

LITTLEPORT PARISH COUNCIL

Report of a Parish Council Meeting held in The Barn on Monday 20th February 2006 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor P M Cox
Councillor C M Ambrose Smith
Councillor D J Boyd
Councillor F J Brown
Councillor F J W Brown
Councillor J H Crane
Councillor J M Howard
Councillor S D Kerridge
Councillor D T Murfitt
Councillor L E J Murfitt
Councillor G Norman
Councillor M Pyrah
Councillor C W Webber
Councillor A N Wright

1. PCSO PRESENTATION:

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Alan Savill to the meeting.

Sergeant Savill outlined the works of the Parish Council funded PCSO and reported on a pilot scheme run in Ely whereby the City Council set monthly tasks for the officer to add to their normal work load. A maximum of three tasks are set monthly and the PCSO reports back at the end of the month.

The PCSO visits schools, visits victims of crime to reassure and intelligence gather; this frees up the time of the Community Beat Manager (CBM) to make arrests and carry out the duties not covered in the PCSO's brief.

The District is being hit with distraction burglaries

The Home Office funded PCSO has been given responsibility for Little Downham and does a three hour weekly patrol there. Staffing levels under Health and Safety after 8.00pm must be double crewed.

Sergeant Savill then took questions. Anti social behaviour appears to be returning to the Main Street. Offensive language, motor scooters and car nuisance were also raised. These issues could be highlighted on the "tasking sheet"

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Savill for attending.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Here to Help Fare takes place at Littleport Leisure on 24th February.

The Assistant Clerk has tendered her resignation with effect from 10th March 2006. A sub committee would look at the requirements for a replacement with a view to the long term future and report back to full council.

3. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hayes, County Councillor Mrs Bean and District Councillor Morrison

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillors Howard, Kerridge, Norman and the Clerk declared their interests in Agenda Item 13.

5 MINUTES:

The reports of the Finance and Parish Council Meetings held on 16th January 2006, The Planning Committee Meeting and the Cemetery Working Group Meeting held on 23rd January 2006 were confirmed.

6. FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Councillor Norman reported on the recommendation accept the 2.95% pay rise for council staff with effect from 1st April 2006. Agreed

7. FOLLOW UP DIARY:

The Clerk reported:

Local Development Framework will be addressing issues covering smaller communities such as Little Ouse and Black Horse Drove later in the year.

A letter had been sent to Trevor Eagle the District Council Enforcement Officer drawing his attention to two buildings in the Littleport Conservation area that are unsightly. (Curry House and outbuildings at Laburnum Lodge) A property owner in Ely was served a notice to improve his building. Mr Eagle's response was not acceptable and it was agreed to ask our District Councillors to take up the matter and to respond to Mr Eagles' letter noting the dissatisfaction at the lack of positive action.

SS Ambrose has been contacted again about the repainting of the Village Sign. Awaiting response.

Jane Hollingworth is attending the next planning meeting to discuss affordable housing and rural exception sites. (13th March).

Street Lights in Main Street and Granary Lane are still faulty. Clerk will chase up.

8. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Wright reported:

District Council will present to full council a budget increase of 2.5%. County Council, Police etc have increased their budgets by 5%.

A possible solution to the Old School Close contaminated land issues will be put to full council this week. The Government has been unhelpful by not clearly defining levels of contamination. Five houses have severe contamination above the defined level and 26 properties are below that level. Grants from the Government and County Council will be available for the severe cases and the proposition to assist the others with money taken from

reserves of £370000 (This equates to 60p on the rates for 5 years) will be voted on this Thursday.

9. CEMETERY WORKING PARTY:

The spokesperson Councillor Mrs Howard reported:

Interviews to fill the vacancy of Handyman will take place on 6th March 2006.

Funding is in the budget to meet the costs of laying two new paths at the Cemetery at a cost of £3300. Agreed to instruct Ringway to proceed.

Grubbing up hedges. Councillor D T Murfitt left the meeting. Councillor L E J Murfitt made council aware of new regulations regarding the disposal of debris. A duty of care disposal notice will be required if the hedging is removed from the site and not taken to a licensed tip. This rule does not apply if the hedge is chipped on site prior to disposal. D T Murfitt and Son had produced the lower written quote and they would be asked if they can comply with the new regulations.

10 POLICE CRIME REPORT:

Inspector Gallop's letter was received. Councillor F J W Brown queried the hours worked by the funded PCSO in the absence of any monthly reports.

Councillor Wright raised concerns about the under provision of Police in East Cambridgeshire and the unfair distribution of manpower within the county. Agreed a letter be sent to the Chief Constable raising the concerns.

11. LITTLEPORT PARTNERSHIP:

The minutes of the Partnership Meeting were received.

Councillor Norman outlined the action plan discussed at the meeting which included consultation on the new community facility, upgrading the kitchen in the Village Hall, updating Welcome Pack.

Councillor Wright pointed out the entire Village Hall was in need of a revamp and would like to see more discussion and a joint approach.

12. LITTLEPORT YOUNG PEOPLES ACTIVITY DAY:

Members received the correspondence on the one day event on May 31st 2006.

Councillor Wright questioned the amount of resources to fund a one day event.

The Chairman explained the history of Youth Development in Littleport and Councillor Webber reported that both Mark Peck from the Youth Service and Diana Walsh Community Development Worker were both very enthusiastic and delivering a good service.

It was agreed to nominate the chairman to attend the meeting about the proposed event.

13. LITTLEPORT VILLAGE HALL:

Councillors Howard, Kerridge, Norman and the Clerk left the meeting.

Councillor Mrs Boyd took the notes.

A suggestion to combine this agenda item with No 14 was turned down.

Village Hall is in need of a complete update and it was suggested the Parish Council should donate. The building needs urgent professional assessment of roof, heating, electrics, flooring and décor. The building is not up to standard for functions and needs £100000 spending on it.

Agreed the building needs saving – but should drawing plans wait until the Paddocks open and then close and refurbish completely.

Parish Council should underwrite the loss in the meantime plus have urgent work done immediately.

Several questions were posed. If the structural work is done now – we will have to close the hall while this is done. Should be done immediately. Where will the money come from? Urgent work could cost £10/12000. Littleport cannot support 2 facilities?

Proposal: Urgent work to be done, other matters use of hall, management, upgrade, need discussed as separate issue. Also underwrite loss of present operation and structural survey.

14. PROPOSED COMMUNITY BUILDING:

The Chairman reported on the great debates on the proposed new community building and would it survive with the Village Hall. There is an opportunity to provide a new facility on land given by the developers on the Highfield development.

Councillor Webber pointed out the steering group were looking on the impact it would have on the Village Hall and not to steal trade. Still in the consultation period and will be driven by parishioners desires and needs and paramount is sustainability.

Councillor Wright pointed out there was £150000 in the original Section 106 towards a community facility and this was a two way agreement.

An overall plan is needed. What size and what is needed? There has to be Public Consultation as part of the process. The Annual Parish Assembly in May will include this as an agenda item to form part of the consultation process.

In confirmation of the foregoing report

CHAIRMAN

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DATE