

MINUTES OF THE CROSSWAYS PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD AT 6PM ON WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2010 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr Andrew Brewer (Chairman), Cllr Elaine Stenning (Vice Chairman (Finance))
Cllr Ron Arnold, Cllr Barry Thomas, Cllr Kathy Foster and Cllr Ted Rowley

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Cllr Terrie Connor and Cllr Dave Harris.

ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no Declarations of Interest.

ITEM 3 DECLARATIONS OF PREDETERMINATION There were no Declarations of Pre-determination.

ITEM 4 TO AGREE AN ADJUSTMENT TO THE BUDGET 2011 – 2012 Cllr Brewer explained the circumstances which brought the Council to convene this extra-ordinary meeting. The Council has received notification that Dorset County Council (DCC) is terminating the agreement whereby this Council arranges for grass cutting of some DCC land in the village. In future DCC will use their own contractors and will be responsible for all their own grass cutting in Crossways. Crossways Parish Council employs Steve Manuel under a contract negotiated to cut all our grass plus DCC areas within the Parish. The termination takes effect in April 2011 and we renegotiate our grass cutting contract in September of the same year. The formula used by DCC and the extremely advantageous price given us by Steve Manuel means that for many years we, as a Council have received more in grant than the cost to us of the service provided and this offsets our own maintenance costs. The sudden change of policy means we are faced with the need to cover this shortfall. It is therefore proposed that we undertake this over two financial years to spread the impact on our precept requirements. In year one we will allow for a draw of up to £2,000 from the open spaces monies held on deposit with West Dorset District Council. This will then see a need to increase the precept to £29603.00 a rise of 9.23% (revised copy attached)(rather than 16% if we try and cover the whole shortfall in one year). We then shall be able to review costs in September 2011 when the contracts are renegotiated and then stage a further increase in the next budget round if it is necessary. Cllr Rowley stated that the Government has reduced its grants to County Councils and it is Government policy that the reduction in funding should not be recovered from council-tax payers but should be absorbed by cutting waste and increasing efficiency in Town Halls. However, the Highways Dept now intends to save money in its own budget by changing the arrangement between the Parish Council and the County Council for the maintenance of grass areas. The effect of this change will be a reduction in the annual income of the Parish Council of about £2500. As a Parish Council, we only have a small budget which is spent on unavoidable costs. It follows, therefore, that the Highway's saving will unavoidably be passed-on to the taxpayer in the form of an increase in the the Parish Council precept. This is contrary Government policy.

The adjustment to the precept figure to £29603.00 was agreed.

Proposed Cllr Brewer, seconded Cllr Rowley

AGREED

Signed Date 2011