

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 280th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2012

Present: Cllr Bennett in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Administrative Officer

Cllrs Baldwin, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Martin, Mitchell, Ridley, Seeley, Shafe, Vane and Wynne-Jones (Cllr Ridley left the meeting at 8.33pm after item CC1159/12).

Public: 6 (5 left at 8.35pm after item CC1159/12)

Voting Members: 13 (reduced to 12 after item CC1159/12)

CC1147/12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dann, Isard-Brown and Jordan.

CC1148/12 Declarations of Interest by Members

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

CC1149/12 Representations from the Public

Representations were made by two members of public who fully supported item CC1159/12 (Parish Council Acquisition of The Green, Stones Orchard and the Sports Ground). It was stated that the Parish Council have done great things and that key staff would be on standby and this was the whole idea of the Localism Bill. It was pointed out that TRDC spend money creating plans and then there is no 'doing'. Councillors were thanked for the work they do voluntarily for the benefit of Croxley Green.

Representations were also made about the Community Plan - the questionnaire is very close to completion and Councillors were asked to help with encouraging residents to complete and return the questionnaire.

Thanks were expressed for Cllr Bennett and Cllr Edmund's help with the boundary walk project.

Under Standing Order 9.1.6 it was agreed that the Agenda be rearranged so that items CC1158/12 (Rickmansworth School Swimming Pool), CC1157/12 (Community Plan Questionnaire) and CC1159/12 (Parish Council Acquisition of The Green, Stone's Orchard and The Sports Ground) could be discussed next.

CC1158/12 Rickmansworth School Swimming Pool

Cllr Mitchell advised that Sarah Arnold (who runs swimming classes at Rickmansworth School) had contacted him about the closure of Rickmansworth School swimming pool due to health and safety reasons. Many classes are held at this, the only indoor pool in Croxley. Cllr Mitchell added that he had contacted the Chair of Governors and they were keen for the pool to reopen. Cllrs generally felt that the pool should be open and should also be available for public swimming.

Resolved:

- **that the Council support any action to help keep the pool open for the future, especially if it can be more open to the public (at this stage not including funds from the Council);**
- **That Cllr Mitchell and the Clerk if required, are able to meet relevant parties to discuss and try and persuade them to ensure the pool is**

reopened;

- **That a paper be brought to the Finance and Administration Committee once further information has been obtained.**

A copy of the letter sent to parents of pupils at Rickmansworth School was given to the Clerk who said they would be attached to these Minutes.

CC1157/12

Community Plan Questionnaire

The Chairman introduced this matter and referred those present to the copy of the Community Plan questionnaire. On behalf of Cllr Jordan, Cllr Mitchell informed Cllrs that the questionnaire on Survey Monkey was almost ready to go live and also be delivered to residents. This will take place after Christmas. He advised that this would form the foundations for the Community Plan which would go on to become a Neighbourhood Plan at a later stage. Cllr Mitchell requested that Cllrs help encourage residents to complete the survey and help to generally publicise and promote it.

Resolved:

- **That the Parish Council notes and supports the Community Plan Questionnaire**

CC1159/12

Parish Council Acquisition of The Green, Stone's Orchard and The Sports Ground

The Chairman introduced this matter and asked Cllr Edmunds to elaborate. Cllr Edmunds said there was not much to add to the supporting paper but he wanted to stress that this was not a budget item, merely the start of negotiations.

Cllr Brading advised that he had already started the ball rolling as he had broached the subject with the Chief Executive of TRDC. He pointed out that there would be greater implications from more land acquired. Any transfer of land would have to be undertaken properly with due regard to the legal process. He suggested the Parish Council also requests the land its office is sited on as well as other land and suggested that we don't stop with TRDC but also approach Herts County Council.

The Clerk advised that he had spoken to Mrs Wells at the Guild of Sport to advise her that this matter was being discussed. Cllr Brand asked the Clerk why he did not contact him as he is the Secretary of the Guild of Sport. The Clerk advised that he was unaware of Cllr Brand's interest in the Guild.

Members were in favour of supporting this proposal and it was suggested that the woodland in Croxley Green be included too.

A recorded vote was requested. Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Getkahn, Martin, Mitchell, Ridley, Seeley, Shafe, Vane and Wynne-Jones voted for the proposal. Cllr Brand abstained.

Resolved:

- **That the Parish Council instructs the Clerk to start negotiations with Three Rivers District Council as to the formal acquisition of The Green, Stones Orchard, the sports ground and any other land owned by them within the Parish;**
- **That the Parish Council instructs the Clerk to start negotiations with Hertfordshire County Council as to the formal acquisition of any land owned by them within the Parish**

The Clerk was asked to write a courtesy letter to the Tennis Club and the Guild of Sport to say that enquiries are being made regarding the transfer of land ownership.

The Clerk was asked by a Cllr whether Cllr Brand, as Secretary of the Guild of Sport

should have declared an interest in this matter.

Cllr Ridley left the meeting at this point. A short while after, five members of the public also left the meeting.

CC1150/12 The Chairman introduced this item and advised that one Cllr had written to him and the Clerk and to say that he thought the Minutes were inaccurate. The alleged inaccuracies were discussed but Members felt there was no reason to amend the Minutes. The Councillor had also requested that his name be quoted when he raises matters at meetings. The Clerk clarified that it is not normal protocol to name Cllrs and this would actually lead to a CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) failure.

Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the 279th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 October 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

CC1151/12 Matters Arising

CC1140/12 (Matters Arising; CC1124/12 Matters Arising; CC1104.2/12 Matters Arising; EA876/12 Representations from the Public). The Clerk was asked for an update and he replied that the survey was not undertaken by Mr Hicks. However, a lichen survey and a report and map of Stones Orchard have been undertaken and these would no doubt be included in any draft Management Plan for Stones Orchard.

CC1140/12 (Matters Arising; CC1124/12 Matters Arising; CC1116/12 Community Centre – Village Hall). The Clerk was asked by a Cllr for an update. The Clerk advised that he had given the Cllr an update on the telephone only this afternoon! He repeated that a meeting has now been scheduled.

CC1152/12 Committee Reports

CC1152.1/12 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 2 October 2012

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 2 October 2012 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1152.2/12 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1152.3/12 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 October and Wednesday 17 October 2012

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 3 October and Wednesday 17 October 2012 be adopted as reports of the meetings.

CC1152.4/12 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC1152.5/12 Finance and Administration Committee held 11 October 2012

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on 11 October 2012 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC1152.6/12 Any matters arising
There were no matters arising.

CC1153/12 Budget 2013/12
The Chairman introduced this matter and stated that he did not propose going into the details of the budget as it is very difficult to go through at the end of a meeting. Instead, if any Cllr has queries they should contact the Clerk. The Chairman added that as per last year, there will be an Extraordinary meeting on 10 January (after the Finance and Administration meeting) to discuss the budget and if appropriate to set the precept and Cllrs were in favour of this. It was pointed out by a Cllr for the benefit of the press that the current draft budget which is showing an increase of £26,000 to the precept, is currently in a very, very early draft stage of preparation. The Chairman added that Parish Councils are not capped at present and all budget proposals must be submitted by 13 December and consideration should be given to the current economic climate. The Chairman advised that his £250 budget for a Christmas tree outside the library (agreed last year) was not enough as the cost of a hole and electrics amounted to over £1700. He added that he may bring a further budget proposal for this to Council.

CC1154/12 Internal Audit Report (Interim) for the year ending 31 March 2013
The Chairman introduced this matter and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk stated that the Report refers to several cheques issued in and dated in September in the August Cashbook. The Clerk said that the invoices for those cheques were indeed dated August and therefore correctly shown in the August cashbook but the cashbook has picked up the entry date of the invoices onto the accounts system in September for authorisation at the September Finance & Administration Committee meeting. The Clerk added that in practice and for reasons of efficiency all invoices are bulk input prior to preparing the monthly accounts for the Finance & Administration Committee meeting. The Clerk continued that in this particular case the August invoices, allocated to month 5, August, were input on 11 September prior to the Finance meeting on 13 September but the entry date of September was picked up rather than the August invoice date.
The Clerk was asked why, if the invoices are always entered this way, this has happened to which he replied that it may be a quirk of the accounts software and he would seek advise on this aspect.
The Clerk also stated that as for the Auditors comments regarding Journals, these are only used for any necessary recodings and for the correct allocation of salary information in regard to gross/net pay, PAYE, National Insurance and Pension payment and as such did not understand the Auditors comments but he would take this aspect up with the Auditors.
The Clerk commended the Audit Report to Council for noting with the appropriate actions. The Chairman stated that the Audit Report was good but further clarification should be sought on the points raised in the report.

Resolved:

- That Cllrs noted the Audit report and the Clerk seeks clarification regarding the entry of the journals and independent scrutiny and about the input date issue regarding the August invoices.

CC1155/12 TRDC Electoral Review

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk said that we could opt to comment on the new ward boundaries if appropriate. Following the public consultation on council size, it was agreed that there would be 39 Members for TRDC. This works well as there are 13 wards and thus 3 Members per ward. Currently, there are three wards within Croxley Green but it could have two new, larger wards within the Parish boundary with three Members per ward.

Resolved:

- That the Clerk writes to the Local Government Boundary Commission to say that we support two, three Member Wards and
- That we maintain the integrity and strength of the existing strong, easily identified Parish boundary

CC1156/12 Open Space / Groundworks contracts undertaken by the Parish Council

The Chairman introduced this matter and pointed out that as we have discussed the acquisition of land it would be illogical to consider this proposal. However, Cllrs stated that they wished to discuss the matter so that under Standing Order 15.1 it could not be brought to Council for reversal for the next six months.

A recorded vote was requested. Cllrs Baldwin, Bennett, Brading, Edmunds, Getkahn, Martin, Mitchell, Seeley, Shafe, Vane and Wynne-Jones voted against the proposals. Cllr Brand abstained.

Resolved:

- The proposals put forward by Cllr Ridley in his supporting paper were not agreed.

CC1157/12 Community Plan Questionnaire

This item was discussed after CC1158/12 (Rickmansworth School Swimming Pool).

CC1158/12 Rickmansworth School Swimming Pool

This item was discussed after CC1149/12 (Representations from the Public).

CC1159/12 Parish Council Acquisition of The Green, Stone's Orchard and The Sports Ground

This item was discussed after CC1157/12 (Community Plan Questionnaire).

CC1160/12 PART 2

Resolved:

- That the meeting proceeds to a confidential, Part 2 discussion and the member of the press left the meeting.

CC1160.1/12 Councillor Conduct

This matter was introduced by the Chairman who referred to a Strictly Confidential Report that had been circulated to Councillors only.

Following a discussion it was proposed that actions set out in the Strictly Confidential Report be taken.

CC1161/12 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.54pm.