

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2008 AT 8.00 pm

Present Cllr Seeley in the Chair D Allison – Clerk to the Council
A Taft – Minute Taker

Cllrs Birch, Brading, C Jefford, Shafe and Vassiliou
Voting Members 6
In Attendance: Cllr Brand

EA492/08 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Cllrs Dann, Martin and Norman

EA493/08 Declarations of Interest
The Chairman recommended that declarations of interest be made throughout the meeting if necessary.

EA494/08 Representations from the Public
There were no public present.

EA495/08 Minutes
There were various amendments to the first three paragraphs of item EA488/08 and the revised paragraphs now read:

“The Chairman introduced this item and updated those present on the events that had occurred since she received her copy of the letter dated 27 August 2008 from Peter Brooker to the Clerk. The Chairman was confused about the comments in the third paragraph which stated that the Parish Council did not wish to extend the current contract and reference to correspondence dated 5 April 2007 was made. The Chairman, being unable to find this correspondence, visited TRDC and requested and received a copy of a letter dated 5 April 2007 to the Clerk from Alison Page. In the meantime, Cllr Jefford had found her copy of this letter.

When Cllrs Seeley and Jefford compared letters, they found that they differed in that the copy obtained from TRDC had extra wording to the effect of “as you have previously indicated that you do not wish for an extension” (in relation to the maintenance contract for the Green and Stones Orchard). The Clerk confirmed that these words were not on the original, signed copy that he had received on 10 April and copied to Parish Councillors. Cllrs Seeley and Jefford then met with Peter Brooker and Karl Murdoch of TRDC, the latter being requested to attend the meeting by the above Cllrs. However, neither Peter Brooker nor Karl Murdoch were able to explain or offer proof of this alleged claim but that correspondence was being looked for and that this would be available by 2 September 2008.

When Cllr Seeley returned to TRDC, she was given copies of old Minutes which stated the same information; that the Parish Council did not wish to extend the grounds maintenance contract. When Cllr Seeley queried this she was told that they could not explain it but that it is a very small matter as far as they (TRDC) are concerned. Cllr Seeley stated that it is not a small matter as far as the Parish Council and local residents are concerned. Karl Murdoch informed Cllr Seeley that he would continue to search from correspondence from the Parish Council to corroborate their claim and would contact her or the Parish Council.”

It was proposed by Cllr Jefford and seconded by Cllr Brading that the amended Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2008 be approved as correct. The proposal was agreed and the Chairman signed the minutes.

EA496/08

Matters Arising

EA485/08 (EA473/08; EA462/08; EA451/08 Matters Arising). The Clerk was asked if the meeting had been arranged to discuss the future of the Basketball Club to which he confirmed that the meeting will be held on Friday 10 October at 10.30am. He added that as well as himself, Mr Munroe, the two Coaches, the Sports Coordinator of Rickmansworth School and the Sports Development Officer of Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) would be attending.

EA485/08 (EA474/08; Active Works List). The Clerk was asked if he had written to Hertfordshire County Council, TRDC, Countryside Management Service and the Guild of Sport to offer services such as litter picking, weeding, strimming and tree work in return for payment. The Clerk replied that he had not done so as yet.

EA486/08 (Active Works List). The Clerk was asked if the Kissing Gate at Stones Orchard had been reinstated to which he replied that it had.

EA488/08 (Maintenance Contract with TRDC for the Green and Stones Orchard). The Clerk was asked if the other Ranger had Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance to which he answered no. The Clerk added that he had been in contact with TRDC as the nominating body to request CRB checks for all members of staff. It was asked if the Parish Council staff actually need CRB checks as there is not one-to-one contact with vulnerable adults and they do not work with children. It was asked if the Rangers were qualified First Aiders and the Clerk responded that one of the Rangers did indeed have this qualification.

It was asked why the Parish Council did not have a 'full blown' Health and Safety policy to which the Clerk responded that the Minute accurately reports the fact that as the Parish Council only has four members of staff this is not required. The Parish Council's Health and Safety policy is based on the model policy for Parish Councils. The Chairman stated that this has gone against us with TRDC to which the Clerk replied that the Parish Council cannot compare or compete with large, Corporate companies.

It was then asked why the Health and Safety policy that had accompanied the questionnaire did not have an approved date nor a review date and the Clerk concurred with this comment.

[Post meeting note: The Health and Safety policy was agreed at the 185th Full Council meeting of 24th April 2003 (item 10)].

One Member suggested that when the Clerk and Peter Brooker of TRDC set the Agenda for their forthcoming meeting, that an item (a debrief on how the questionnaire was scored) be placed on the Agenda. It was suggested to the Clerk that the Rangers join TRDC on their vulnerable adults training programme to which the Clerk clarified that TRDC had only quite recently undertaken this training but that he was hoping to be able to link into it.

Regarding future works for the Rangers, the Clerk was asked if he had written to Hertfordshire Highways and the Keep Croxley Green Group to which he replied that he had not. He added that the Rangers had been helping out briefly on Croxley Common Moor but any ongoing arrangement would need further discussion. The Chairman stated that this was a very important issue.

The Clerk was asked that if the Rangers spend 30% of their time maintaining the Green and Stones Orchard, what is the other 70% of their time spent on. The Clerk responded that he was very disappointed that a former Chairman of the Parish Council does not know what work the Parish Council undertakes. This issue again highlighted the importance of a more detailed Active Works List, detailing the time spent on the different locations and activities.

EA497/08 Active Works List

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk referred to the Active Works List that had been circulated with the Agenda. The Clerk was asked how serious the scratch to the Land Rover was and he replied that it was very minor. The Clerk also clarified that the Artichoke Public House on the Green had taken up some of their decking and the Rangers were on standby to begin work on reinstating the Green.

The Active Works List was criticised again for not providing a detailed enough account of the Rangers time and the Chairman pointed out that the Rangers' day sheets were available in the Parish Office for anybody to view. The Clerk confirmed that a new day sheet had been introduced and once computerised, would give a detailed analysis of time spent on different locations and activities. The Clerk was asked for a time scale for this to be completed and he informed Members that he was working on this but that other priorities also have to be dealt with.

EA498/08 Maintenance Contract with TRDC for the Green and Stones Orchard

Cllr Brading declared an interest in this item and refrained from the discussion.

This item was introduced by the Chairman and the Clerk stated that the current situation is as it was at full Council, that a meeting had been scheduled for Friday 24 October with Peter Brooker of TRDC and that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk of the Council had been invited to attend. Cllr Shafe stated that she was unaware of her invitation to this meeting until she read the Council Minutes. Cllr Jefford suggested that Cllr Seeley, as Chairman of the Environment and Amenity Committee and instigator of the need for this meeting should attend and that if possible she would also like to attend. The Clerk confirmed that he would mention this to Peter Brooker of TRDC when he meets with him on 9 October.

EA499/08 Maintenance of the Guild of Sport Football Pitches

Cllr Brand declared an interest in this item and refrained from the discussion.

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk informed those present that the situation was unchanged since the discussion at full Council. The cost for the cut had been calculated at £61.12 and it was agreed that the Parish Council cuts the grass at a cost of £70 per cut and that the Guild of Sport be invited to apply for a S137 grant to cover the cost of a twelve month period. The Clerk added that he had written to the Guild of Sport and had enclosed an application form for a S137 grant and he was currently waiting for their reply.

EA500/08 Christmas Lights, Scots Hill

This item was introduced by the Chairman and the Clerk advised that after the last full Council meeting when it had been agreed that Christmas lights be installed on Scots Hill (eastbound carriageway) the orders for the necessary works had been placed.

EA501/08 Fireworks 2008

The Chairman introduced this item and the Clerk informed those present that an order for £4000 had been placed with Whizz Bang for a firework display on New Year's Eve. Given the large number of people of all ages who attend this event, concerns were expressed about road safety. It was believed that if a Risk Assessment were to be undertaken, road safety would be a high risk. For that reason it was requested that the road be closed 15 minutes either side of midnight to allow pedestrians safe access to and from the firework display. The Clerk stated that he would discuss this matter with Inspector George Holland and would act upon his advice.

EA502/08

Play Equipment for Play Areas in Croxley Green

This item was introduced by the Chairman and the Clerk stated that Cllrs Martin and Shafe had met with TRDC back in May when TRDC had said that they needed more detailed information. The Clerk added that both TRDC and the Parish Council would need to discuss this item in their forthcoming budget rounds. Cllr Shafe reported that since May, both she and Cllr Martin had been out to visit sites recommended by TRDC and had come up with ideas. Cllr Shafe added that they had done all their research and intended to put a plan together during the October half term holiday. It was asked if signs could be put up in the play area asking users what they would like and this sparked the idea for an item to be placed on the November Junior Council Agenda, with the possibility of the Junior Cllrs creating posters of their vision. It was acknowledged that it was unlikely that the Parish Council's budget proposal would be agreed it time to submit to TRDC for their budget discussions.

EA503/08

Flowers in Croxley

The Chairman introduced this item and informed the Committee that a meeting had been held on 6 October, the Winter bedding plants had been ordered and the bulbs were ready for the three schools involved in the bulb planting. It was hoped that the three barrels would shortly be in position at the shops at the East and West end of Baldwins Lane. Mrs Grant had obtained permission for the roundabout to be planted up. Volunteers had cleared the flower beds on the Watford Road and were over-wintering the geraniums in the hope that they could be used again next year. The Chairman added that she intended to submit a budget proposal for next and forthcoming years. It was pointed out that 201-208 Watford Road should actually be 200 – 208 Watford Road.

It was asked if TRDC's enhancement scheme for the shops at the east end of Watford Road would affect the barrel planters and the Chairman confirmed that TRDC are not beginning these works until April 2009. The Clerk added that he would be in contact with Peter Kerr of TRDC regarding the specific siting of the barrel display.

EA504/08

Tree Bulletin

There were no tree works to be reported.

EA505/08

Closure

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