

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 269th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2011

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

Cllrs Baldwin, Brading, Brand, Edmunds, Getkahn, Isard-Brown, Jordan, Mitchell, Ridley and Wynne-Jones

Voting Members: 10 rising to 11 during item CC984/11 (Cllr Mitchell).

Public: 1

The Chairman reminded Members to switch mobile phones off or to silent.

CC978/11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dann, Martin, Seeley, Shafe and Vane.

CC979/11 Declarations of Interest by Members

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

CC980/11 Representations from the Public

The following Representation was made:

CC987/11 Committee Reports to Council - A member of the public stated that he did not support the proposal that unadopted minutes of all committee meetings are presented to Council in the same month they occur. The member of the public stated that to return to a system the Council had operated some time ago would be illogical as it meant that the Council were reviewing reports of meetings before the Committees themselves have had the opportunity of ratifying the Minutes of their own meeting. The member of the public continued that the current system did not prevent Resolutions from Committee meetings from being actioned after each Committee meeting and matters were not held in abeyance for months until Council had adopted the report as suggested in the supporting paper for this Agenda item.

CC981/11 Minutes

Resolved

- that the Minutes of the 268th monthly meeting of the Council held on Thursday 29 September 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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 the posts have been purchased and ready for installation. The Clerk added that he had received one response from a resident to the letter sent advising of the impending works and that he would be making arrangements to meet with the resident to discuss practical site issues.

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. He replied that he had received a reply from British Waterways (BW) in regards to the proposed identified works and that these had been referred to BW's groundforce staff for consideration. The Clerk added that he was currently waiting to hear from them that it is in order to arrange for volunteers to

undertake the identified works.

CC963/11 Matters Arising: CC946/11 Matters Arising – (C938/11 Former Yorke Road School Site – Part Demolition). The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had submitted its letter of concern, and received a response and that the correspondence was concluded.

CC964.4/11 Any Matters Arising: PD1626/11 (Street Lighting). The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that the recommendation from the Planning & Development Committee regarding the times when street lights should not be turned off had been passed to Three Rivers District Council and there was nothing further to report.

CC974/11 Draft National Planning Policy Framework: The Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee advised that a full response on the Consultation had been prepared and submitted and wished to that all those involved and in particular to the Clerk in dealing with the matter in such an expeditious manner. Another Councillor added that he thought the Parish Council's response prepared by the Clerk was "brilliant".

CC983/11 Committee Reports

CC983.1/11 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 September 2011

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 6 September 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC983.2/11 Any matters arising

EA795/11 Photographs of Croxley Green: The Clerk was asked for an update. The Clerk advised that Croxley Camera Club had now made contact with him directly confirming the locations where the photography will be undertaken. The Clerk continued that arrangements would now be made for a letter of authorisation to be prepared and passed to the Camera Club.

CC983.3/11 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 September and Wednesday 21 September 2011.

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 7 September and Wednesday 21 September 2011 be adopted as a report of the meetings.

CC983.4/11 Any matters arising

CC1666/11 Village/Community Plan: Cllr Jordan stated that the meeting scheduled for the 14 September had had to be cancelled but that work on the plan was continuing well.

CC1675/11 Part-Night Lighting: The Clerk was asked for an update and he advised that the proposals from the Planning and Development Committee had been passed to Three Rivers District Council and that he had received an acknowledgement.

CC983.5/11 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 8 September 2011

Resolved:

- that the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held on Thursday 8 September 2011 be adopted as a report of the meeting.

CC983.6/11

Any matters arising

CC749/11 Special Expenses: The Clerk was asked whether the detail of the Special Expenses had been placed on the Parish Council's web site. The Clerk advised that this was not the stated intent from the Finance and Administration Committee meeting which stated that the detail would be circulated with the Minutes, which they were.

CC984/11

Budget 2012/13

The Clerk referred to the supporting paper and the draft trial Budget Schedule that had been circulated with the Agenda and emphasised that this was very much a trial budget taking into account inflation of 5.2% (CPI). The Clerk added that already some minor downward tweaks have already been made to take account of recently available information such as the revision of Rates for next year but advised that as yet no budget proposals had been received.

One Councillor expressed the view that given the economic climate currently prevailing that perhaps the Council should consider capping the Precept at a figure below the CPI inflation figure. He continued that the Council should focus on what would be nice to do in good times versus what can be afforded to be done with the current situation.

The Chairman pointed out that if Councillors had any projects that would benefit residents which Council could fully justify then these should be brought forward for discussion. There was support for this principle in that the 'nice things' could ease the hardships.

A Councillor raised the possibility of making a proper small pond out of the wetland area on Little Green Lane opposite Killingdown Farm.

The Chairman referred to the recent budget 'brain storming' session that had taken place and that there had been some items put forward which would have a zero cost to the Council. It was advised that the notes of the 'brain storming' session will be circulated as soon as possible and that further ideas would be welcomed.

A question was raised in respect of the Staff Welfare item on the trial budget schedule. The Clerk advised that this was only intended at this stage to be an aide memoir in the event that the Staffing Committee consider at some point that some monies should be allocated to this.

CC985/11

Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

The Chairman introduced this matter and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk referred to the supporting paper circulated with the Agenda which explained the detail of the aspects of the Council's work covered by CiLCA. It was explained that it would be necessary to put together a comprehensive portfolio which would include sample Agendas, Minutes and a host of other documentation and that the Clerk would need quality time to do this.

It was pointed out that it would also be incumbent on Council Members to follow correct protocol and procedures as failure not to do so would result in a failure of the Clerk to achieve CiLCA.

It was advised that once registered the CiLCA portfolio has to be completed with 24 months and that the time needed to complete the portfolio can be anything up to about 50 hours.

Resolved

- that the Clerk undertakes the Certificate in Local Council Administration

commencing in January 2012 at a cost of £350.

CC986/11

Dickinson Square

Councillor Edmunds declared an interest in this matter on the basis of being a resident in Dickinson Square.

The Chairman referred to the recommendation from the Environment and Amenity Committee that the Parish Council should become involved in maintaining Dickinson Square at no cost to TRDC who currently undertake the maintenance.

A discussion ensued about whether there would be an impact on Special Expenses and although the maintenance undertaken by TRDC was very minimal it was unlikely there would be such an impact, although this matter will be raised with TRDC.

It was pointed out that what would be envisaged for maintenance was not a matter of doing anything significantly different than at present (shrub trimming, pruning and tidying) but more a matter of the care and quality of workmanship that the Parish Council would take over the existing arrangements.

It was suggested that once the arrangements have been made with TRDC, a letter is written to the residents advising of the Parish Council's role in maintaining the area pointing out that there would be no significant change to the maintenance regime other than the quality of the work. It was also suggested that the letter might invite constructive comments from the residents.

Resolved:

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

CC987/11

Committee Reports to Council

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that he considered that the Minutes of committee meeting should be presented to Council in the month that the committee meetings have taken place rather than after the Committee have signed the Minutes.

It was pointed out that the current procedure allows the Committees to approve their Minutes prior to the Council considering them as a Report of the meeting to ensure that the Minutes, the resultant Report, is a true reflection of the meeting. It was also pointed out that any actions resulting from Committee are not held in abeyance and they are actioned following the meeting.

There was some sympathy for Cllr Ridley's proposal and that perhaps the Agenda item covering this matter could be structured in a different way to allow the unadopted Committee Minutes to be received as a Report.

It was asked whether the current procedure slows down the work of the Council to which it was stated that it did not.

Resolved:

- That the matter is deferred pending the Clerk establishing custom and practice elsewhere.

CC988/11

Electronic Serving of Agendas

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley stated that not all Councillors are currently using the new Cllr@ email addresses and that to get to a position for the Clerk to electronically serve the Summons and issue Agendas by emails that Councillors should be allowed to use their existing personal email address.

It was pointed out that the background to this was one of being able to make a distinction between official email from Councillors rather than personal email from their personal email address. It was added that to allow use of personal email address would go against a recommendation from the Three Rivers District Council Standards Committee and although this was not a legally binding recommendation, it does represent good practice.

It was also pointed out that whilst the serving of Summons', Agendas and other matter for meetings would be electronic, hard copy will always be available which can either be collected from the office prior to the meeting or picked up at the meeting for ease of reference at the meeting.

One Councillor pointed out that he liked to be able to annotate hard copy prior to a meeting and without hard copy he would be unable to do so. It was reiterated that hard copy will always be available from the office from the time the Agendas are issued electronically, but the Councillor wished to continue to have his papers delivered to his home address in hard copy form. This was duly noted.

Resolved:

- No further action required.

CC989/11

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.36pm.