

LITTLEPORT PARISH COUNCIL

Report of a Parish Council Meeting held in The Barn on Monday 18th November 2002 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor D T Murfitt
Councillor B E Boddington
Councillor F J Brown
Councillor J H Crane
Councillor S Green
Councillor B W Hayes
Councillor J M Howard
Councillor L E J Murfitt
Councillor G Norman
Councillor J M Peachey
Councillor A N Wright

Also present County Councillor P Bailey, District Councillor N Morrison and two members of the public.

1. AFTER SCHOOL CLUB:

The chairman welcomed Mrs Jo Coggins and Mrs Sheila Burgess to the meeting and invited them to make a presentation on the After School Club. Copies of their business plan were circulated to all councillors.

Mrs Burgess reported staffing levels required a ratio of 1:8 children and this was a large part of their budget. The cost of transporting the children from Millfield School to the Youth Club in Parsons Lane was another major expense after the charges made by the school for the hire of the Youth Centre. The difference between fees paid and running costs is in the region of £8000. Applications have been made to various sources for funding including the lottery, local businesses and Town Lands Charity. The Club is registered for 32 children and is open 38 weeks a year.

Councillors were invited to ask questions, concern was raised at the charges made by the school to hire the premises. It is understood the school governors are being approached to reduce these charges. Currently looking for new premises to accommodate the club to avoid some of the costs including transport.

Councillor Wright proposed that a meeting of all interested parties be held to discuss the dilemma, the group needs physical responsibility and permanent future. Agreed the Clerk arrange a meeting between Mesdames Coggins and Burgess together with representatives from County, District and Parish Councils and the headmistress of the Community Primary School. This meeting to take place before Christmas.

The Club currently has debts of almost £1000.00. Councillor Mrs Howard proposed giving the Club £1000.00 seconded by Councillor Norman. Councillor Hayes proposed an amendment to give £1000.00 as an interim payment to keep the club open into the New Year and that their business plan does not rely on future payments

from the Council. Agreed unanimously. Mesdames Coggins and Burgess were thanked for attending.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a] Messages of thanks were received from the Air Ambulance and Neighbourhood Watch Group.
- b] Councillor Brown has resigned as the Parish Council's representative on the Board of Governors at Millfield School.
- c] The FLAG group are looking into setting up a grass track racing club for young people
- d] Meetings: Fens LeAP Leader + 10th December and Voluntary Network AGM 6th December
- e] The following publications are available from the Clerk:
Countryside Agency Vital Villages update 2 and Step by step guide for parish councils transport grant; Rural Direct Annual Review; Clerk and Councils Direct; Local Council Review; Biodiversity leaflet; hlec news; brochures on Energy Efficiency Grants and Countryside rights if Way Act 2000 and Vehicular Access across Common and other land (England)

3 APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox, Kerridge and Pyrah and CBO Carey.

4 MINUTES:

The reports of the Finance and Parish Council Meetings held on 21st October 2002, the Planning and Special Finance Meeting held on 4th November 2002 were confirmed.

5. FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Councillor Boddington reported that the British Legion had made a donation of £250.00 towards St George's Church Clock.

Recommendations to ask the Littleport Business Group to supply additional information about the proposed "welcome sign" and to ask the Citizens Advice Bureau to submit their grant application in time for the appropriate meeting. Agreed.

It was further agreed to ask the Citizens Advice Bureau to reconsider their closure of the Littleport Surgery.

6. FOLLOW UP DIARY:

The Clerk reported:

New Street Light still not operational. Councillor Brown had been in contact with 24Seven and was assured of answer within days to resolve this matter.

Copies of the Car Parking Orders and Dog Fouling by laws had been received. Copy of the Car Park order has already been passed on to the Police.

Freedom of Information Act Model received too late for inclusion on this month's agenda.

Confirmation from County Council Highways on receipt of the Parish Council's bid for the 2003/4 Jointly Funded bidding round.

The illuminated scroll for Ron Barber was displayed. A suitable frame to be purchased and the scroll will be presented to him at the next Parish Council Meeting.

Concern was raised about the new hedging at Littleport Cemetery. Appears to be dead. Branching Out to be contacted.

7. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Hayes reported on a recent meeting to discuss the Harley Davidson Art project. Strong opposition had been met to site the memorial to Mr Harley at Hawthorn Close. Consideration was now being given to siting a memorial on the green opposite St George's Church subject to approval by the church.

The Queen's speech reported on measures to combat Ant Social Behaviour. Full details are awaited.

Councillor Wright raised concern at the amount of paper work received with the Policy Resources Committee agenda. On the positive side the new Bandstand for Jubilee Gardens has been ordered.

Councillor Morrison Hereward Housing was expanding into Forest Heath. The District Council had won eight out of these years 100 awards for Loo of the Year. Littleport had won again. It was agreed a letter of appreciation be sent to the cleaner Linda Benstead.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Bailey reminded councillors he can always be contacted by E-mail. He had received representations about the flooding at the Station underpass. He was attempting to contact Rail track to resolve this matter. Councillor Crane offered his ferry service.

Councillor Bailey was willing to attend the meeting for the After School Club.

9. PRECEPT 2003/2004

The Precept estimates recommended by the Finance Committee at their meeting held on 4th November 2002 having been previously circulated were approved

A copy of the Precept follows these minutes.

10. PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY:

A ballot was held to fill the Parish Council Vacancy:

Mrs L Cooper 6 votes

Mrs C Ambrose Smith 5 votes

Mrs Cooper was duly co-opted to fill the vacancy.

11. POLICING ISSUES AND REPORT FROM Ely POLICE CONSULTATION MEETING:

Inspector Causer's response to Community Beat Officers covering reactive duties elsewhere was received. A number of local Parish Councils had responded to a request for their views on the matter and their particular areas of concern. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism and car crime were common areas of concern.

Councillors Hayes and Boddington reported on a positive Police Consultation Meeting. Car crime in Littleport had been targeted and to date 12 arrests had been made.

Main Street is seen as a no go area and requires more policing. If crimes are not reported they do not show a true reflection and therefore do not appear on the statistics.

A questionnaire circulated to 250 commuters at Ely Station resulted in 41 responses. Vandalism was rated the highest crime, the preferred method of policing was foot patrols.

Councillors Howard and Peachey had carried out a survey a few years ago with similar results

It was agreed a letter be sent to the Police Ombudsman asking for the procedure to follow if a complaint were to be made about policing.

12. PORTACABIN:

Councillor Boddington reported on an offer of a Portacabin made to Rev Chesher for the youth of the village by RAF Witton. The building would not be available before April 2003. Free Spirit youth workers had shown an interest in setting up a base. A suitable site for the building would be required with connections to main services.

It was moved to accept the offer of the Portacabin and to arrange a meeting with interested parties to follow the skate board park meeting on 2nd December. It was agreed to invite members of the newly formed Youth Council to attend this meeting and involve them at an early stage.

13. WELCOME PACK:

Councillor Crane reported on the progress being made to produce a welcome pack for the village. A 40 page A5 booklet will be produced combined with an A4 folder. A local graphic designer will produce the art work for the cover. Sally Bonnett will collate the information and Mrs Sharon Murfitt will visit local businesses seeking advertising sponsorship.

14. AGE CONCERN:

Councillor Mrs Howard reported on the success of the scheme 17 people are currently benefiting from the warden service. However some of the initial funders had only given for one year leading to a shortfall to be made up by others.

Councillor Wright felt other agencies should share a joint responsibility; too many projects receive only one year funding with many players then dropping out. The parish council cannot fund everything in the village from their limited budget.

15. SCHOOL BUS – BRANDON CREEK:

Councillor Norman reported on the recent changes made by the new contractor to the pick up and drop off points for children living on Henry Thompson's Farm at Brandon Creek and attend the City of Ely College.

Numerous people have been contacted about the safety issues raised by these changes and the refusal of the coach driver to drive down the farm road. The A10 is a busy single carriageway road and with the dark evenings, the hazards of crossing a busy road in the dark and thereby putting the children's lives at risk. This stretch of road has had a high number of accidents over the past few years including 4 fatalities.

It was agreed a letter be sent to the Education Department at Shire Hall and ask for a safety inspector to look into this matter. A copy of the letter to be sent to the contractor who is understood to have sub contracted the work. County Councillor Bailey will also intercede on behalf of the parents and children. If a satisfactory answer is not forthcoming in seven days the press will be informed.

Councillor Crane left the meeting.

16. SAFER VILLAGES INITIATIVE:

Councillor Mrs Howard asked if the sub committee was now defunct. Currently there are no projects for the committee, however it was agreed to hold any future meetings after a planning meeting in the hopes of attracting new members.

17. LITTLEPORT BUSINESS GROUP:

Councillor Mrs Howard brought to the attention of the council a press report given by the Littleport Business Group complaining about the parish council alleged response to a Countryside Agency questionnaire. Agreed a letter be sent to the group pointing out this council has the interest of the whole village at heart and was not happy with the press statement.

18. RACE RELATIONS (Amendment) ACT 2000:

As a result of new legislation, local councils are under a general duty to promote race equality and need to demonstrate they have due regard to this duty and thereby councillors resolved to adopt the following resolution:

Littleport Parish Council acknowledges the general duty placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Council will continue within its' functions and policies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote racial equality between people of different racial groups.

A final draft guide for local councils for Racial Equality will be available soon.

In confirmation of the foregoing report

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE