

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL
ON THURSDAY 29 APRIL 2010

Present: Cllr Birch in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs Bains, Bennett, Brading, Brand, Dann, Hollands, Martin, Saxon, Seabourne,
Seeley, Shafe and Vassiliou

Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllrs C Jefford, Norman and Wynne-Jones

In Attendance: There were five members of the public present

AP43/10 The Chairman welcomes members of the press and public

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present to the Annual Parish Meeting.

AP44/10 Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 30 April 2009

The Clerk advised those present that in accordance with good practice, the Minutes of the last Parish Meeting had already been signed off on 25 June 2009, that being the first full Council meeting following the preparation of the Minutes after the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting.

AP45/10 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

AP46/10 To receive the Chairman's Report

Cllr Birch as Chairman of the Council, delivered the Chairman's Report for the year, see attached.

AP47/10 To receive the following Committee Reports

AP47.1/10 Planning & Development Committee

Cllr Bennett, as Chairman of the Committee, delivered his report for the year, see attached.

AP47.2/10 Environment & Amenity Committee

Cllr Martin, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, delivered Cllr Norman's report for the year, see attached.

AP47.3/10 Finance & Administration Committee

Cllr Birch as Chairman of the Committee, delivered the report for the year, see attached.

AP48/10 To receive the Parish Council's Accounts for year ending 31 March 2009

The Clerk advised that in accordance with our statutory requirements the 2009 accounts were made available to the public from 18 May 2009 to 15 June 2009 between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday. The Annual Return to the Audit Commissioner's External Auditor was signed by the External Auditor on 11 August 2009. The Accounts and Audit Report have been on our website since 27 August 2009 and no enquiries had been received. The accounts show that at the end of that year, we carried forward just over £194,000 into the current year.

AP49/10

To consider any other interest in the Parish

One person spoke to say that he was pleased that the Chairman had raised the matter of the Village Plan and that representatives of the Keep Croxley Green Group, the Residents Association and the Revels would be pleased to offer support. The matter of the Three Rivers District Council Local Development Framework Consultation was raised also and that the Parish Council should perhaps avail itself to a stronger input into such consultations in future.

AP50/10

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.28pm.



Chairman's Report Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 29 April 2010

From July 2009 the workings of Croxley Green Parish Council have been available to the public through our website. All minutes, agendas, policies, accounts and Councillor details are available at the click of a button. If residents do not have computer facilities documents are on display at Croxley Green Library. Since the site went live we have around 1500 visits a month from people wanting to access information about the Council. This has helped to cut down on the amount of paper being distributed from our offices – saving resources, time and money.

Croxley Green is a wonderful place to live and one area that makes our village special is Croxley Hall Woods. This historic woodland is maintained, under contract, by the Parish Rangers. Their knowledge and skills ensure that the woods are protected for our enjoyment and for future generations. I do hope that residents will take advantage of this valuable amenity and visit it through the seasons, especially bluebell time.

During 2009 the maintenance of The Green and Stones Orchard was the subject of furious debate in the Council Chamber of Three Rivers District Council. It had been proposed that the open spaces of the district should be looked after by one contractor which would mean the Parish Council would be excluded from tendering for the work. Luckily, common sense prevailed and the Green and Stones Orchard remain in the care of our Rangers.

The young people of Croxley Green are being encouraged to look after their environment and become self sufficient through the Parish Council support for gardening clubs in our local schools. I was delighted to be able to visit two junior schools during the year to award the prizes for the tallest sunflower and largest pumpkin. Our Rangers visit the schools regularly to help the children with the cultivation of their plots. I am very pleased to report that we are now working with Rickmansworth School on a new initiative to establish an allotment to grow fruit and vegetables. Our local children have also benefited from the new adventure playground constructed in the Barton Way recreation ground with money from Three Rivers District Council and Croxley Green Parish Council.

My Charity of the Year also focused on the young people of the village by supporting the Croxley Green Scout groups. Our fundraising events included a Treasure Hunt with participants from a wide of ages, a photographic competition which demonstrated amazing talent by the competitors and our quiz which baffled some of the brains of the village. I would like to thank everyone that supported our efforts to raise funds for this very worthwhile cause.

As part of our partnership and community involvement we are supporting the Croxley Revels and Flowers for Croxley. We are pleased that we now have achieved Village Hall status for the Croxley Green Community Centre and we are working with the Community Association to strengthen that relationship. Our commitment to making Croxley Green a safe and healthy place to live and work is demonstrated through our continuing funding of the Police Community Support Officers who have a high profile throughout the village. The Parish Council also encourages clean streets, footpaths and open spaces by providing dog mess bags and 42 dog bins around the village.

Croxley Green Parish Council has a duty as an employer to protect and support its employees. As part of best practice we have introduced policies and procedures, and with professional advice, we will continue to update our working arrangements. During the last year we have introduced a Vexatious Complainant Policy and implemented it by placing an individual on our Awareness Register. We are mindful of our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act but this action

has enabled us to operate free of the demands and stress of multiple emails, numerous telephone calls and visits.

Thousands of residents of Croxley Green joined us to celebrate the arrival of 2010 with the Parish Council Firework Display but this time with the added attraction of music. We hope that the event planned for this New Year's Eve will prove just as popular and spectacular.

Preserving the character of Croxley Green but also improving our surroundings is a vital part of our role so we will be forming links and developing communication channels with organisations like Croxley Residents' Association, Three Rivers District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and other interested parties to work towards formulating a Village Plan that is realistic and achievable.

Cllr Birch
Chairman



Planning & Development Committee Report

Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 29 April 2010

Fellow Councillors, electors of the Parish, it gives me great pleasure to present to you my report for the year, on behalf of the Planning & Development Committee.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting there have been 24 P & D meetings scheduled. As you may be aware this committee consists of five Members of the Council, as two Members have declined to serve. I therefore thank the serving members for their diligent attendance as there was only one occasion when the meeting could take place as it would not have been quorate. The only other occasion when a meeting was cancelled was due to the January snows. I would also like to thank Cllr Bains and Cllr Hollands for chairing the three meetings that I was unable to attend during the year.

The functions allocated to this Committee include planning, transport, road safety, village appraisal and sign posting. In our consultative capacity for planning within Croxley Green, 136 applications have been considered with our recommendations being forwarded to Three Rivers District Council. Over this period there were only 13 occasions where Three Rivers District Council have disagreed with the recommendations given.

The Committee has followed closely the separate Section 106 planning agreements, where funds will be set aside to upgrade both the Harvey Road and Shell zebra crossings on the Watford Road. We will continue to monitor both of the developments and to liaise with District and County Councils, to ensure these upgrades do take place.

For the next financial year the Committee has budgeted £100 for the maintenance of the two bus shelters the Council is responsible for on the Green. £6900 has been budgeted for the continuation of the very welcome and appreciated Community Bus service. Also a figure of £1000 has been put aside so that additional Salt Bins can be provided for the residents of Croxley Green this coming winter.

Following Tesco's successful appeal we have liaised closely with TRDC to ensure that the Parish Council has valid input as to how the £29,000, agreed for the provision of open space, is used.

The Committee continue to liaise with Three Rivers District Council to ensure that the Yorke Road School Building is not left to fall into a dilapidated state.

Input has also been given by the Committee for Public Rights of Way, Bridleways, Highways Works and, not least, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferences.

All in all quite a busy year for the Committee.

Cllr Bennett
Chairman



Environment & Amenity Committee Report

Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 29 April 2010

The newly formed Environment and Amenity Committee were duly co-ordinated towards the future events in the summer of 2009. The mature residents of Croxley had their day trip to Eastbourne; the report in the Parish Pump underlines its success with our residents and many letters of thanks were received. The Revels endorsed the past activities of the Parish Council especially towards looking after our local environment, likewise many thanks to our Junior Council for their ideas and support through the year. The Garden Competition was supported by our usual gardening enthusiasts within the village but due to the inclement weather the prize giving has had to be postponed.

The new year, 2010, staged the opening of the new Barton Way play area, the Parish Council were pleased to act in partnership with Three Rivers District Council not only with a financial contribution, but also with hands on research carried out by Parish Councillors Cllr Shafe and Cllr Martin, so that they were able to advise on the type of equipment to be considered.

August 2009 saw a new member to our staffing team Jamie Marlow, who has already shown his capabilities in keeping the village up to the rural standard that we have been proud to maintain.

The Council's E & A budget was reviewed and without loss of events we have managed to keep the budget within previous years' expenditure. At this period of events, the forthcoming programme for 2010 can be either reviewed or altered to try new ideas. After due debate, it was decided to allow the Garden Competition to lapse this year to allow another format of a similar competition to be considered for 2011 to hopefully encompass new abilities within the community.

Even though we have monthly meetings, our Committee members involve themselves in researching many aspects of the Village's environment to see how we can improve Croxley Green.

As Chairman of the E & A I would like to thank the Committee members and the Council staff for their support towards our main goal in looking after Croxley Green.

Cllr Norman
Chairman



Finance & Administration Committee Report

Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 29 April 2010

The Finance and Administration Committee have the responsibility of scrutinising the Parish Council accounts and making recommendations to the Council regarding the governance and management of the Council. The members consist of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Environment & Amenity and Planning & Development Committees.

By meeting on the second Thursday of the month the committee is able to go through the accounts for the previous month and compare against the budget.

During 2009/10 the following matters were considered by the Finance and Administration Committee:

- Implementation of web site;
- Review of standing orders;
- Staffing structure working group;
- Investigating professional employment advice service;
- Setting budget for 2010/11;
- Community Village Hall works;
- Provision of roadside salt in adverse weather;
- Introduction of policies and procedures;
- Recommending grant applications;
- Discussing business planning process;
- Agreeing purchasing policy;
- Replacement of missing village signs.

The Finance and Administration Committee will continue to address staffing and employment matters, consider the use of external specialist consultants, introduce policies and procedures and decide on a business planning process.

Cllr Birch
Chairman