter on behalf of the Parish Council regarding the draft National Planning Policy Framework;
- that the Clerk contacts TRDC officers for a copy of the TRDC letter on this matter.

CC975/11

Submission of Motions or Proposals to Meetings

The Chairman introduced this matter and referred to the Supporting Paper circulated with the Agenda.

The Chairman pointed out there were an increasing number of Agenda items being put forward and that this was resulting in less time to have a quality debate on the matters being raised. He Chairman continued that the policy of Councillors being allowed to submit no more than two Agenda items per meeting had been agreed by Council in June 2009 but wished to have the current Council Members endorse this policy.

After a brief discussion Members agreed that the proposal was appropriate.

Resolved:

- that Parish Councillors are limited to presenting a maximum of two motions or proposals or discussion topics at any one meeting.

CC976/11

Standing Orders Amendments

The Chairman introduced this matter and reminded Councillors that at the last Council meeting in July a new set of Standing Orders were discussed and a number of amendments had been put forward. The Chairman continued that at that meeting it was agreed that the amendments be incorporated into the new Standing Orders and that the amended version be accepted.

The Chairman stated that he has brought this matter to this meeting to provide Members the opportunity to verify that the amendments to the Standing Orders were undertaken and to ratify the introduction of the new Standing Orders with effect from 30 September 2011.

There were no comments from Members.

Resolved:

- That the new Standing Orders be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk and be introduced from Friday 30 September 2011.

CC977/11

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.37pm.