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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 8.00 PM

- Present Cllr Edmunds – In the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Cllrs Brading, Dann (arrived 8.55pm), Mitchell, Seeley and Vane.
Voting Members: 5 rising to 6
Members of the Public: 5
- EA1060/14 Apologies for Absence
Apologies had been received from Cllr Bennett.
- EA1061/14 Declarations of Interest
The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting.
- EA1062/14 Representations from the Public
Representations were made by the Little Green Lane Residents Association in respect of Agenda item EA1067/14. It was stated that some 30 years ago the pond and surrounding area was completely overgrown but the residents cleared the willows and surrounding area and the pond refilled. Works undertaken more recently allegedly disturbed the clay lining resulting in water draining away. The application for the S137 Grant is intended therefore to reline the pond to retain water and funds are sought to assist in this project.
The Chairman, under Standing Order 9.1.6 proposed that Agenda item EA1067/14 Ponds and S137 Grant Application be brought forward and taken at this point. The proposal was agreed.
- EA1067/14 Ponds and S137 Grant Application
The Chairman introduced this item and referred to the supporting paper that had been circulated with the Agenda and invited comments from Members.
It was asked whether the pond is actually within the Parish Council's boundary to which the Clerk advised that there was no doubt that it was. The matter of land ownership was raised and it was pointed out that from the Land Registry's email, contained in the supporting paper, that the land was unregistered but they had made a comment that the fact that it is not registered does not automatically imply that there is no land owner.
A discussion ensued about the potential to acquire the land but the Clerk pointed out that when the Council commissioned an independent report in 1996 it stated that the pond was "owned by Three Rivers District Council and managed by the Parish Council". The Clerk added that on file there was a letter from the Environmental Protection Manager at TRDC at the time (1996) which was a reply to circulation of the independent report. The letter stated that he and the Parks and Woodlands Officer had read the report and stated that the restoration of the pond would be a benefit to the community and thus implied support for the Parish Council's restoration project at the time. The Clerk added that of particular note is that TRDC did not dispute the statement at the beginning of the Report that the pond was "owned by Three Rivers District Council and managed by the Parish Council".
The Clerk raised the question of public liability and that the Council should not take on liabilities that are not in the Council's ownership. However, the Clerk recognised that as a result of the Parish Council's involvement in the ponds' past restoration and indeed the

statement in the report that the pond was managed by the Parish Council, the Council had previously knowingly or not accepted a liability in respect of the pond.

It was asked whether the Committee had authority to made the S137 Grant award to which the Clerk referred to the supporting paper which made it clear that Council had delegated the matter to the Committee so that it could consider the Grant and the Committee's Pond Budget together.

It was proposed and seconded that the Grant of £1,000 be made and that the Committee's Pond Budget of £1,000 should be given to the project. The proposal was agreed but it was requested that the Clerk investigates the possibility of land acquisition and that the Clerk clarifies the matter of public liability.

Resolved:

- that the Grant of £1,000 be made and that the Committee's Pond Budget of £1,000 should be given to the project;
- that the Clerk investigates the possibility of land acquisition;
- that the Clerk clarifies the matter of public liability.

The representative of the Little Green Lane Association thanked the Council and left the meeting. There were other Members of the public remaining for another Agenda item so the Chairman proposed that Agenda item EA1066/14 Car Parking and Post on The Green be moved up the Agenda under Standing Order 9.1.6. The proposal was agreed.

EA1066/14 Car Parking and Posts on the Green

The Chairman introduced this item and referred to the supporting paper. He stated that as The Green is not owned by the Parish Council it has no authority for it but there is a perceived problem with unauthorised car parking and it needs to be established whether this is, in fact, a problem that needs addressing.

It was pointed out that a number of cars are parked during the day on the cross-over access to the Artichoke public house but are probably not pub users but more likely employee cars from a local company in New Road. It was noted that the extension to the Artichoke pub had resulted in car parking spaces being reduced and a number of cars do park in Old Barn Lane and Green Lane when visiting the pubs. Members were concerned that there were on occasions a significant number of cars parked near Providence Hall which may be arising from activities at the Guild of Sports.

A Cllr stated that he had requested an Officer at TRDC to write to the publicans on the Green to remind them that there is no parking on the Green and to advise their clientele accordingly but it was recognised that the success of the pubs was to be commended so a 'light touch' was required when dealing with the problem.

It was recognised that the thin posts installed by the Council were really not up to the job and were proving unpopular and that perhaps if new and additional posts are required then they should be of the 'square' style that are seen at Elmcote Way and Copthorne Road.

It was also pointed out that there is an annual problem with car parking in respect of the open evening at Rickmansworth School and that it should be for the school to arrange car parking rather than a free for all on the Green.

It was also noted that some residents on the Guild of Sports side of the Green were considering the Green as an extension to their property and using it for parking cars and that they should be reminded that there should be no parking on the Green.

A Cllr pointed out that the matter of land ownership was not the issue when it came to car parking given that under the existing Bye-Law it is a civil offence and therefore could not be enforced by the Police or Traffic Wardens but only by civil action by the land owner. Such action is time consuming and expensive and accordingly more should be done to put more posts in even to the point that some areas are completely enclosed by posts. An example of what could be done was cited which were the posts and rail system that was installed on ground opposite the Harvester which also historically had had a car parking problem. It was suggested that a letter be written to TRDC drawing their attention to the matter again with a

view to arranging a site meeting to discuss what practical measures can be effectively taken.

It was commented that there were one or two 'No Parking' signs and perhaps there should be more non obtrusive signs installed to reemphasise the no parking restrictions.

Resolved:

- that the Clerk writes to the groups that use the Guild of Sports; to Rickmansworth School; to the office in New Road; and to owners of property near to the Guild of Sports to remind them all of the no parking restrictions.
- The Clerk writes to TRDC to arrange a site meeting;
- That more substantial posts be installed where appropriate having taken account of the views of TRDC from the site meeting.

EA1063/14 Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 July 2014 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Dann arrived at 8.55pm increasing voting numbers from 5 to 6 Members.

EA1064/14 Matters Arising

EA1056/14 Land at A412 Watford Road, East of Sycamore Approach. The Clerk was asked whether there had been any progress on this matter. The Clerk advised that the Senior Ranger has only recently returned from holiday and that the priority has been the induction of the new Ranger since that time. However, the Senior Ranger will be taking a look at the site to see what needs to be done before an approach is made to HCC.

EA1065/14 Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and invited comments.

It was commented that if the Rangers visit the school gardening clubs in the near future they should tell them about the Croxley Show to be held in St Oswald's Church Hall on Saturday 13 September.

A Cllr noted that there was no mention of Croxfest on the Works List to which the Clerk advised that the organisers are extremely good at making sure the site is cleared of litter etc after the event and in practice there has been no need to roster the Rangers for additional clear up works.

Resolved:

- That the Works List for September 2014 be noted.

EA1066/14 See above.

EA1067/14 See above.

EA1068/14 Dog and Litter Bins at Old Merchant Taylors

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk referred to the paper circulated with the Agenda and advised that the Old Merchant Taylors Residents Association had contacted the Council in regard to potentially installing two dog waste bins in the recreation area as there was an increasing problem with dog fouling.

The Clerk continued that the cost of purchase and installing the two bins would £593.04 which is a one off cost but there would be an recurring cost in regard to emptying the bins and these would be added to the Council's schedule for emptying with its contractor. The Clerk advised that the annual cost for emptying both bins would be £350.40 based on current costs with its contractor at £2.40 per bin per empty. The Clerk added that he would wish to have discretion

as to whether the bins would go onto the twice a week emptying cycle during the summer months depending on usage. The Clerk clarified that the annual cost referred to earlier was based on the twice a week summer cycle.

The Clerk also said that the Old Merchant Taylors Residents Association were concerned that the three litter bins that are in the children's play area were not being regularly emptied and this was causing excess litter accumulating and as well as being unsightly was a potential health and safety hazard. The Clerk added that the three litter bins could be added to those which the Rangers clear on Fridays and would not currently make a significant impact in operational terms in doing so.

It was pointed out that the Old Merchant Taylors estate was privately developed and perhaps it should be the developers (Barratt Homes) who should pay for the purchase of the bins and their ongoing maintenance in the event of damage and that the Council could then take on the necessary arrangements to have them emptied.

Resolved:

- That the Council requests that Barratt Homes fund the capital purchase of the two dog waste bins and take responsibility for ongoing maintenance of them;
- That the Council would then add the bins to the dog waste contractor;
- That the Council empty the three litter bins in the children's play area.

EA1069/14 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.