

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008 at 8.00pm

Present: Cllr Shafe then Cllr Norman from David Allison – Clerk to the Council
FA406/08 – In the Chair Amanda Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs C Jefford and Seeley

Voting Members 3 (increased to 4 from 8.29pm)

In Attendance: Cllrs Brand, Saxon and Vassiliou

No members of the public present

FA399/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bains and Wynne-Jones

FA400/08 Declaration of Interests

The Chairman asked Members if they wished to declare any interests and stated that declarations of interest may be made throughout the meeting if necessary.

FA401/08 Representations from the Public

There were no public present.

FA402/08 Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Jefford that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2008 be approved as correct. The proposal was agreed and the Chairman signed the Minutes.

FA403/08 Matters Arising

It was questioned by a Member in attendance whether there was any further information on FA392/08 (External Sourcing of Grants) to which the Clerk replied that this item was on the agenda under item FA408/08 (Third Party Funding/Grants).

FA404/08 Schedule of Payments

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the Monthly Management Accounts Report for month 11 (February 2008). The Clerk explained the format of the report for the benefit of Members, and pointed out that it is a more helpful and constructive method of presenting the monthly accounts to Members. He added that the first page is a summary and this is followed by the detailed report. The Clerk clarified that at times an expenditure may be allocated to an account code with a zero budget, (as it is good accounting practice to be specific about allocating to correct account codes) but so long as the overall expenditure is within the limits of that department, this is not an issue.

It was asked if £784 for Light and Heat was a quarterly figure and the Clerk confirmed that it was. The Clerk was asked what £180 for Grounds Maintenance and £117 for Equipment Purchased covered and it was requested that this information be included in the Minutes. It was asked if the Clerk could have this type of information to hand at future meetings for items covered by generalised headings. The Clerk clarified that the negative figures of £59 and £176 for Fuel and Oil and Fireworks respectively were adjustments on his part for duplicate entries. The Clerk elucidated that the £86 spent on bus shelters was for a stock of Perspex to replace that damaged by acts of vandalism.

It was proposed by Cllr Jefford and seconded by Cllr Seeley that the Management

Accounts be approved, and the proposal was agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

[Post Meeting Note: Account Number 4037 (Grounds Maintenance) £180 – replacement outside water tap at the library £60; purchase of salt £117; linseed oil £2.57 = £179.57. Account No 4046 (Equipment Purchased) £117 – chainsaw blade £83.05; plane hacksaw £34.40 = £117.45]

FA405/08 Parish Council Web Site Development

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the supporting paper which had been previously circulated with the agenda. He then gave a presentation (which was viewed by Members on the whiteboard) of various examples of websites created by mh-p, Vision websites, Market Town and Inco Software Solutions. This resulted in a long discussion of the pros and cons of each site. Consideration was given to the number of pages, Contents Management System (CMS), which is the ability to upload items directly from the Parish Council Office; the style and presentation of each site; the ability to hyperlink to external websites; training; start up costs and annual costs.

Eventually, Cllr Norman proposed that Inco Software Solutions be recommended to Council for ratification and this was seconded by the Cllr Shafe and the proposal was agreed.

FA406/08 Work of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

Cllr Norman took over the Chairmanship of the meeting from this point and introduced this item and the Clerk referred Members to the report from Inspector George Holland. The Clerk pointed out that the email from which the report had been taken had been received after he had distributed the agenda. It was noted that item 14 on the report stated 'Since the 1st April 2008...' and this should have read 2007. Concerns were raised by a Councillor that he had never seen a PCSO at night at the bottom end of Baldwins Lane or at the play areas and he was concerned that vandalism in his ward was still a major issue. The Chairman asked the Clerk to write to Inspector Holland to invite him to the next Finance and Administration meeting to be held 10 April 2008. The Chairman asked that Members come prepared for this meeting and submit their questions for Inspector Holland prior to the meeting, via the Clerk.

FA407/08 Asset Replacement Policy

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk reiterated his recommendation as detailed in the previously circulated supporting paper; namely that assets are automatically replaced when the optimum part exchange value versus the Ear Marked Reserve funding are reached. Members discussed this and although some felt this was taking away the democratic role of Councillors, the Clerk and Chairman explained that a proper Management Plan would be established to enable forward planning for the replacement of assets. The Management Plan would be established with the assistance of specialists in the relevant field. Members generally felt that this was a sensible policy and a more efficient way of managing the replacement of assets. Cllr Shafe proposed that this policy be adopted and this was seconded by the Chairman and the proposal was agreed.

The Clerk then referred Members to the second recommendation in the paper; that the Land Rover be replaced immediately. He added that the bill for repairs totals some £2477 and the vehicle is estimated as being worth only £1000. One Councillor stated that a second opinion as to its value should be sought as £1000 seemed very low. Another stated that these repairs should have been undertaken sooner and then the cost would not be so great. The Chairman recommended that if a new Land Rover is purchased, more stringent care of it should be taken. One Member was concerned about the health and safety aspects detailed in the supplement and stated that the last thing the Parish Council would want is an insurance claim as a result of the state of the vehicle. Cllr Seeley recommended that the Clerk goes ahead with the purchase of a new vehicle and this was seconded by Cllr Jefford and the proposal was

agreed. This item will be placed on the agenda for ratification by Council on 27 March 2008.

FA408/08 Third Party Funding/Grants

The Chairman introduced this item and requested that the Clerk make a log to be used as a reference for funding from other sources. One Member recommended the website www.grantfinder.co.uk as a potential source of information. The Chairman suggested that any future budget proposals are submitted with details of potential appropriate grant sources included.

FA409/08 Parish Council's Risk Assessment

Cllr Vassiliou left the meeting at this point. The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk informed Members that a summary of the Local Council Risk System (LCRS) had been circulated to Members with the Minutes of the Finance and Administration meeting held 14 February 2008 and reminded them again that the full document was available in the office should they wish to see it. He then gave a presentation using the Risk Assessment relating to 'Bus Services' as an example, demonstrating to Members how risks and scores are achieved. The Clerk was asked whether the risk of accident to staff due to the condition of the Land Rover had been assessed to which the Clerk stated that it had not. It was suggested that a Councillor Training Session in Risk Assessments may be a good idea and the Clerk confirmed that Members ought to be fully up to speed in this area.

FA410/08 Closure

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman for standing in for him and then closed the meeting at 10.08pm.