

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 8.00pm

Present Cllr Edmunds – In the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council

Cllrs Brading, Dann, Ridley, Seeley and Shafe

Voting Members: 6

Not Present: Cllr Vane

EA977/13 Apologies for Absence
No apologies had been received.

EA978/13 Declarations of Interest
The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting.

EA979/13 Representations from the Public
There were no public present.

EA980/13 Minutes
Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 July 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

EA981/13 Matters Arising
EA975/13 – Active Works List. It was asked whether the litter bins on the Green had been emptied by the Parish Council during the short absence of the Ranger on sick leave. The Clerk advised that in fact the Ranger did empty the bins as a priority upon his first day back although the Council's contractors were on standby if required. It was also asked as to the costs for the contractors service in comparison to the offer of assistance from TRDC. It was pointed out that the costs would be shown in the Council's accounts.

EA982/13 Active Works List
The Chairman introduced this item and advised that he had been considering submitting a paper to the Committee to discuss how items can be added or subtracted from the generic Active Works List. The Chairman continued that having spoken with the Clerk, he had been advised that as the Active Works List was a regular and ongoing Agenda item for this Committee that it would be appropriate to discuss this matter under the Active Works List Agenda item.

The Chairman added that following the recent events when matters such as watering the new oak tree and watering the new apple trees in Stones Orchard had not been on the Works schedule, this had not been regularly done. The Chairman continued that the watering of the oak tree had now been resolved as a resident had offered to do this but there needs to be flexibility in adding to the Works schedule.

It was pointed out that the Council does have a water bowser and this should have been deployed. The Clerk advised that the bowser is on a trailer and when full it is extremely heavy and could not be manhandled by one Ranger to attach to the Land Rover.

It was suggested that whilst there is only one Ranger perhaps consideration should be given to the use of temporary agency personnel to assist with these sorts of mundane issues. The Clerk noted the point and pointed out that the Council's contractors had been assisting with the watering regime particularly in respect of the Croxley Green Welcome

Signs.

The Clerk also added that there is no difficulty in adding or subtracting from the generic Active Works List and that all that is required is for Members to contact him about it providing that the request is reasonable and falls within the Council's remit. The Clerk added that he would also email other Councillors about the mechanism for works to be added or subtracted from the list.

A Cllr stated that the opportunity had been taken recently to inspect the Ranger's daily work sheet and it had been noticed that there appeared to be no feedback arising from any inspections of areas that had been undertaken from the previous day. The Clerk advised that the inspections were intended to identify the necessary work that needed to be undertaken so that those works could then be integrated into the work programme. The Clerk added that the conversion from inspection to active works should be an automatic process that would be identified by the work undertaken in the subsequent daily work sheets but he noted the point and would address this issue.

The Chairman commented that as and when a new Senior Ranger was appointed in discussion with the Clerk it would be the intent for the Ranger to be present at this Committee meeting from time to time e.g. once a quarter.

A brief discussion took place about the current Senior Ranger vacancy and it was pointed out that as the year was approaching a dormant growth period, perhaps there was no need for a second Ranger at this time. The Clerk noted the point.

A Cllr noted that there was a Staff Training day on the Works List. The Clerk advised that this would have been a Ranger to Ranger training day but under the current circumstance with only one Ranger this would not be done although the Clerk may use the opportunity to use this time with the Ranger.

A Cllr raised the matter of strimming around the base of the new trees in Stones Orchard which had not been undertaken. The Clerk advised that with only one Ranger there had been a lot of work for one person and that as the Ranger is now on sick leave for two weeks, it was the intention to brief the Council's contractor accordingly.

Resolved:

- That the Active Works List for September be noted.

EA983/13 Stones Orchard update and Budget 2013-14 (£3,000)

The Chairman introduced this item and both he and Cllr Dann declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter being Vice Chairman and Chairman respectively of The Friends of Stones Orchard.

The Chairman asked Cllr Dann to elaborate. Cllr Dann stated that there had been a number of initial meetings but The Friends of Stones Orchard had now been established with the main functions of promoting and improving the Orchard over and above the current basic management plan of the grass and hedge areas and to raise awareness of the Orchard. Cllr Dann added that a competition was being considered but no details were available as yet and a bank account would be opened in the near future in order to receive donations and contributions to the future maintenance of the Orchard.

Cllr Dann added that there were 5 Committee Members for The Friends of Stones Orchard and there were 5 other residents so far who were taking an active interest but it was hoped that with better promotion of the group and of Stones Orchard itself this would greatly increase.

It was suggested that further information about this could be placed on the Parish Council web site. The Clerk stated our web site already contains a section about Stones Orchard and that if the necessary additional script was provided this indeed could be added to our existing section.

Cllr Dann stated that it was not the intent of The Friends of Stones Orchard to significantly change the Orchard given that it is an historic orchard and that it was certainly not the

intent to make the Orchard into a 'community orchard' in the way that has been done in Chorleywood. Cllr Dann continued that the intent was to protect and enhance the existing environment of Stones Orchard.

A discussion ensued about updating the existing management plan for the orchard but this was not being taken forward at the present time given the Parish Council's interest regarding land acquisition.

Cllr Dann advised that there is a lot of data available about the orchard in terms of tree species and an audit has also been made of the plant species but as yet no audit on fauna. The information that is held is in different formats and it is necessary to pull all the information together into a working document.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Dann for the update and said that although the Parish Council does have a budget for the Orchard for this year, from what has been said in the update it may be premature to discuss specific proposals until matters are further advanced. The Chairman added however, that perhaps a 'wish list' should be developed for more detailed consideration at some future time and Members are invited to submit items to go onto that list.

EA984/13 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.