

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF the 247th MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 30 JULY 2009

Present: Cllr Birch in the Chair
David Allison – Clerk to the Council
Amanda Taft – Administrative Assistant

Cllrs Bennett, Hollands, C Jefford, Martin, Norman, Saxon, Seeley, Shafe and Vassiliou

Voting Members: 10

Not Present: Cllr Seabourne

Public: 2

CC670/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bains, Brading, Brand, Dann and Wynne-Jones.

CC671/09 Declarations of Interest by Members

The Chairman recommended that any declarations be made as necessary throughout the meeting. Cllr Norman declared an interest in item CC680/09 The Green/Stones Orchard Contract.

CC672/09 Representations from the Public

Representations were made by one member of the public concerning four items: CC680/09 The Green/Stones Orchard Contract – it was stated that the supporting paper did not detail any figures.

CC682/09 Flood Prevention Work at the Community Centre/Village Hall – It was stated that as the works estimates exceed £5,000 they should be tendered publicly.

CC683/09 External Decoration of the Community Centre/Village Hall – It was asked why the Rangers could not undertake some of this work.

CC684/09 Appointment of Temporary Personnel Consultant – the recent loss of the Ranger to Chorleywood Parish Council was acknowledged and it was suggested that contact is made with other Parish Councils to establish salary levels elsewhere before paying a consultant.

CC673/09 Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Hollands and seconded by Cllr Bennett that the Minutes of the 246th Monthly Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 June 2009 be accepted. The proposal was agreed and the Chairman signed the Minutes.

CC674/09 Matters Arising

CC661/09 (Representations from the Public). It was pointed out that the representations had been reported verbatim in the body of the Minutes and there was some debate as to whether representations should be included as an attachment or summarised in the Minutes.

CC661/09 (Representations from the Public). It was reported that the website went live today and the Clerk gave those present a demonstration and a brief overview. The Chairman asked that ideas for further content be discussed with the Clerk.

CC664/09 (Matters Arising). It was yet again asked why those who make representations are not named in the Minutes. The Clerk once again explained that this was a requirement in order for the Parish Council to achieve Quality Status. It was suggested that if any Cllr has strong views on this or on any matters they should advise the Clerk who will be reviewing Standing Orders during August.

CC665.2/09 (EA575/09; EA563/09; EA552/09 Environment and Amenity Committee Matters Arising). It was asked why the distribution of the Parish Pump had not been placed on the July Agenda. The Chairman advised that this will be on the September Agenda in order that there are options and a proposal for Cllrs to consider.

CC675/09 Committee Reports

CC675.1/09 Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 7 July 2009

It was proposed by Cllr Seeley and seconded by Cllr Martin that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenity Committee held on Tuesday 7 July 2009 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.

CC675.2/09 Any matters arising

EA583/09 (Representations from the Public). It was pointed out that these representations were a summary of those made at the meeting and that a copy of these representations had not been circulated with the Minutes.

EA587/09 (COMMA Funding). It was considered that this item should be placed on the September Environment and Amenity Agenda with supporting papers for discussion.

CC675.3/09 Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 1 and Wednesday 15 July 2009

It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Hollands that the Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 1 July 2009 be adopted. It was noted that the meeting that was scheduled for 15 July 2009 was cancelled as it would have been inquorate. The proposal was agreed.

CC675.4/09 Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

CC675.5/09 Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 9 July 2009

It was proposed by Cllr Norman and seconded by Cllr Shafe that the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee held Thursday 9 July 2009 be adopted. The proposal was agreed.

CC675.6/09 Any matters arising

FA521/09 Monthly Accounts. The Clerk was asked about account 101/4008 (Training). The Clerk said that as reported at the Finance and Administration meeting, this training was as a result of the staff appraisals and is part of continuous professional development.

CC676/09 Annual Accounts 2008/09 – External Audit

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk advised that at the time of submitting the accounts they were correct but in the meantime, £30 interest received on the savings had to be added. It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Hollands that the amendments to the annual accounts be approved and the proposal was agreed.

CC677/09 Parish Council's Internal Audit Review

This item was introduced by the Chairman and Members duly noted the review of the effectiveness of the Parish Council's internal audit and the Audit Plan for 2009-10.

CC678/09 Parish Council Risk Assessment Review

The Chairman advised Cllrs that they have to undertake responsibility of the Council's Risk Assessment for 2009/10. However, some Cllrs believed they had a responsibility to ensure the Risk Assessment has been completed but that it is the Clerk's responsibility that the contents are in order. After a brief discussion, Members

were happy to note that the Risk Assessment Review had been undertaken.

CC679/09 Parish Council Deposit Bank Account

The Chairman stated that this item had been placed on the Agenda in order that the decision to close the Council's deposit account be reversed. The Chairman added that this is due to the fact that cash cannot be paid into the current account. It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Hollands that the deposit account remains active in order that cash can be banked and the proposal was agreed.

CC680/09 The Green/Stones Orchard Contract

Following an introduction by the Chairman, the Clerk advised that the contract with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) had now been drawn up and Members were referred to the copy that had been circulated with the Agenda. The Clerk was asked about the financial implications and he explained that there would not be any exchange of money as in return for us maintaining the Green and Stones Orchard, Three Rivers Direct Services would undertake the cut and bale of the meadow grass once per year resulting in a nil effect. It was considered that the contract was rather verbose, strongly worded and appeared somewhat onerous in parts. Concern was expressed about point P.2 regarding damage to the Green by vehicles having to be made good by the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that when the Green is hired for an event, TRDC takes a deposit. If it became necessary for the Parish Council to make good any damage, the expense would be paid to us from the deposit by TRDC.

It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Hollands that the Clerk be authorised to sign the contract with TRDC. A recorded vote was requested; Cllrs Bennett, Birch, Hollands, Jefford, Martin, Saxon, Seeley and Shafe voted for the proposal, Cllr Vassiliou voted against the proposal and Cllr Norman abstained from voting having declared an interest in this item at the start of the meeting. The proposal was therefore agreed.

CC681/09 Barton Way Recreation Ground Play Area

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk advised that TRDC were in the process of letting the contract for the play area and that TRDC had asked for the Parish Council's contribution to be released. The Clerk added that the options for the play area were on display in the library for residents to comment upon and select the design they would most like to see. It was also advised that both the Cllrs who had been involved in this project had been having regular meetings and had been involved in the process from the beginning. The Chairman stated that she was very pleased with the progress but would like the Parish Council to have input through to installation. It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Martin that the £20,000 included in the approved Council budget be released to TRDC and the proposal was agreed.

CC682/09 Flood Prevention Work at the Community Centre/Village Hall

This item was introduced by the Chairman and Members noted the dates on the estimates (December 2008) and the date they were received by the Parish Council (July 2009). It was also noted that December 2008 was before the Parish Council entered into the agreement to use the Community Centre as the Village Hall. Following some discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Shafe and seconded by Cllr Bennett that the Parish Council contacts TRDC in their capacity as landlord for expert advice and for them to draw up a specification of works in order that the works can be re-tendered and the proposal was agreed. It was asked if the Clerk could advise the Community Centre of the outcome of this discussion.

CC683/09 External Decoration of the Community Centre/Village Hall

This item was introduced by the Chairman and, as for the flood prevention work item (above), Members noted the dates on the estimates (December 2008) and the date

they were received by the Parish Council (July 2009). It was again noted that December 2008 was before the Parish Council entered into the agreement to use the Community Centre as the Village Hall. The Chairman suggested that as the external decoration cannot be undertaken until after the flood prevention works, a specification of works is carried out and this matter be referred back to Council.

CC684/09

Appointment of Temporary Personnel Consultant

The Chairman opened this item and the Clerk reminded Cllrs that back in March they had agreed to the idea in principle of a Human Resources Consultant being appointed to perform an independent review of the staffs' job descriptions and salaries but that more detail had been requested by Cllrs.

It was considered by some Cllrs that money is not the motivating factor in a job and that the staff accepted the pay scale when they were initially employed by the Parish Council. It was the opinion of some Cllrs that the Clerk's paper was not independent. It was requested that Cllrs or the Chairman of the Council be involved in this matter and the ex-Chairman of the Council advised that he had been involved in the staff appraisals back in October 2008. The current Chairman advised those present that she had had an exit interview with the Ranger before he left, which, although confidential, has been documented. It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Seeley that this matter is put before the Finance and Administration Committee on how to take it forward and the proposal was agreed.

CC685/09

Youth Club in Village Hall

The Clerk advised Members that he had contacted the four local Parish Councils and had received two replies which had been circulated with the Agenda. It was proposed by Cllr Bennett and seconded by Cllr Shafe that the Parish Council establish a working group to take this matter forward and the proposal was agreed. The Chairman asked if anyone was interested in joining this working group and then suggested that if any Cllrs are interested in becoming involved they contact the Clerk. The matter will be placed on the Environment and Amenity Agenda in September.

CC686/09

Correspondence

Members noted the lists of correspondence which the Clerk stated was not exhaustive. The Clerk was asked about the letter to a resident regarding the insurance claim to which he advised that the resident had sent a bill for repairs to his vehicle and the Clerk had written to him to say that he had forwarded this bill to our Insurance Company. The Clerk was then asked about the correspondence from TRDC to which he advised that this related to a paper that was to be discussed by TRDC being withdrawn from the Agenda in order for them to consider any implications concerning Special Expenses.

CC687/09

Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm.