

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Annual Parish Meeting 26 April 2012

Agenda Item AP64/12

Parish Council Referendum (Poll)

Introduction

Legislation allows residents at a parish council APM to request that the council holds a referendum (Poll). As Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC) was created by a referendum in 1986, then I believe the residents should have the right to have to ask for a referendum on whether they want a referendum on the abolition/retention of Croxley Green Parish Council.

It might also serve local democracy as many residents have raised the issue of do we need a parish council and they are only asked to vote on councillors who stand every four years and not how they believe the council represents them as a council?

If the following costs were presented to the residents to create a council would they actually vote for a parish council?

It's official; CGPC increased the precept to residents by 3.3% whilst Three Rivers District Council (CGPC) cut their costs by 2.6%. Of 15 parish Cllrs, Brand, Ridley and Vane voted against the parish budget with Brading abstaining.

CGPC spend over £250,000 [a quarter of a million] of our money and what do we as residents get for it that TRDC couldn't undertake?

If there was a referendum to create a parish council, who would vote for it on the costs below?

Staff wages	No CGPC no cost.	£118.000
[Admin wages		£69.000]
[Rangers wages		£49.000]
Community Support Police Officers	Could be paid by TRDC	£30.000pa
Xmas lights	For one month on 20 lampposts	£11.000pa
Village Hall	Rent out depot to pay	£10.000pa
Equipment fund	No CGPC no cost	£10.000pa
Dog bins/bags	Could be done by TRDC	£10.000pa
Cost of running vehicles	No CGPC no cost	£7.600pa
Pensioners Community bus	Free travel already available	£7.000pa
Fireworks	15 mins worth	£5.000pa
Parish Pump	Info can be supplied by my Croxley	£5.000pa
Development of play areas	TRDC?	£5.000
Croxfest	Why doesn't the Croxley Green Society fund raise?	£4.500pa
Insurances	No CGPC no cost	£4.500pa

Toilets for Revels	TRDC could pay	£1.000pa
Accountant's fees	No CGPC no cost	£2.700pa
H/R consultant	No CGPC no cost	£2.700pa
Water rates	No CGPC no cost	£2500pa
Clerks vehicle allowance	Why? No CGPC no cost	£1.200pa
Grants	TRDC?	£2.000pa
Roads/Street furniture	TRDC?	£1.600pa
Pensioners Seaside outing	Why does CGPC pay?	£1.000pa
Plants etc	TRDC?	£1.000
Craft W/Shop Day	Local group grant	£750
Other office costs etc	No CGPC no cost	£20.000

CGPC have only just admitted after four years that it costs residents over £15.000pa to tend the Green, when for years they have claimed they do it for free, self delusional or deliberately giving false information to residents? They still have no idea of how much it would cost if TRDC cut the Green and charged via special expenses. TRDC are taking over the emptying of the litterbins on the green for no extra cost, which is part of the existing contract. Something I initiated.

CGPC own no land except their depot and only have responsibility for two bus stops and sub contract for TRDC in the main. Other parish councils own land and Sarratt Parish Council who own their Green/Commonwood and Dawes Common and Penmans Green only costs residents £80.000pa. £40.000 groundwork's.

Watford Rural is in the same situation as CGPC, they own no land. They also have no ground staff costs as all work is undertaken by TRDC, when CGPC is estimated at £110.000pa.

If TRDC could arrange via special expenses to pay for the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and were allowed to lease out the depot and council offices to pay for Village hall, would there be a need for a parish council and if it was abolished we as residents might be £200.000pa better off.

HCC are turning off lights to save money, CGPC are spending £11.000 to attach Xmas fairy lights to lampposts that are left on for one month.

When the parish council hold their surgeries at the library go along and ask them what they actually do that TRDC or County can't and where can they save residents money.

Why did CGPC give £4.500 to the Croxley Green Society (CGS) when the estimate they presented was £900 in error and there was no documentation to substantiate their stage hire claim and why didn't CGPC insist on three stage hire estimates, would they have from any other organisations applying for public money,

Is it because there are too many councillors with either Croxley Green Residents Association (CGRA) or CGS association?

Is Cllr Martins dad, P Foster president of the CGS and Shafe's husband treasurer and both do not declare interests?

Do the public know?

Discussion Narrative

As there is an allowance in legislation there is no need for council to discuss, unless council want to discuss the many contentious issues including the granting of £4.500 to the Croxley Green Society for stage hire for the Croxfest festival with the estimate presented being so amateurish it could have been written on the back of a fag packet or beer mat and without any documentational proof of the stage hire estimate and why council failed to insist that the CGS provide three valid written estimates to substantiate their application and any other contentious issues that CGPC have been involved in the past.

Recommendation

Council to put to those present at the meeting that a referendum is called allowing the residents of Croxley Green to cast a vote on the abolition/retention of Croxley Green Parish Council and if ten people present at the meeting including councillors present vote for the referendum (Poll), then Three Rivers District Council are contacted and requested to hold the referendum under the current legislation.

Cllr R J Ridley