



MINUTES OF the 304th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2015 at 8.00PM

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

Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Martin and Shafe.

Not Present: Cllrs Dann, Ridley and Vane.

Voting Members: 10

In Attendance: Peter Goodwin, Architect and Consultant for Council re Neighbourhood Plan and one member of the public.

CC1460/15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Baldwin, Seeley and Wynne-Jones.

CC1461/15 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations be made at the time.

CC1462/15 Representations from the Public

There were no representations made.

CC1463/15 Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the 303rd monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 26 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1464/15 Matters Arising

CC1454/14 Community Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman referred to the updated report that had been sent to Cllrs prior to the meeting to allow them to preview its contents and to raise any issues at the meeting. The Chairman asked Peter Goodwin to give an overview of the update from the last meeting and in particular since the meeting with TRDC which had taken place following the last meeting.

Mr Goodwin stated that the meeting with TRDC was very positive and that the Plan was heading in the right direction. TRDC had indicated that the Plan should be more positive and also focus on character areas. It was pointed out that there may be some policies that may contradict those in the TRDC Plan so it was suggested that these be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan in an Annexe.

Members were asked if they had any comments on the updated report and draft policies. A discussion ensued regarding the character areas and possible extension and creation of new conservation areas.

A Cllr asked about the draft policy regarding housing construction standards and whilst it was recognised this may push the cost of development up, this would not be significant in overall terms.

It was reported that the balance of the Grant that had been made available has now been released and paid into the Council's bank account.

It was stated that there will be a presentation of the draft policies at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 30 April.

CC1465/15 Committee Reports

CC1465.1/15 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 3 February 2015

Resolved:

- It was noted that the meeting scheduled for Tuesday 3 February 2015 was cancelled.

CC1465.2/15 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 4 February 2015 and to note that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 18 February 2015 was cancelled.

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 4 February 2015 be adopted as a report of the meeting;
- It was noted that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 18 February 2015 was cancelled.

CC1465.3/15 Any matters arising

PD2458/15 Planning Applications – 15/0041/FUL (works at the Shell Garage). A Cllr asked why the Council had had no grounds for objection when a local business at the site had been given notice to vacate the land. In reply it was stated that the Planning & Development Committee can only comment on the planning application as submitted which had not made any reference to the other matter. It was also pointed out that the planning application and the notice to vacate to the local business by the landowner were two entirely different and separate matters.

CC1465.4/15 Finance and Administration Committee of Thursday 12 February 2015

Resolved:

- It was noted that the meeting scheduled for Thursday 12 February 2015 was cancelled due to it being inquorate.

CC1466/15 Senior Citizens Friday Bus Service to Watford

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk stated that of late the Council had been experiencing a less reliable service than had been previously experienced so as we went through the usual procedure for obtaining quotes for coaches for the Senior Citizen's outing, the opportunity was taken to seek quotes for the Friday bus service.

The Clerk advised that 6 companies were approached but only 4 responded. The Clerk continued that on 3 March he received an email from the existing Friday bus provider advising that as from 1 April 2015 they would be increasing the charge from £130 per Friday to £175,

The Clerk added that of the 4 companies who responded to quote for the Friday bus service 1 had quoted £185, the existing company £175 and 2 had quoted £130. The Clerk said that he reviewed the vehicles that would be used by both companies quoting £130 and the most suitable to navigate the local residential roads was from Desi Coaches. Accordingly an order had been placed with them to commence from Thursday 2 April 2015 – the Friday being a Bank Holiday. The Clerk added that he had circulated an email to all Cllrs on 4 March advising of the change.

CC1467/15 Nectar / Oasis Areas within Croxley Green

The Chairman introduced this item and noted that the proposer of the motion, Cllr Ridley who had not expressed his apologies for the meeting, was not in attendance.

In order for the matter to be discussed two other Cllrs proposed and seconded the motion.

It was pointed out that it was unclear in the supporting paper which traffic island by the

Harvester was being referred to and it was presumed that it was probably the roundabout.

The Clerk advised that the subject of nectar oasis areas was raised in September 2011 and the matter subsequently raised at no less than 11 other meetings subsequently over a 14 month period. The Clerk stated that whilst there is little doubt that the concept being put forward was a good idea the Council does not own any land over which we have complete control as to its maintenance regime. Accordingly any purchasing of meadow seeds at the public expense and subsequent sowing of seeds on grassed areas would only be 'mown' over by whoever is responsible for maintenance.

The Clerk added that during the previous discussions on this matter every effort was made to encourage the land owners, principally TRDC and HCC, to create nectar oasis areas and were written to accordingly.

The Clerk stated that at the Environment and Amenity Committee meeting on 4 September 2012, it was reported that Highways would not agree to Scots Hill central reservation as a nectar oasis area due to safety issues that would arise as a result of long grass. Highways said that they already promote a wildlife area in Scots Hill on the left going up the hill and would be happy to continue with that practice and would consider other highways areas but the Clerk emphasised that this was a matter for them and not this Council. The Clerk continued that this Council does not have any direct powers in respect of this matter on third party land.

The Clerk added that meadow seed was being planted at Little Green School as part and parcel of the Council's School Gardening Club initiative and that when Yorke Mead School are ready, meadow seeds could also be used there.

The Clerk suggested that a Cllr takes the matter up and seeks to have it added to the Agenda of the next Environmental Forum at TRDC on 1 July 2015 - democratic services at TRDC would be able to advise how that could be done.

Members were supportive of nectar oasis areas and considered that the matter be referred to the Environment and Amenity Committee to endeavour to take forward through land owners.

Resolved:

- That the matter be referred to the Environment and Amenity Committee with a view to identifying nectar oasis areas with landowners.

CC1468/15

New Year's Eve Fireworks

The Chairman introduced this item and noted that the proposer of the motion, Cllr Ridley who had not expressed his apologies for the meeting, was not in attendance.

In order for the matter to be discussed two other Cllrs proposed and seconded the motion.

A Cllr stated that he was saddened to see this Agenda item submitted by an experienced serving Cllr. He added that the firework display has been financed and organised by the Parish Council since 2006 and the current provider was proven to be reliable and competent in putting on a memorable show to the enjoyment of the public. The Cllr continued that the event could not take place without all the additional voluntary help each year of Cllrs and others in preparation on the Green, the marshalling of the actual event and clear up afterwards and it had been noted that Cllr Ridley has never been numbered amongst these volunteers.

The Cllr continued that concern was expressed with Cllr Ridley's use of the word 'probity' given that the present arrangement is legal and fully compliant with the Council's Standing Orders. In addition, the Council has a robust budget setting process to ensure that the necessary financial probity is undertaken and during the

recent budget and precept setting process at no time were any questions or queries raised on this matter.

The Cllr stated that of particular concern was the fact that a Cllr without any permission or authority from the Council had approached suppliers who may or may not be known to the Cllr and that such action by the Cllr was certainly questionable in respect of probity.

Another Cllr stated that the paper submitted by Cllr Ridley was fundamentally flawed in that you should never disclose the names of those who would be invited to tender. Accordingly, by naming companies Cllr Ridley has totally undermined his own actions.

It was categorically stated that Cllrs should not approach potential tenderers.

It was pointed out that in real terms there has been no increase in the cost of the firework display other than where the Council has increased the firework budget and given the display provided it was proven to be exceptional value for money.

Resolved:

- That the recommendations by Cllr Ridley to put the firework display out to tender to the companies named in his paper was not agreed.

CC1469/15

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.