

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2012 AT 8.00pm

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

Cllrs Bennett, Dann, Edmunds, Ridley, Shafe and Vane
Voting Members: 7
In Attendance: Cllr Brand
Public: 1

EA874/12 Apologies for Absence
Apologies had been received from Cllr Brading.

EA875/12 Declarations of Interest
The Chairman recommended that any declarations of interest be made, if necessary, throughout the meeting. Cllr Dann declared an interest during item EA882/12 (TRDC Special Expenses for The Green and Stones Orchard).

EA876/12 Representations from the Public
Representations were made regarding item EA881/12 (Stones Orchard) by a resident. It was the opinion that recommendations 1 and 2 (on the supporting paper) would be a way forward to progress the site. Regarding items 3 and 4 it was felt that local residents are interested in examining the flora and schools may also be keen to survey the Orchard. Regarding recommendation 5, it was felt that an interpretation plaque would be something to consider.

The resident also made representations regarding EA882/12 (TRDC Special Expenses for The Green and Stones Orchard) stating that many residents are unsure how Special Expenses work and asking if an article could be included in the next Parish Pump regarding the cutting and management of The Green and Stones Orchard and how costs are calculated.

Members were informed that this resident had had a meeting with Martin Hicks of Herts Biological Records Centre (HBRC) this afternoon in Stones Orchard. Mr Hicks felt that the meadow area at present was looking good and many of the grasses etc recorded in the 1990s were still strong. The grasses in the 'fruit tree' area were not so rich due to the type of cutting although the fruit trees were doing well and the site as a whole looked very pleasing when entering. Mr Hicks recommended that the two new trees in one section some distance from the newly planted ones should be replanted elsewhere, probably the original fruit tree area. He also said that some trees would benefit from a 'professional' person with fruit tree management skills and he could supply details of such people. As a result of his visit, Mr Hicks is prepared to carry out an up to date survey in approximately 10 -14 days time. Upon completion of this, a new, updated Management Plan can be considered, if required. Julie Hughes of Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) will liaise with him as well as the Parish Council. Finally the Orchard could take more fruit trees; the positions and type agreed with the survey and Management Plan.

EA877/12 Minutes
Regarding EA866/12 it had been pointed out by the resident who made representations that the fifth line states Countryside Management Services when it should state Herts Environmental Record Services.

Resolved:

- that the amended Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 April 2012 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

EA878/12 Matters Arising

EA868/12 (Matters Arising; EA860/12 Active Works List). The Clerk was asked if a meeting had been arranged with TRDC regarding them emptying the bins on The Green and in Stones Orchard to which he advised that whilst this matter will be taken forward it was not a top priority at the present time.

EA868/12 (Matters Arising; EA861/12 A Year in Croxley in Photographs). The Clerk was asked for an update and he replied that he had not heard from Mr Williams. Cllr Ridley stated that he would contact Mr Williams.

EA869/12 (Active Works List). The Clerk was asked about the bins and bench for Dickinson Square. The Clerk said that it is intended that the existing bench will be replaced and two new roll log litters bins will be installed. The Clerk added that the matter of installation of a second bench, which had been removed some time ago would be reviewed later in the year.

EA870/12 (Stones Orchard, Tree Planting). It was pointed out that an email was sent to the Parish Council saying when the planting was going to take place. The Clerk stated that this did not constitute a consultation. Cllr Shafe confirmed that Cllr Martin was only told about the planting the day before it took place and only then because she had a meeting with Julie Hughes about a different matter entirely. It was felt that Julie Hughes was under the impression she had permission following her conversation with Cllr Martin and the Ranger, however, she had admitted that there was an oversight with the lack of consultation. It was confirmed that in future, District Cllrs would be notified of any mass planting and they would, in turn, forward such notification to Parish Councillors.

EA871/12 (Parish Boundary Walk Project). The Clerk was asked if an application had been made. The Clerk advised that application for grants had had to be submitted in December last year but he had been liaising with Hertfordshire County Council's Rights of Way and had received an email advising that they would provide funding for the project this year to go with the £200 from Cllr Drury's Locality Budget grant and £100 in the Parish Council's budget. This Clerk added that this being the case, a formal application for a grant has now been submitted.

EA879/12 Active Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and Members were referred to the active works list for June.

It was pointed out that there was a gas meter without a cover on the side of a house in New Road along the footpath that leads from New Road to footpath 10. The Clerk said that he would look into this matter.

It was asked what happens with the Rangers attending the Revels and the Chairman clarified that the Rangers, as usual, would erect the gazebo and be on the Parish Council stall for the day before packing the gazebo up and storing it away at the office.

In relation to Stones Orchard it was pointed out that it was good to hear that Martin Hicks is happy with the Orchard and the Rangers should be congratulated.

Members noted the Active Works List for June.

EA880/12 Environmental Protection on the Green

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk reminded Members that this item had been referred from the Council meeting of 10 May 2012. The Clerk added that a District Councillor had offered to talk with the Head of Planning at TRDC but he was not here to

provide an update. The Clerk advised that at a recent Planning and Development meeting members had discussed a planning application relating to a property on The Green. The comments submitted to TRDC stated 'No grounds for objection. However, the proposed development is in the Conservation Area and access to the property is from The Green. Conditions should be applied to the granting of planning permission that access to the site by contractors must not result in damage to The Green but should damage occur the contractors must put right or pay to put right any damage incurred.' The Clerk added that an Officer had contacted him to advise that they could not make this a condition on the planning permission although they could add it as an Informative to the planning decision. Upon checking, however, the Clerk found that this had not been added to the planning permission. It was generally considered that between the District Councillors (including Cllr Lloyd), Officers at TRDC and the Parish Council's Planning and Development Committee The Green could be protected from construction vehicles.

EA881/12 Stones Orchard

The Chairman introduced this item and a long discussion ensued. Members were advised that on the previous night, a meeting of very well meaning people had taken place in a local pub. Matters discussed included Chorleywood's Orchard (and funding) and an Apple Day which Julie Hughes of TRDC is planning for the Orchard sometime this year. Also discussed was the need for a new Management Plan as the existing one is inadequate, especially with the recent planting of the new trees.

It was felt that the Management Plan needs to be modernised and some of Cllr Ridley's proposals could well form part of the outcome and implementation of a new Management Plan or at least discussed during the formation of the new Plan. Cllr Dann (who is a Plant Scientist) said he would be hesitant on letting local schools survey the Orchard but having Martin Hicks conduct the survey would be excellent. The Clerk said that Julie Hughes would be liaising with Martin Hicks and was hoping to have the Management Plan completed by the autumn.

It was pointed out that in any future Management Plan consideration needs to be given the ground ecosystem particularly if it is intended for more trees to be planted as the tree canopies could affect the ground flora and fauna habitat in the future as the trees grow and develop.

From the representations made by a member of the public it appears that Martin Hicks could be in a position to undertake a survey. It was commented that with the presence of a rare sedge that perhaps the site should become a site of Special Scientific Interest and should not be overwhelmed by new trees.

It was suggested that given the local interest in Stones Orchard that a more formal meeting be arranged of interested parties to start the development of a new Management Plan including ongoing maintenance of the area.

Resolved:

- **that Croxley Green Parish Council liaise with TRDC for guidance into revisiting the Management Plan to ensure its recommendations are up to date with the progress the Orchard has undertaken since its first planting**
- **that Croxley Green Parish Council consider making a plan of the Orchard and identify the trees that have already been planted and create an Orchard 'map' and that information be placed on our website**
- **that the Clerk contacts Julie Hughes of TRDC to state that Mr Hicks has offered to undertake a survey of the Orchard in the very near future.**

EA882/12 TRDC Special Expenses for The Green and Stones Orchard

Cllr Dann declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter and did not participate in the discussion.

The Chairman introduced this item and stated that she did not know why this matter was

being discussed as the Parish Council has an ongoing agreement with TRDC. Cllr Ridley stated that he would like the Parish Council to contact TRDC to find out the cost to Croxley Green residents for maintaining The Green and Stones Orchard if it was charged as Special Expenses. One Cllr said this matter was discussed in December 2011 and regardless of the cost, which would be minimal, TRDC would not maintain these areas to the same standard as the Parish Council. The Chairman also added that this matter was raised some 3-4 years ago and over 1,000 residents signed a petition for the Parish Council to maintain these areas.

The Clerk clarified that the £15,000 cost to the Parish Council (as stated in Cllr Ridley's supporting paper) was the underlying cost, ie the commercial cost in days' work and use of equipment and this cost has not changed from when Cllr Ridley was Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. The Chairman asked Cllr Ridley if he had a seconder for his proposal and no Cllr came forward therefore the motion was not considered further. The Chairman passed on some information to Cllr Ridley that was once given to her "if you ever have a proposal to put to Council, ensure you have a seconder".

For the benefit of new Cllrs, the Clerk clarified that the £15,000 was worked out by adding together the cost of two Rangers for 35 days per year to maintain The Green and Stones Orchard, management and administration time, and then the commercial costs associated with equipment.

EA883/12 Footpath between FP10 and New Road

The Clerk introduced this matter and said that he had received complaints about the surfacing of footpath 10 to The Green which is very uncomfortable to walk on. Under the Parish Council's P3 Agreement with Hertfordshire Highways the Clerk had had a meeting with the Rights of Way department and they are prepared to resurface the stretch of footpath 10 from the Parish Council office to The Green. They also discussed the merits of resurfacing the unadopted footpath that leads from New Road to footpath 10 at the same time and the Clerk said that it makes sense to resurface both paths at the same time and he referred Members to the previously circulated quote for £780. The Clerk was asked if this was the only company that had been contacted and he stated that this was the contractor who will undertake the works on footpath 10 and it was not a matter for the Parish Council but one for HCC Rights of Way to appoint the contractor.

The Clerk was asked whose responsibility the footpath from New Road to footpath 10 was and the Clerk replied that the Ramblers' Association are working to get these old footpaths on the definitive map. A discussion followed about the ownership and the works specification.

Resolved:

- **that the Clerk checks what concrete dust is**
- **that the Clerk checks the ownership of the footpath from New Road to Footpath 10 with TRDC or Land Registry**
- **that subject to the clarification of these two points, this matter is put on the next Council agenda**

EA884/12 Installation of Posts on the Green

This matter was introduced by the Chairman and the Clerk advised that with the exception of outside Saltram Cottage, the installation of the posts on The Green was now complete. The Clerk clarified that consultation took place with residents on the eastern side where the crossovers are very tight. It was considered that the posts look odd but the Clerk said that was because Highways had installed square posts at Elmcote Way and the approach into Copthorne Road.

EA885/12 Tree Bulletin

There were no tree works to note. It was pointed out by Cllr Ridley that a great deal of the trees at Rickmansworth School had been cut down and he wondered if the trees had Tree Preservation Orders.

EA886/12 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.33pm.