

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 271st MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 22 DECEMBER 2011

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

Cllrs Baldwin, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Martin, Mitchell, Ridley, Seeley and Shafe

Voting Members: 11

Not Present: Cllr Vane

Public: 5

The Chairman opened the meeting and it was proposed that under Standing Order 9.1.6 the Order of Business be altered to take Agenda item CC1010/11 Budgets, last. The proposal was agreed.

CC1004/11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dann, Jordan, Getkahn and Wynne-Jones.

CC1005/11 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting. Cllrs Bennett and Mitchell declared an interest in any discussion on budgets for the Croxley Green Society (Revels and Croxfest).

CC1006/11 Representations from the Public

The following representations were made regarding Agenda items CC1011/11 Cost of Implementing the Green and Stones Orchard Contract and CC1012/11 Mechanism for Residents to call for a Referendum.

The member of the public stated that he was not surprised that these two Agenda items submitted by Cllr Ridley were on the Agenda given his protracted solitary campaign to abolish the Parish Council. He continued that interpreting what Cllr Ridley was saying about maintenance of the Green and Stones Orchard is that he considers that the Council employees are worthless and that their hard work to maintain the Green and Stones Orchard to a very high standard was also worthless and that Cllr Ridley cares little for the good of Croxley.

On the matter of the proposal about the mechanism for holding a Referendum the member of the public said that again Cllr Ridley was saying that all the efforts of current and past Councillors and what the Council is doing and has done in the past for the benefit of residents were worthless and pointless. The member of the public continued that given Cllr Ridley's attitude he should apologise to his fellow Councillors and resign as a Councillor forthwith.

Another member of the public expressed the view that information about Local Government is available on the HM Government web site and that interested members of the public should source information there.

Cllr Brand expressed the view that he was tired of members of the public turning up to meetings and criticising Cllr Ridley whereupon it was stated that members of the public are quite entitled to attend a meeting to express their views.

CC1007/11 Minutes

The Chairman called for a proposer for the Minutes of the last meeting but a Councillor stated that in his view some comments he made at the last meeting had not been recorded in the Minutes. The Chairman pointed out that the Minutes are not

intended to be a verbatim report of everything that had been said at the meeting. It was pointed out that the Minutes had been available since 29 November yet nothing had been brought to the attention of the Clerk until now and no alternative wording was being put forward at this meeting.

It was proposed that the Minutes as written be accepted and a Recorded Vote was called for. Those in favour of accepting the Minutes as written were Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Martin, Mitchell, Ridley, Seeley and Shafe (10). Those against the proposal was Cllr Brand (1).

Resolved

- that the Minutes of the 270th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 24 November 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1008/11

Matters Arising

CC994/11 Matters Arising; (CC982/11 Matters Arising; CC963/11 Matters Arising; CC946/11 Matters Arising; CC926/11 Matters Arising; CC912.2/11 Matters Arising; EA751/11) **Posts on the Green**. The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that work to install the new posts will take place after the Christmas break.

CC994/11 Matters Arising; (CC982/11 Matters Arising; CC963/11 Matters Arising; CC946/11 Matters Arising; CC926/11 Matters Arising; CC912.2/11 Matters Arising; EA750/11) **British Waterways Adopter Scheme**. The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that the Adoption Agreement had now been signed by both the Council and British Waterways and an inspection will be undertaken early in the New Year to identify necessary actions that need to be undertaken in association with volunteer groups.

CC984/11 Matters Arising; (CC982/11 Matters Arising; CC964.4/11 Matters Arising; PD1626/1) **Street Lighting**. A Councillor advised that it was unlikely that HCC would consider any alternative part-night lighting scheme than that they are already intending to progress with.

CC999/11 **Parish Councillors' Surgeries**. Cllr Brading advised that he had discussed the possibility of sharing surgeries with Parish Councillors but that there was no support for the idea given that the District Councillor Surgeries were, in the main, a political issue.

CC1000/11 **Litter Bins on the Green and Stones Orchard**. Cllr Brading reported that he had spoken with Peter Brooker about this matter who saw no reason why TRDC could not undertake emptying the litter bins. Cllr Brading said that perhaps the way forward would be for the Clerk to contact Peter Brooker to discuss detail.

CC1009/11

Committee Reports

CC1009.1/11

Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 1 November 2011

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 1 November 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1009.2/11

Any matters arising

EA795/11 Photographs of Croxley Green. The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that the matter had stalled whilst the Council contacts the Camera Club.

CC1009.3/11 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 2 November and to note that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 16 November 2011 was cancelled.

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 2 November 2011 be adopted as a report of the meetings and that it be noted that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 16 November 2011 was cancelled.

CC1009.4/11 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1009.5/11 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 10 November 2011

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 10 November 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1009.6/11 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1010/11 Budgets 2012/13 – change of order of business as proposed at the beginning of the meeting and will be discussed last, see below.

CC1011/11 Cost of Implementing the Contract for the Green and Stones Orchard

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that TRDC had said that it would only cost £1,600 by way of Special Expenses to maintain the Green and Stones Orchard.

The Chairman pointed out that this is not the full picture and there can be no comparison between what TRDC said they would do for £1,600 and what the Parish Council does throughout the year in maintaining both The Green and Stones Orchard.

For the benefit of newer Councillors, the Clerk gave a resume of the history of the current contract with TRDC following their decision to put out to Tender all the groundworks maintenance within Three Rivers. The Parish Council were unsuccessful in its submission at the pre-tendering stage and as a consequence were not able to submit a formal tender for the maintenance of The Green and Stones Orchard. The successful tenderer for the groundworks maintenance Contract was TRDC Direct Services. As a result of public pressure, a Petition signed by Croxley Green residents and the Parish Council itself, an arrangement was ultimately agreed with TRDC that the Parish Council would be contracted to maintain the Green and Stones Orchard. The Clerk explained that he went into negotiations with TRDC with the actual costs of this maintenance and eventually it was agreed that TRDC would 'pay' the Parish Council £1,600 for its maintenance of the two areas but would 'charge' £1,600 for the cost of undertaking the meadow grass cut once a year i.e. there was a zero effect. The 'zero' effect was agreed between TRDC and the Parish Council.

The Clerk for the benefit of members advised that the actual costs for maintaining The Green and Stones Orchard throughout the year, excluding the meadow grass cut, was £15,003.55. The Clerk added this was the approximate initial figures he started with when negotiating with TRDC. The Clerk also added that his estimate for one meadow grass cut per year had been £1,500. The Clerk stated that the figures he had mentioned were based on commercial rates for maintaining a grassed area of 78,200 sq m and associated hedge works. The figures also included the costs associated with the use of the equipment used.

On receiving the information on the costs, Cllr Ridley withdrew his motion.

Resolved:

- no further action

CC1012/11

Mechanism for residents to call for a Referendum

The Chairman introduced this item by stating that at no time have members of the public turned up to meetings to make representations about calling for a referendum and he could not understand Cllr Ridley's view on this matter.

It was pointed out that the language used by Cllr Ridley in his supporting paper was poor and denigrating and with the emergence of the Community Plan residents can express their views about the future. Cllr Brading stated that in all his years as a District and Parish Councillor at no time has such a subject been raised with him whilst subjects like speeding, parking, planning and dog mess on streets were the matters of importance to residents.

One Councillor stated that a number of people think the Parish Council is a waste of time whilst another Councillor responded by saying that the only complaints he has received when he meets residents is in relation to the background of one particular Councillor, why that Councillor was sitting on the Council and why was he wishing to bring the Council into disrepute.

The Clerk read out a statement from a Councillor who was unable to attend and had wished his views on this matter to be expressed. The statement stated that a referendum is not a matter for the Parish Council and it is the responsibility of people to find whatever information they need. The statement continued that the Council has a duty to discuss matters of relevance to the community and not waste time and money on pointless discussions such as this.

The proposal that the Council contacts NALC (HAPTC) about the procedures for residents to call a parish referendum and that the information is placed on our website and in the next edition of the Parish Pump magazine was put. A recorded vote was requested. Councillors for the proposal were Cllrs Brand and Ridley (2). Councillors against the proposal were Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Isard-Brown, Martin, Mitchell, Seeley and Shafe (9).

Resolved:

- that the Council contacts NALC (HAPTC) about the procedures for residents to call a parish referendum and that the information is placed on our website and in the next edition of the Parish Pump magazine was not agreed.

CC1013/11

Update on S137 Grant for Croxley Guild of Sports and Social Club Cricket Pitch

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Brand to elaborate. Cllr Brand stated that the fund raising target was £1,500 which to date £950 has been raised. Cllr Brand continued that the Guild were hoping to hold an 'antiques market' possibly in May 2012 to endeavour to raise further funds.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Brand for the update.

It was proposed at this point that the Council recess for approximately 5 minutes. The proposal was agreed.

CC1010/11

Budgets 2012/13

It was decided that the initial discussion on budgets should focus on the subscription to the Croxley Green Society (£5,500). Cllr Bennett declared an interest in this matter and asked the Vice Chairman of the Council, Cllr Wendy Shafe, to chair this part of the meeting. Cllr Mitchell also declared an interest.

A detailed discussion ensued about the finances of Croxfest and an estimated cost analysis for the 2012 event was circulated to Members (see attached). A representative from the Croxley Green Society (CGS) was available to answer Members questions. It was noted that the cost of the stage hire was higher than the 2011 event to which it was stated that the contractor had absorbed the VAT costs in 2011. Members enquired whether the Society had applied for any other grants to support the event. In reply the CGS representative said that it was a little early to apply for grants but an application had not been made to TRDC last year given that the as an application for a licence to use the Green had been applied for the Society did not wish to 'muddy' the waters by applying for a grant at the same time. It was noted that the first aid costs were estimated to be more in 2012 than 2011 to which is was reported that the 2011 lower cost was a one off charge for the first event. A few other minor points of detail were discussed whereupon it was proposed that the Croxley Green Society Membership Subscription of £5,500 be included into the Council's budget.

Resolved

- that £5,500 be included in the budget as a subscription to the Croxley Green Society.

Cllr Bennett retook Chairmanship of the meeting.

It was suggested that consideration should be given to calling an Extraordinary Meeting of Council prior to the full Council meeting at the end of January so that the budgets can be discussed in more detail prior to having to make the final decision. The Chairman said that he would give consideration to this idea.

A discussion ensued regarding the Village Hall funding versus Special Expenses and the budget proposal for a feasibility study for a new village community centre was raised.

One Councillor pointed out that the current draft level of the budget/Precept was showing nearly 15% increase at a time when people were having difficult financial times. The Chairman pointed out that a number of Councillors had put forward budget proposals and accordingly it was not unexpected that a request for inclusion of finance into the budget would result in an increase in overall terms. The Chairman continued that it would be for Members to decide whether any potential increases were outweighed by the benefits the proposals would bring to residents. It was commented that the draft proposals to date equated to no more than the equivalent cost of a packet of cigarettes per household. It was suggested that any new proposals could be offset if possible by cuts and savings elsewhere including the amount of monies which are set aside for vehicle and equipment renewal.

One Councillor stated that when increases are put into percentage terms it may sound a lot but in terms of actual pounds the figure is not a lot given the potential benefits to residents in creating a good local environment for residents to live in. It was generally agreed that there needs to be a balance in value for money and what residents get for that money. It was proposed that no new budget items be submitted so that detailed discussions can take place through the Committee meetings in January to finalise the budget.

Resolved

- that no new budget items be submitted.

CC1014/11

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm.

CC1010/11

Croxley Green Society
Croxfest 2012

Estimated cost analysis of staging event on 8th September 2012
(Figures based on 2011 cost plus known increases)

Stage Hire	£4500
TRDC Hire of Grounds	£ 150
Toilets	£1200
Promotional Material	£ 350
TPL Insurance	£ 90
First Aid Cover	£ 300
Crowd Control Barriers	£ 450
Hire of Traffic Signs	£ 50
Staffing Costs	£ 500
Hire of Tables / Chairs etc	£ 150
Total Estimated cost	£8640

Mark Saxon

Mark Saxon
Event Organiser