

## CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
**ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE**  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER  
ON TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2013 AT 8.00pm

Present Cllr Edmunds – In the Chair David Allison – Clerk to the Council

Cllrs Brading, Dann, Mitchell, Ridley, Shafe and Vane

Voting Members: 7

Members of the Public: 3

EA1000/13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Seeley.

EA1001/13 Declarations of Interest

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

EA1002/13 Representations from the Public

Representations were made by Mr Barry Grant on behalf of Croxley Green Residents Association in respect of Agenda item EA1008/13 Works within the Parish. Mr Grant stated that it was essential that any ground works within the Parish should be undertaken and controlled at a local level by Parish staff and jobs not put out to contractors as this would lead to a loss of accountability and quality of service. He continued that from the results of the Community Plan survey it was evident that residents want the Parish Council to do this work and not a third party.

Mr Grant also made representations in respect of Agenda Item EA1006/13 Budgets 2014/15 and in particular about the subscription to Croxley Green Society. Mr Grant stated that the subscription represented only a very small percentage of the Council's Precept and represented excellent value for money and kudos for the Council particularly in respect of the Revels which is an annual event enjoyed by thousands of local people. Mr Grant went on to comment that there was no conflict of interest by members of the Council and any role they may have with the Society given that it was a voluntary organisation which coordinated and arranged the detail for events to take place.

EA1003/13 Minutes

**Resolved:**

- that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman.

EA1004/13 Matters Arising

EA987/13 (Active Works List). It was asked the work on the Works List had been undertaken by the Ranger. The Clerk advised that the Ranger was indeed undertaken the works and was doing a very good job in catching up on aspects that needed to be addressed.

EA1005/13 Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and invited comments from Members about the list.

An update was requested concerning the installation of the external Christmas Tree outside the library. The Clerk advised that all the necessary engineering works for the tree pit and associated electrical works for the lights other than connection to the District Network Operator's service were started on Wednesday 27 November and was completed by Friday 29 November. The Clerk continued that the tree and lights were due for install on Monday 2 or Tuesday 3 December but the mains connection had not be undertaken as

this needs to be done by the District Network Operator which was due imminently.

Resolved:

- That the Works List for November be noted.

EA1006/13 Budgets 2014/15

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred to version3 dated 22 November of the Budget Schedule that was circulated previously.

The Clerk stated that at the current time submissions had been received for a range of projects in Stones Orchard (£1,000), the Dog Show (£250) and for the Wassail (£250). In addition provision was being made for Plants and Shrubs (£1,000), Dog Hygiene (£10,000), Christmas lights (£13,784), New Years Eve Fireworks (£4,500) and contingency sum for the War Memorial (£200).

The Clerk advised that subsequent to the issue of Version 3 of the Schedule submissions had been received for producing a new local map for walkers and cyclists (£1,000), Provision of Bird/Bat boxes (£150) and to commission a survey on the drainage pond on the Green near Killingdown Farm (£1,000).

A discussion ensued about ponds and the Clerk advised that there was already a simple management plan in place for the drainage pond on the Green. It was considered that the proposal to commission a survey should be less specific.

EA1007/13 Car Parking on the Green

The Chairman introduced this item and stated that there had of late been a number of complaints about unauthorised car parking on the Green. The Chairman continued that these complaints had been referred to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) as the land owner but they have stated that there is little that they can do to stop the parking.

It was commented that the main problem area were by the War Memorial, New Road to Stones Orchard and in the vicinity of the Guild of Sports entrance particularly at week ends when there is rugby being played.

It was pointed out that TRDC does have Byelaws which cover the Green which does prohibit unauthorised vehicles but TRDC have said that they do not have the resources to take civil action against offenders.

It was generally agreed that the response from TRDC was disappointing but efforts should be concentrated on prevention rather than legal recourse. It was considered that the tarmac area by the War Memorial which was being used as a car parking space could have the tarmac removed, grassed over and the drop kerb removed or as an alternative option two posts and a chain between the two could be installed.

It was considered that there should be more 'no parking' signs and that a flyer should be place under windscreen wipers on unauthorised parked cars advising that it was against the Byelaw to park and refer to the environmental impact and damage to the integrity of the Green.

After further discussion it was proposed that there should be a joint initiative with TRDC to address this matter and budget provision be put into the Council budget with a request for match funding from TRDC.

**Resolved:**

- That a budget proposal for £2,500 be included in the Council's budget with a request to TRDC for match funding to restrict parking on the Green.

EA1008/13 Works within the Parish

The Chairman introduced this item and asked Cllr Ridley to elaborate. Cllr Ridley referred to his paper and said that the use of contractors to undertake works in the Parish area would provide best value for money for residents.

A Cllr suggested that there should be one full time Ranger and to use contractors and that he was willing to assist in contacting contractors and arranging contracts.

The Clerk advised that it was not for Councillors to interfere with the administration of this Council and in particular to sort out contractors as this is not their role. The Clerk continued that for a Councillor to be directly involved in sorting out contracts would probably be unethical let alone against the Councillor Code of Conduct and the spirit of the Code.

It was pointed out that the recruitment of a Senior Ranger was in progress and it would be totally wrong to place all groundworks under contract as it was very important that the Council keeps groundwork intelligence within the organisation otherwise this would be lost.

A number of Cllrs pointed out that value for money is not only in terms of the financial benefit but comes also in the form of the Rangers being ambassadors for the Council and this value would not be there with contractors. It was pointed out that as the Rangers are employees they take more pride in the area and the work they do rather than it just being another job for a contractor.

It was commented that for a proper market test a very comprehensive and an exceptionally detailed written document would need to be prepared and to try to set out every single diverse function that the Rangers perform would take a considerable amount of time in accounting terms.

A Cllr referred to a recent presentation by Hertfordshire County Council which he attended from which it was very clear that there was a very marked thrust to devolving responsibilities for local matters to Parish level and that progressively Parishes will be expected to take on more, to directly fund more aspects locally and to become self sustaining.

On the question of ownership of the footpaths in Croxley Green, the Clerk advised that these are owned by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) all be it that in the majority of cases they were public footpaths on the Definitive Map with the public having a right of access over them.

It was commented that given the fact that the Parish Council has agreed to enter into discussions with TRDC regarding land acquisition that the position regarding the future of groundwork management should be held in abeyance.

On the matter of getting TRDC to empty the litter bins on the Green the Clerk pointed out that this matter had been raised before in September 2012 and at that time TRDC advised that it was not just a matter of taking this element out of the maintenance contract that the Council has with them but the whole of the contract would need to be reviewed. The Clerk added that the Rangers have to go to the waste depot anyway to dispose of any arisings following other work that have undertaken so there was not a journey purely to dispose of litter.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendations from Cllr Ridley's paper be voted upon as a whole and a recorded vote was requested.

Those in favour of Cllr Ridley's proposals were Cllr Ridley and Cllr Vane. Those against the proposals were Cllrs Brading, Dann, Edmunds, Mitchell and Shafe.

**Resolved:**

- That no action is taken on any of the proposals put forward by Cllr Ridley.

EA1009/13 Closure

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.