

LITTLEPORT PARISH COUNCIL

Report of a Parish Council Meeting held in The Barn on Monday 21st July 2003 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor D T Murfitt
Councillor N A Binks
Councillor F J Brown
Councillor F J W Brown
Councillor L Cooper
Councillor P M Cox
Councillor J H Crane
Councillor S Green
Councillor B W Hayes
Councillor S D Kerridge
Councillor L E J Murfitt
Councillor G Norman
Councillor M Pyrah
Councillor A N Wright

Also present District Councillors Morrison and Rodriques

1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - i Members noted the successful conclusion to the first Harley Davidson weekend and agreed a letter of congratulations be sent to the Littleport Society. The siting of the memorial is still an issue and hopefully the 1903 Ordnance Survey Map will prove conclusively the highways issue.
 - ii Mike Broughton from Cannon Kirk will attend the next Planning Meeting on August 11th 2003 to discuss the revised Highfield development.
 - iii Free Spirit had expressed keenness to utilise the Caretaker's bungalow. The Chairman was prepared to raise the issue again if sufficient support was forthcoming.
 - iv The Cemetery Mower had been damaged again. Agreed the Chairman and Clerk meet with the staff and issue them with formal warnings.
 - v Cavity Wall Insulation grants are available to homeowners over 60 years of age.
 - vi The following publications are available from the Clerk:
Flood Action – Wicksteed Leisure Guide to Disability Discrimination Act 1995 – hlec news – Local council Review – fire Service Corporate Performance Plan 2003/4 - Consultation paper on indemnities for relevant members and officers – Clerk and Councils Direct –Tackling Substance Misuse – Footpath 14 Creation Order – Ely & District Training Group minutes – new bus services coming into service from September.
 - vii ECDC Meeting on tackling crime and anti social behaviour 30th July
 - viii Rural Housing enabler attending August meeting
 - ix Members allowances cease on 30th September 2003
 - x ECDC Best Value Performance Plan 2003 available from Libraries or on the web
 - xi public footpath 11 (part) extinguishment order has been posted

2. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Howard

3. MINUTES:

The reports of the Finance and Parish Council Meetings held on 16th June 2003, The Play Equipment, Allotments, Footpaths and Open Spaces Working Party meeting held on 23rd June 2003 and the Planning Committee Meeting held on 30th June were confirmed

4. FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Councillor Cox reported on the Finance Committee recommendation:

To award a £150.00 grant towards the Fishing Trip and to ask for future applications are made in line with other grant applications in October and March of each year.

Agreed.

5. FOLLOW UP DIARY:

The Clerk reported

- i According to local resident Ragwort a notifiable weed was present on land adjacent to the allotments. DEFRA have supplied an official complaints form. Prior to proceeding with a complaint the owner of the land will be approached.
- ii. Highways reported that the Interactive Signs should now be working properly on Station Road and Wisbech Road. Understood this is not so. Highways had responded on the delivery issues in Main Street. Agreed a letter be sent to the Co-op about the problem. The pavement outside Bambers had recently been repaired and has already been damaged by delivery vehicles. The Business Group will be contacted about the issue.
- iii John Selby the Conservation Officer reported that there is no freeze on the regeneration funds for current schemes.
Shop front enhancements scheme finishes in September
Bollards for Ponds Hill are at Highways Depot and just waiting for manpower to erect them; additional bollards will be placed near to the Village Sign.
Bus shelter for Crown Lane has been ordered. The previous contractors John Henry have been sacked.
New street lights for Main Street have been ordered
- iv Skate Park: ECDC have confirmed a £10,000 grant. Countryside Agency and Hereward Housing turned down the applications
- v Maintenance of the Harley Davidson Art Work – requires occasional washing down with a pressure hose
- vi Tree Officer is now back in post and has inspected the trees in the Cemetery; none of the works recommended is urgent. Cannon Kirk's Construction Manager has visited the Paddocks and will do the necessary works on the tree after consultation with the Tree Officer

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Morrison reported that an Enforcement Order had been placed on Murfitt's Industries for noise pollution.

Councillor F J W Brown pointed out the inconsistencies regarding working conditions imposed on businesses located nearby who cannot operate outside certain hours, yet Murfitt's can operate through the night.

Councillor Wright reported he was Chairman of the Licensing Committee and Policy and Resources Committee and Councillor F J W Brown was Vice Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

There was a shortfall in the revenue budget and a strategy was in place to try and maintain the present level of council tax with no more than inflation linked rise.

The pension fund for the Local Government Officers was protected and was likely to cost rate payers an extra £125,000.

Following a survey of council owned property a huge catch up on essential works would require an additional £80,000 per annum for a few years.

In three years the council would lose the interest in the bank of £150,000 per annum.

The first priority on spending would be the core legal services. The introduction of car parking charges in Ely was being considered to alleviate parking problems and costly repairs to the car parks.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

No report

8. PLAY EQUIPMENT, ALLOTMENTS, FOOTPATHS AND OPEN SPACES:

Councillor Norman reported on the two awards made this year for the best kept allotments.

The old play equipment and mats had been removed from the Parsons Lane site to Pepper Lots Farm awaiting an inspection by Wicksteed Leisure to see if any were salvageable for re-use on other play areas.

It was noted any sub contracting works carried out should be put out to tender.

9. HIGH STREET TOILETS:

Cambridgeshire County Council was offering to sell the redundant toilets in High Street and the park area for around £40,000. The figures should be re-examined, the site is too small for a building plot and the Yew tree has a preservation order.

The Littleport Society confirmed they had no use for the building and the Conservation Officer had no objections to demolition.

It was agreed to write back offering to pay a peppercorn rent for the site and the Parish Council would demolish the building.

10. CCTV CAMERAS:

The District Council were inviting proposals for the re-use of the CCTV equipment and would be offered free of charge to Parish Councils.

It was agreed more information was required into the running costs, installation costs and monitoring before a proposal could be made. The Clerk would gather as much information on the costs of the scheme before calling a meeting to discuss the matter. It was agreed that the local Business Group and the Town Centre Officer Sally Bonnett should be invited to the meeting to assist in drawing up proposals. The Clerk to ask for an extension on the deadline for proposals. Ray Harding to be contacted to see if there are any funds that can be accessed for the scheme.

11. YOUTH PROVISION:

Councillor L E J Murfitt reported that the Littleport Community Primary School was not prepared to permit use of a proposed community room in the new primary school for a youth club.

Following the response from the College Principal Ian Gartshore. Councillor Mrs Kerridge proposed

- a) Parish Council should write to Cambridgeshire County Council saying it is a Government requirement to provide a safe youth club in our village which our youngsters can walk to safely
- b) We should ask Mr Ian Gartshore Principal of City of Ely Community College to attend a meeting of the Parish Council to discuss youth provision *
- c) if the mobile classroom is available it should be offered to the Toddler Group as a temporary home so the existing youth club can be used for the youngsters of the village again.

* We should also like him to explain the current expenditure of £10,000 on youth provision in Littleport.

Seconded by Councillor Crane and carried unanimously.

12. QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME:

The documents relating to the Quality Parish Council scheme were received.

13. BEST VALUE HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE SURVEY:

The Chairman and Clerk would complete the County Council's Best Value of Highway Maintenance and Network Management Stage 2 Survey.

14. AGE CONCERN WARDEN SCHEME:

In the absence of Councillor Mrs Howard, Councillors Crane and Mrs Kerridge reported on the continued success of the scheme and the need to expand the service to two wardens due to a waiting list for their services. This would require additional funding.

15. HIGH DENSITY HOUSING:

Councillor Cox expressed his grave concerns about the high density proposed for the new Highfield development. Having illustrated what he considered planning mistakes around the Parish over the last 50 years he could foresee similar problems in the future if this density is permitted.

The PPG3 government edict specifies 30/50 houses per hectare and the local council are pushing for the upper limit. At this level of density it will make it difficult to maintain infrastructure access to the services without disruption and it is unlikely the emergency services will be able to gain access without hazards.

The Planners are trying to urbanise the village and our anger should be directed at East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners for taking the PPG3 to the limit.

16 LITTLEPORT PARTNERSHIP:

The minutes of the last Littleport Partnership Meeting were circulated. Members wished to record their appreciation to Councillor Hayes for his good works whilst Chairman of the Partnership.

The Clerk to check on the Constitution of the Partnership in relation to the appointment of Chairman. Copies of the Constitution will be circulated to all members.

It was agreed the Clerk should write to Ray Harding the Economic Development Officer wishing him well upon his departure from the District Council.

In confirmation of the foregoing report

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE