

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 8.00pm

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

Cllrs Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Ridley, Shafe and Vane

Voting Members: 7 (reducing to 6 during EA799/11)

Not Present: Cllr Getkahn

In attendance: Cllr Brand

Public: 5

EA789/11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Dann.

EA790/11 Declarations of Interest

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

EA791/11 Representations from the Public

Representations were made by two members of the public and by the Clerk on behalf of another member of public who could not attend the meeting but had submitted his comments in writing.

Ms Pomfret made representations regarding (EA796/11) Nectar/Oasis areas, suggesting that before creating new sites, the management plan for Stones Orchard and the Green should be revisited. Ms Pomfret added that for the past two years a different management plan appears to have been introduced regarding the grass cutting to the detriment of the wildflowers in these locations and resulting in these valuable wildlife areas being turned into parkland.

The Chairman pointed out that Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) had undertaken the cut and bale of the meadow grass too early and without the Parish Council's knowledge. The Chairman asked the Clerk to write to TRDC asking them to advise us of dates in future.

Mr Saxon made representations regarding two items, firstly EA799/11 (The Green/Stones Orchard Contract with TRDC). He stated that the figures quoted in the supporting paper were a nonsense. He added that he believed Cllr Ridley (during the time when he was not a Cllr) tried to get a referendum about the future of the Parish Council and this was nothing short of him trying to reduce the Parish Council's work to a rump. Mr Saxon then produced two photographs of verges in Croxley Green demonstrating examples of the poor quality of the work of contractors. Mr Saxon also asked how many of Cllr Ridley's constituents in Croxley South had asked him to put this item on the agenda.

Mr Saxon's second matter related to EA800/11 (Use of felled products to create benches, tables and posts). Mr Saxon reported that the Rangers do not undertake any arboreal work and TRDC have not undertaken active woodland management for a number of years either and any wood that has fallen has done so because it has rotted. He stated that as a resident who uses the woods every day, he would not wish to see them turned in to some form of pixie's palace where gnomes and elves can while their time away whittling wood. He added that fallen wood should be left in situ to encourage the multitude of animals, plants and fungi that naturally occur.

Mrs Hanscomb had attended the meeting on behalf of Mr Litherland who had

submitted written representations prior to the meeting. The Clerk read out Mr Litherland's representations in which he stated that he has a great deal of experience in studying wildlife and wildflowers in particular. He added that the Orchard should be brimming with wildflowers and accompanying insects and birds etc and this was the case up until a few years ago. He added that the bio diversity has been severely reduced due to too frequent mowing and over management of this area and the early cut of the meadow grass by TRDC was very destructive. Mr Litherland continued that the Green is old, unimproved pasture and is therefore brimming with wildflowers but it is being cut like a municipal park. He requested that the previous cutting regime is resumed and proposed that the Rangers are sent on a course to help with their knowledge of habitat management. It was further added that a team of interested people could get together with the Rangers to walk around the Green and Stones Orchard to point out suggestions for improved management.

The Chairman was asked if EA795/11 (Photographs of Croxley Green) could be moved to the next item.

Resolved:

- that item EA795/11 be moved up the agenda to this point.

EA795/11 Photographs of Croxley Green

This matter was introduced by the Chairman and Mr Williams of Croxley Camera Club circulated a list of the sites that had been proposed. He said that it would be possible to photograph at all the locations at the specified intervals. He advised that members of the Camera Club were ready to start taking the photographs as soon as possible. He requested that the Clerk writes a letter of permission in the event that the photographers are challenged and also that the project is lodged with the police. Permissions may also be required and Mr Williams stated that he was happy to seek certain permissions but that the Clerk would need to obtain more formal permissions ie from developers and site managers of building sites etc.

Resolved:

- that 'A Year in Croxley' photography project begins as soon as possible as detailed in Mr Williams paper (see appendix on page 5).

EA792/11 Minutes

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 July 2011 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

EA793/11 Matters Arising

EA780/11 (Active Works List). The Clerk was asked what was meant by 'wish list' in relation to the bench on the Green. The Clerk clarified that it was something we had hoped to do with TRDC's approval.

The Clerk was also asked about the request from the Guild of Sport for the Rangers to cut their field. The Clerk advised that he had been approached by Ms Wells and his view was that we use the tractor and cut the grass given the grant allocated in lieu of works in 2008 was not taken up.

EA781/11 (Dog Waste). The Clerk was asked if the dog waste company had been changed and the Clerk advised that it was next on his 'to do' list.

EA783/11 (Stones Orchard). The Clerk was asked for an update and he informed those present that at the July Council meeting he reported that he had been making enquiries into Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and the GIS used by

TRDC cannot be shared by us as it runs on servers. However, the Clerk informed those present that there is a package that can be run on the computers online and he would bring this matter to Council in due course. The Clerk also stated that the Arboricultural & Woodland Officer at TRDC was currently undertaking a tree survey within the district although we have a complete listing of 1,014 street trees which was carried out a couple of years ago.

EA786/11 (Earth Mound in Baldwins Lane Park). The Clerk was asked whether Cllr Seabourne had been in contact with the Parish Council about the policing of this location. The Clerk replied that he had not been in contact but that the PCSOs were aware of the issue and monitor this location. When asked what was underneath the mound, the Clerk stated that he had been advised it was an old pavilion. However, others present at the meeting believed it to be an old air raid shelter and it was considered that this local knowledge may be more accurate.

EA794/11 Active Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and Members were referred to the active works list for September. It was pointed out that the daily tasks for the multi-sports court at Barton Way and the weekly emptying of bins at the Green and Stones Orchard had been duplicated. The Clerk advised that Cllr Dann had asked if the Rangers could put right the finger post between the alley and the car park and this had been omitted from the September works.

EA795/11 Photographs of Croxley Green

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting after EA791/11.

EA796/11 Nectar/Oasis Areas

This item was introduced by the Chairman who asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley referred members to his supporting paper and a discussion ensued. Some possible sites suggested included the roundabout at Two Bridges, the Green at the front of Croxley House, parts of Stones Orchard, land to the rear of Killingdown Farm (Little Green Lane), the second village green as well as along the canal towpath. It was generally considered a very plausible idea but one which would need permissions and proper management.

Resolved:

- that the Clerk contacts all Cllrs and Croxley Green Residents' Association to ask for suggestions of potential sites and for a list of such sites to be compiled.

EA797/11 Croxley Rail Link Viaduct

This item was introduced by the Chairman who asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley referred members to his supporting paper and stated that the viaduct may or may not be built and asked if the Parish Council should find out who is building it. Members generally considered that at this stage there was no certainty that it would even go ahead and this proposal was a little premature.

Resolved:

- that this matter is deferred until a more appropriate time.

EA798/11 Dickinson Square

This item was introduced by the Chairman and the Clerk reminded Members that this matter had been raised by a local resident. Cllr Edmunds declared an interest as he is a resident of Dickinson Square. A discussion followed with the general view that the Square would be better cared for by the Parish Council, although if the Parish Council intend to do anything other than maintain and tidy the Square then the

residents should be consulted.

Resolved:

- that the Committee recommends to Council that the Parish Council should become involved in maintaining Dickinson Square at no cost to TRDC.

EA799/11 The Green/Stones Orchard Contract with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC)

Cllr Vane left during this discussion at 9.30pm.

This item was introduced by the Chairman who asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley referred members to his supporting paper and a discussion ensued. Cllrs found the figures quoted in the paper confusing and the Clerk confirmed that they were actually incorrect. It was considered that TRDC would not maintain these areas as well as the Parish Council do even though the Management Plan has not been adhered to over the last two years. It was stated that perhaps there should be a meeting with TRDC to discuss matters.

Members were reminded that the proposal was to get a breakdown of the costs involved but it was felt that when the Parish Council tendered for the contract these figures were not discussed and Cllrs wondered if there was an underlying reason for this request; if they were calculated, what then?

It was proposed that the maintenance of the Green and Stones Orchard remains the responsibility of the Parish Council but the Management Plan must be revisited and adhered to.

It was counter proposed that Committee request that the Clerk presents to the September Council a full breakdown of costs associated with the contract so that council can decide on the appropriate course of action. There was no seconder for this proposal.

Resolved:

- that the maintenance of the Green and Stones Orchard remains the responsibility of the Parish Council but the Management Plan must be revisited and adhered to.

EA800/11 Use of felled products to create benches, tables and posts

This item was introduced by the Chairman who asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley advised that Croxley Green Residents' Association had a stack of wood for benches. Members felt that if they wanted to build benches that was up to them and it was clarified that the wood they had was formed and ready to be made into benches. A brief discussion followed whereby it was pointed out that the Rangers were not skilled in bench making and it was also felt that the woods were not the place for a metropolitan park.

Resolved:

- that no further action be taken.

EA801/11 Tree Bulletin

The supplement of tree works circulated with the Agenda was noted.

EA802/11 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.41pm.

A year in Croxley

by Steve Williams

Proposed sites

The Green

Shots taken on a two week basis, plus any events or functions.

The Allotments

Shots taken on a two week basis, plus after any adverse weather ie. snow.

Common Moor/lock gate

Shot around this area will be more frequent, probably weekly.

All Saints Church Yard

Shots taken on a monthly basis.

The school sports building

Shots taken on a two week basis depending on building progress and access.

Oak tree on the green

Shots taken to follow seasonal changes.

New Road shops

Shots taken on a two week basis, plus any events or functions.

Extra sites

These will be visited less often

Stones Orchard

The Christmas house (Lancing way)

The pond opposite Killingdown Farm

New housing developments

Croxley Great Barn

Croxley Hall woods

Buddleia Walk

Initial Requirements

To undertake this project I will need a letter of permission from the Parish Council authorising me to take pictures on their behalf. This will also need to be lodged with the local police along with my details and the locations I will be visiting.

Permission (photographic releases) will also need to be obtained in advance for me to be able to photograph private property ie. school, allotments, church yard, new building developments etc.