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Community Way
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire WD3 3SU

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2017 at 8.00 PM

Present: Cllr Edmunds – In the Chair
David Allison - Clerk
Ryan Bennett – Administrative Assistant

Cllrs Cole, Kaur, Linhart, Montague & Vassiliou.

Voting Members: 6

In Attendance: Cllrs Gallagher, Mitchell & Wallington.

EA1308/17 Apologies for Absence

All members were present.

EA1309/17 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting.

EA1310/17 Representations from the Public

There were no members of the public present.

EA1311/17 Minutes

The Clerk drew Members attention to the fact that the Minutes under review for this meeting were those of Tuesday 4 July 2017.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4 July 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

EA1312/17 Matters Arising

A Cllr asked whether item EA1297/17 (the purchase of an additional Dog Bin between Common Moor and Byewaters estate) had been installed. The Clerk informed the Cllr that he was still seeking confirmation on who owned the piece of land and as such no bin had yet been installed.

EA1313/17 Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and invited any comments. The Clerk drew member's attention to two new entries on the works list, a weekly littler pick and a monthly inspection, both taking place at Weston Wood.

There were no other comments.

Resolved:

- That the Works List for September 2017 be noted.

Resolved:

- That the Clerk writes a letter to Matthew Watts from the Countryside Management Service outlining the view of Croxley Green Parish Council, and compiles a list of specific comments from CGPC in response to the plan – see attached.
- That the Clerk writes to Matthew Watts in response to the Croxleyhall Woods GAP briefing document – see attached.

EA1317/17 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:59pm

David Allison
Clerk to the Council



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8 September 2017

Matt Watts
Countryside Management Service
Environment Department
County Hall
Hertford
Herts
SG13 8DN

Dear Matt

Stones Orchard Greenspace Action Plan 2017 – 2022 draft

I refer to your email dated 14 August 2017 advising of the stakeholder/public engagement consultation currently being undertaken.

We are grateful to CMS for the time and effort that has been put into the preparation of the Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) but are a little disappointed that this Council were not given the opportunity to comment on its draft content until this public consultation exercise. This disappointment stems principally from the fact that day to day management and maintenance of Stones Orchard is undertaken by Croxley Green Parish Council and has been for many years and whilst the GAP makes passing comment on this aspect, it barely reflects the true extent of the work and effort the Council and its Rangers put into the site.

It is noted that the documentation, including the 'feedback' form, includes the Parish Council's logo for which we are grateful, but the Council wishes to express that as it was not party to the drafting of the wording it could be mistakenly believed by those seeing and reading the current document that the Parish Council is fully supportive of all the proposals and action plans which is not the case.

That said the Parish Council wish to continue to work closely with TRDC, as the current land owner, in formulating any future ideas and proposals for the area, the Parish Council being that much closer to the residents their wishes and expectations.

Stones Orchard is already a very popular area for residents, their families and others and is seen as an area to complement the openness of The Green by way of its more secluded and quiet environment. The Council had previously expressed its view at a site meeting with you that the area should not become an urban park and its rural, informal layout is part of its appeal and attraction.

The GAP has many positive elements in terms of grounds maintenance and the Council is looking forward to taking these forward. The Management Plan arranged by the Parish Council in 2014 and agreed by TRDC regarding tree management is proving to be successful particularly in regard to the older mature trees in having a "managed traditional orchard" and this together

with some of the grounds maintenance identified in the GAP working in harmony would prove to a worthwhile approach.

One key element that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later is the access to Stones Orchard particularly given the recent traveller incursion which led to three caravans and associated vehicles entering the site which had it not been for the very swift intervention of the Parish Council staff on site prevented any further incursion by the other caravans that arrived on The Green.

A more detailed schedule of comments is attached which I trust will prove useful and should you wish any clarification on any of the points made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

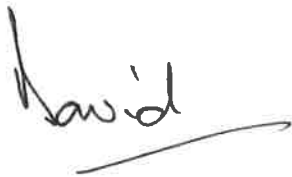
In summary of the discussion from the Parish Council's Environment and Amenity Committee meeting at which this matter was discussed, the Stones Orchard GAP was received with a tepid reaction and considered to be an imposed plan which is unmeasured, uncostered, unwanted and unnecessary.

The Council is not convinced that a plan of this nature is required or needed and a much better approach would be to concentrate on updating some grounds maintenance routines and practices.

Given the above the Parish Council would like to hold a meeting with TRDC/CMS to discuss the proposals and to see how best any plans for the area can be moved forward. I would be grateful for your confirmation that you are willing to engage in such a meeting which the Parish Council is quite willing to host.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

David Allison
Clerk to the Council

**Croxley Green Parish Council's comments on Stones Orchard Greenspace Action Plan (GAP)
8 September 2017**

Page No.	Section	CGPC Comments
1	1	The 'Managed by' subheading should be changed to read "Croxley Green Parish Council under contract from Three Rivers District Council".
4	2.4.1	The informal nature of the walking routes ("desire lines") is an element of the layout of the site which provides the rural atmosphere. CGPC share the concern that certain sections can get muddy but a sympathetic temporary surfacing of bark chippings should be considered and proved effective in the past.
6	2.5.3	Delete "occur" and replace with "be present".
6	2.5.2	The Chairman of this Council's Environment & Amenity Committee has reported at least 2 sightings of Slow worms since 1999 to Three Rivers District Council.
7	2.6	Third paragraph. The new Right of Way is now adopted as FP23 with FB24 leading from FP23 to Fuller Way.
8	3.1	Following recent incursions into Stone's Orchard from Travellers some form of deterrent should be put into place at the orchard's entrance but to allow Council maintenance vehicles access as and when required.
		CGPC have concerns over potential signage as this would detract from the visually rural nature of the site. It is noted reference is made to the site not being seen from the road but as there is no substantive parking available, signage would not necessary attract passers-by.
10	3.2	CGPC will not be able to assist with an out of hours service other having its usual answer phone facility available.
10	3.3	Second paragraph refers to the TRDC Maintenance Contract. The wording should be clear that the bins "are emptied by Croxley Green Parish Council under the TRDC Maintenance Contract". Reference to the TRDC Maintenance Contract elsewhere should also state the role of the Parish Council.
12	3.5.1	CGPC consider that the allotted 3x cut of the Orchard Grassland is wholly inadequate. It is currently being cut upwards of 10x per annum.
12/13	3.5.1	CGPC shares the concerns on the presence of hogweed in the Grassland. It should be made clear in reference to ragwort that Stones Orchard would not be considered 'vulnerable land' as it is not within 100m of land used for grazing for horses, cattle, other animals or used for forage. It is therefore classified as low risk. In biodiversity terms away from areas used for livestock grazing or forage, ragwort can be quite important in that it provides a habitat and food for insects and as stated the Cinnabar moth and also provides pollen for bees. CGPC agree that this requires regular monitoring.
14	3.5.2	It is noted that consideration should be given to repositioning some of the trees to a grid pattern. As far as tree maintenance is concerned the existing Management Plan produced in 2014 should be followed and extended as necessary. CGPC consider that the reference to 'harvesting' will result in inconsiderate activity on the trees by either pulling branches down to a reachable level or attempted climbing with or without the use of a ladder/step ladder to gain access to the fruit. This could lead to potential damage to the trees both in the short and long term.

**Croxley Green Parish Council's comments on Stones Orchard Greenspace Action Plan (GAP)
8 September 2017**

Page No.	Section	CGPC Comments
14	3.5.2	CGPC agree that emphasis on traditional Hertfordshire varieties should be prevalent including the Hertfordshire Black cherry tree even if this has to be grafted to provide a current and future stock.
15	3.5.3	CGPC are extremely concerned by the suggestion that chainsaw activity could be undertaken by volunteers. It may be this is poor wording and if so it would need to be clarified.
16	3.5.3	CGPC agree that the existing holly hedgerow should be tidied but not reduced as it provides a wind break to the area and extra bio-diversity habitat areas. Whilst CGPC agree in principle that the managing height of the hedgerow is a consideration this should not be to the extent of visually producing a sterile 'architectural' feature.
18	3.6	Community Involvement. CGPC consider that informal community engagement on an 'ad hoc' basis is a far better route and would not wish to see a formal group established.
19	3.7	CGPC would like residents to appreciate all the differing natural areas of Croxley Green rather than being focused on a select few areas. Reference should be made to the existing activities that take place in Stones Orchard which further promotes the site. Such events include the annual dog show and the annual Wassail which attracts visitors from outside the area.
20	4 B1	No reference is made to CGPC.
21	4 F2	See comment above under 3.6, page 18
22	5	General. CGPC would like to be consulted and included on all aspect of any potential and developing plan including any potential creation of interpretation panels and site leaflets and should not be excluded in the 'Responsibility' column where there appears to be obvious exclusion.
	D1	Implies that the applying for heritage funding in Spring 2017 has therefore taken place against a Plan that has not agreed or ratified, nor costed and no grant received. The timing of some of the year one actions are therefore unrealistic.
	E1	The inclusion of 'Volunteers' in grass mowing will cause confusion as to responsibilities and implies volunteers can turn up and mow the area at will with their own equipment.
	F2	See comment above under 3.6, page 18
	C2	Maintain site infrastructure has been undertaken by CGPC.
	C3	Emptying & Inspection of litter/dog bins is a CGPC responsibility.
24	Year 2 A4 C1	Location of benches should include CGPC
	C2	This should be a CGPC responsibility with external and/or TRDC advise/guidance as necessary
	C3	Emptying bins is a CGPC responsibility
<p>From the above as examples, it is evident that the detail of future maintenance is not fully thought through and accordingly ALL the Year Action Plans need to be revised.</p>		

David Allison
Clerk to the Council



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8 September 2017

Matt Watts
Countryside Management Service
Environment Department
County Hall
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SG13 8DN

Dear Matt

Croxleyhall Woods Greenspace Action Plan 2018 – 2023 draft

I refer to your email dated 14 August 2017 advising of the stakeholder/public engagement consultation currently being undertaken.

The briefing document produced by CMS is welcomed and the Parish Council looks forward to be actively involved in drafting and agreeing the wording of the management plan prior to further public consultation on its detail.

One aspect that should be considered is reviewing and updating (woodland) Byelaws given that there have been a number of fires which have been started and in some instances required fire service attendance and appropriate redress to perpetrators should be available which I believe is not currently provided for in existing Byelaws.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

David Allison
Clerk to the Council