

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Cllr Mitchell – In the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council

Cllrs Bennett, Edmunds, and Shafe

Voting Members: 4

In Attendance: Cllrs Brand (for Agenda item FA 942/13) and Ridley (for Agenda item FA942/13).

Members of the Public: 2

FA936/13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Jordan and Seeley.

FA937/13 Declaration of Interests

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

FA938/13 Representations from the Public

Representation was made by the Chairman of Croxley Green Community Association (CGCA) who stated that the Association now has a new committee and chairman and they are in the process of returning the Community Centre operations to their originally intended use.

He continued that their ultimate aim is to reduce the amount paid by the PC for the Village Hall facility, and increase the Community use of the Village Hall.

He added that in their view the existing agreement is not fit for purpose as there was no mention of the amount of the fee payable by the PC or how to calculate it; the terms of the arrangement are poorly drafted in terms of maintenance costs and day-to-day operations; and the allocation of the available hours to Village Hall activities and non-Village Hall activities is not clear and restricts CGCA from making best use of the revenue-generating capacity of the Hall.

The CGCA were keen to retain the existing relationship with the Parish Council and they have explored the options of an hourly rate or a formula but have concluded that a fixed annual amount is the only viable option that allows the Parish Council to properly budget for the expense.

The CGCA seeks only to recover the costs of operating and maintaining the Community Centre, and has income from the Croxley Green Community Club (CGCC), from paid-for hall lets, and is keen to keep the hall available for free and expanded Community usage under the Village Hall Agreement with the PC.

The CGCA would be able to offer a significantly discounted charge to the Parish Council due to the significant financial contribution to the building running costs that is made by CGCC who also provide operational support for hirers and users.

The CGCA think that a new agreement would address the shortfalls mentioned earlier and would include a contribution towards ongoing maintenance and major works such as roof replacement. They do not foresee a significant change in the amount charged to the Parish Council for the Village Hall facility compared to previous years, and expect to reduce the amount charged over the coming years as the commercial side of the operations continues to go from strength to strength.

The CGCA aim is to continue to develop a thriving and well-used Community Centre

which can generate funds from commercial operations, provide a space for non-profit organisations to use free of charge, and to generate funds to further the Association's charitable objectives within the community and surrounding areas. The CGCA can see a realistic prospect of reducing the charge to the Parish Council for the Village Hall facility to a nominal figure within five years.

The CGCA look forward to agreeing a new, fit for purpose agreement, that clarifies what the Parish Council will pay towards the Village Hall, what the Community will receive in return, and maximise the value provided to the taxpayers of Croxley Green.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman of the CGCA for his representation and proposed to the meeting that Agenda item FA942/13 Village Hall Agreement be moved up the Agenda under Standing Order 9.1.6. The proposal was agreed.

FA942/13 Village Hall Agreement with Croxley Green Community Association

The Chairman introduced this item and referred those present to the supporting paper and a copy of the letter from Croxley Green Community Centre terminating the agreement and invited comments from Members present.

It was pointed out that there are many variables to consider when considering a new Agreement and the details would need to be subject to a separate meeting.

It was suggested that there should be a working party of two Councillors and two members of the Association to look at a new Agreement. Other Members consider that the working party should have four Councillors due to the fact that there was a likelihood that one or the other may not be able to attend a meeting and therefore the Council's representation could be compromised.

The Chairman referred to the Recommendations proposed in the supporting paper and suggested that there should be a further recommendation that consideration be given to a procurement/tendering process.

Resolved:

- That the Council seeks alternative Village Hall arrangements within Croxley Green;
- That concurrent negotiations are undertaken with the Croxley Green Community Association regarding re-negotiating the existing arrangement;
- That consideration is given to a procurement/tendering process;
- That the matter is put before Council.

FA939/13 Minutes

Resolved:

- That the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 October 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

FA940/13 Matters Arising

FA934/13 Christmas Tree outside Barton Way Library. An update was requested to which the Clerk advised that he has a final on site meeting with the electrical contractors next week prior to the commencement of the work. The Clerk added that the Christmas tree has been ordered as have the multi-coloured LED lights both of which will be installed once the work is complete by the Council's festive lighting supplier. The Clerk said that once the completion date is known he would advise Councillors so that any necessary arrangements can be made for groups to perform carol signing.

FA933/13 S137 Grant Application from Croxley Green Guild of Sport. The Clerk drew Members attention to the article that appeared in the November edition of My Croxley News. The Clerk was concerned to learn that Cllr Brand was quoted as saying that the Grant given by the Council would be "used to repay back one of the Chess Valley Rugby Club members who had put up the money to buy new cookers and a fridge". The Clerk

added that this had not been mentioned at the time Council were discussing this matter and was not the intent from the resolution agreed by Council for pound for pound match funding.

FA941/13

Monthly Accounts

There was an adjournment to allow Cllrs the time to peruse the accounts for month 7 (October).

The Clerk brought to Members attention:

4038/101 Maintenance Contracts (-£1,449) – it was noted that this credit relates to the recoding of this amount to 4038/103.

4038/103 Maintenance Contracts (£1,782) – it was noted that this is the recoding from 4038/101 (£1,449) and the £333 relates to the contractors strimming The Green and Stones Orchard.

4605/211 Christmas Lights (£6,694) – it was noted that this is part payment to the festive lighting supplier as required by the agreed arrangement.

4610/211 Fireworks (£48) – it was noted that this relates to the music license.

4965/399 Community Plan (£450) – it was noted that this relates to the delivery of the survey results.

The following matters were also raised:

4699/203 Stones Orchard Fund (£0) - it was noted that there is no expenditure as yet versus the budget of £3,000. The Clerk added that discussions about this had been held elsewhere and proposals are awaited.

4014/101 Light & Heat (£210) – it was noted that at Month 7, 77.6% of the budget had been spent and was there likely to be an overspend. The Clerk advised that at Month 6 the estimated outturn for this account at year end was £2,682 but a reassessment will be made once month 7 spend details are entered into the Budget schedule.

On the matter of electricity a Cllr asked about the electric car recharging point in Community Way car park and asked that if it is used does the Parish Council pay for the electricity. The Clerk advised that whilst the power is from the Council's Depot, the recharging point is on its own separate meter which the Council does not pay for.

In regard to maintenance contractors, it was asked whether there were any estimates for the work that the Council may wish them to undertake. The Clerk advised that the contractors are only used on an ad hoc basis so there is no fixed programme of works and the arrangement is that the Council pays an hourly rate for the jobs they undertake. The Clerk further advised that the hourly rate was less than that if TRDC undertook any works but both were more than the hourly rate which is paid to the Council's Ranger.

Resolved:

- That the Management Accounts for months 7 (October) be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

FA943/13

Budgets 2014/15

The Chairman introduced this item and asked the Clerk to elaborate. The Clerk advised that he had not received any further budget proposal forms other than those submitted for the Wassail, Dog Show and item for Stones Orchard. The Clerk continued that he had drafted figures for the administration and running of the Council which with the draft figures used shows an estimated small increase at this time in the Precept. The Clerk stated however, that figures will need to be refined.

It was asked whether the Council will be receiving a Grant from TRDC as per last year to which the Clerk advised that at this time this was unknown and that he had not included a figure for this in the current draft figures, hence the showing of a small increase in the Precept.

Following a short discussion it was suggested that there should be a cut off point for the submission of budget proposals.

Resolved:

- That the cut off point for the submission of budget proposals is Friday 6 December 2013.

FA944/13

Closure

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.53pm.