

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 3 APRIL 2012 AT 8.00pm

Present Cllr Dann – In the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Ridley, Shafe and Vane
Voting Members: 7
Not Present: Cllr Getkahn
Public: 2

EA864/12 Apologies for Absence
Apologies had been received from Cllr Seeley.

EA865/12 Declarations of Interest
The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting.

EA866/12 Representations from the Public

Representations were made regarding item EA870/12 (Stones Orchard) by a resident who made representations last September about the fact that the management regime for Stones Orchard appeared not to have been adhered to. It was pointed out that in the Management Plan for Stones Orchard, the area where the new trees have been planted by TRDC is called the 'wild flower meadow'. Back in 1992/3 Countryside Management Services conducted a survey and were very anxious that area in particular was managed with care due to their findings of uncommon grass (*Carex muricata* or Prickly Sedge) and also three types of Buttercup seldom found in one area. It was for these reasons as well as the planting of known original varieties of fruit trees (Carroon cherry and Lanes Prince Albert apple) that the Management Plan was introduced.

Written representations had been received in the office by a resident unable to attend the meeting. The representations were in regard to item EA870/12 (Stones Orchard) and the comments were read out to those present. Although new trees were welcomed, the resident expressed concern about the regimented planting of the trees which was incongruous in this area. Concern was also expressed that the over-mowing of the Orchard would now spread to this area. It was asked that last year's destructive over-mowing of Stones Orchard and the Green is not repeated this year but rather a path is mown around the Orchard. It was also asked if the hedgerow could also be left for a few years to flower and encourage birds to nest.

Representations were made by the Chairman of Croxley Green Residents' Association (CGRA) regarding item EA871/12 (Parish Boundary Walk Project). Members were reminded that £100 had been set aside in the 2012/13 budget towards signage for this project. A walk had been undertaken to set the route and plot the positioning of the fingerposts. Hertfordshire County Council had agreed to the style of the signs. It was pointed out that Hertfordshire Rights of Way have funding of £1000 available for such an initiative as this and any further shortfall would be made up by the CGRA. Members of the CGRA will be able to put up the signs but permission would need to be sought by Sarratt Parish Council as in order to keep the walk away from the roads, it has encroached into their boundary.

EA871/12 Parish boundary Walk Project

Under SO 9.1.6 this item was moved up the Agenda.

The Chairman reported that the proposed boundary walk was a joint initiative between the

Parish Council and the CGRA and that he and the Chairman of the CGRA had walked the route and marked out on a map where it would be necessary to place way markers and signs.

The Chairman stated that it had been estimated that the costs of way marking may be approximately £1,300 and the CGRA had indicated that they were also prepared to assist in funding. It was pointed out that there could be a potential grant of up to £1,000 available from Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way and that further funding had become available for this project by way of County Councillor Steve Drury's Locality budget.

The Chairman continued that the whole walk took about 3 hours to complete but obviously potential walkers would be able to shorten the walk if they choose to by using other established footpaths or local side roads.

Resolved:

- That the boundary walk project is progressed;
- That a Grant application is made to HCC Rights of Way.

EA867/12 Minutes

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 March 2012 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

EA868/12 Matters Arising

EA859/12 (Matters Arising; EA852/12 Tree Work on the Metropolitan Line Embankment). A Cllr who had attended the CGRA meeting stated that they were upset with the amount of work undertaken by London Underground adding that the replies received from Mike Brown were somewhat disingenuous.

EA860/12 (Active Works List). The Clerk was asked if a meeting had been arranged with TRDC regarding them emptying the bins on the Green and in Stones Orchard the Clerk advised that he hoped to arrange it by an exchange of emails.

EA861/12 (A Year in Croxley in Photographs). The Clerk was asked if he had heard back from Mr Williams to which he replied that he had not.

EA869/12 Active Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and Members were referred to the active works list for March.

The Clerk was asked why we were installing new bins and seats at Dickinson Square as it had been agreed that we would just tidy it. He replied that they had been given to us free of charge and that they were intended to replace the somewhat old and rundown bins and seats (one of which is missing). The Clerk added that he would check that residents are happy for them to be installed.

Members noted the Active Works List for March.

EA870/12 Stones Orchard, Tree Planting

The Chairman introduced this item and Cllr Dann declared an interest as a District Councillor as well as the Ward Councillor. He added that he was embarrassed to say that he knew nothing about the tree planting until after the trees had been planted. Cllr Brading added that none of the District Councillors had been advised that the trees were going to be planted and they were as cross about this lack of consultation as anyone else. He added that District Councillor Brian Norman has been in contact with TRDC about this matter. The District Councillors said that they would set up a meeting with the TRDC officers concerned.

It was considered that as the Parish Council maintains this area it would have been courteous at the very least for TRDC to advise us of their plans to plant new trees, if not to consult us on this matter. The fact that TRDC had planted in an area of the Orchard contrary to the Management Plan was also of concern to Members. The Clerk advised that the matter had been brought to his attention by way of a flurry of emails between a TRDC officer and a Parish Councillor. The Chairman stated that if a Parish Councillor contacts an officer at TRDC they should let the Committee, the Ward Cllr and the Clerk know. It was suggested that the Parish Council make representations to TRDC to complement the views the District Councillors would express during their meeting with officers.

Cllr Edmunds who prepared the supporting paper for this Agenda item thanked the District Councillors for their support on this matter. It was asked if a copy of the Management Plan could be circulated to Parish councillors.

Resolved

- that the E&A Committee recognise the advantages of being consulted about planting within the Orchard contrary to the Management Plan;
- that the E&A agree to request Mr Clerk writes to the appropriate officers within TRDC expressing our concern that we were not consulted and that the planting is contrary to the Management Plan and
- that, in the same letter, a request is made that we are consulted with regard to other planting initiatives within Stones Orchard and surrounding areas and that our views and opinions are received, considered and acted on by the appropriate officers within TRDC and that the Croxley Green Parish Council is involved with other such initiatives within our Parish boundary.

EA871/12 Parish boundary Walk Project

This item was discussed after EA866/12 (Representations from the Public).

EA872/12 Tree Bulletin

There were no tree works to note.

EA873/12 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.41pm.