

Pre-meeting Reports
1st November 2011

- 82. Police Report.** The Chairman informed the meeting that there would be no police representation or report due to unforeseen circumstances.
- 83. County Report.** The Chairman welcomed Councillor Smith who began his report with a reply to Councillor Bailey's request from the previous meeting with regard to the £250 million that Mr Pickles had earmarked for a single bin collection. He reported that Mr Geoff Dobson, Head of Strategic Finance at SCC, had taken forward Cllr Bailey's assertion that perhaps the £250 million could be better used in other areas but that he had received a very firm response from the Government that Mr Pickles was set on using the money purely for the purpose stated. In other business Cllr Smith informed the meeting that virtually all the work at the County Council in the previous month had been to try and decide how to make the huge savings required over the next two years to cope with the reduced settlement from the Government. As part of that he announced that all 44 libraries in Suffolk were now safe as the County Council took forward plans to create an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) to run them all. The IPS would have charity status and would work with community groups who, it was hoped, would form to look after the interests of their particular library. It looked like the County would provide 95% of the funding for the libraries (95% of the expected lower running costs) with, eventually, the individual community groups using initiatives to find the other 5%. There were questions and a hope that the 95% did not remain static and thereby lead to a decline in the service but Cllr Smith pointed to the Cabinet Report that covered the whole subject in much more detail. He noted that the Yellow Lines had not been completed yet and heard that, apparently, tenants of sheltered housing in Leiston had been informed that their paths would not be gritted this coming winter. He did not think that there were any planned reductions in the level of service from the Highways department however and wondered whether this was a local service provided by Flagship Housing that was being withdrawn?
- 84. District Report.** Cllr Hawkins had nothing to report. There were comments on the breaking news that the second home discount on council tax may soon be abolished and Mr Briggs expressed his shock at the number of residents waiting on the housing allocation list at the moment.
- 85. Public Session.** Mr Huxley enquired what progress there had been with regard to trying to get a footway installed between Waterloo Avenue and Highbury Cottages. The Clerk regretfully informed the meeting that the landowners involved were currently still thinking about it but were not, at this time, in a position to allow a footway to be laid across their land along the edge of the cemetery field. The Chairman undertook to meet with the landowners once more and Cllr Howard asked for the item to be on the Agenda for December.

**At a meeting of the LEISTON-cum-SIZEWELL TOWN COUNCIL
held in the COMMUNITY CENTRE, King Georges Avenue, Leiston, on TUESDAY,
1st NOVEMBER 2011, at 7.50 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor A. M. Cooper (in the chair)
Councillor R. Bailey
Councillor D. Boast
Councillor R. J. Geater
Councillor Mrs S. M. Geater
Councillor C. S. Ginger
Councillor T. J. Hawkins
Councillor T.E. Hodgson
Councillor W.H. Howard
Councillor J. N. Last
Councillor Mrs A. V. Nunn
Councillor N. J. Parker
Councillor J. I. Sparrow

86. **Minutes.** It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed that the minutes for the meeting of 4th October be signed as a true record with one amendment to 82c) where it should have read Homeguard Club and not Ex-Service Club.
87. **Apologies.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Bailey and Cllr Nunn.
88. **Chairman's Communications.** The Chairman reported that, since the last meeting, he had attended the Suffolk Harvest Festival at St Edmundsbury Cathedral and the Bungay Civic Service at the Priory Church of St Mary's at Bungay. He then paid tribute to the work done for the Council by Mrs Jefferies who had recently left her post as Administrative Assistant to the Council, a post she had held for 10 years. On behalf of members, past and present, he undertook to call on Mrs Jefferies and pass on their regards and thanks for the excellent service she had given during her employment and to wish her well for the future.
89. **St Margaret's Crescent – verge strengthening.** The Clerk explained that the funds required to do the best job possible in St Margaret's Crescent (up to the same standard as Seaward Avenue) would be £7,500. Cllr Ginger explained how part of this could be forthcoming from the Flagship Housing's Community Initiative fund should a successful application be made in due course. The Clerk informed members that he would put a sum in the estimates for next year to be discussed once an application had been made to Flagship.
90. **Leiston Youth and Community Angling Society.** Members were very pleased to be able to support the new Angling Society and cited the excellent work they had done for our young people over the many years they had operated under the umbrella of the Youth Club. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Hodgson and agreed that £750 be released from the reserve, earmarked for the Youth Club running costs, to go to the Angling Society to help with their set up costs.
91. **Divestment of District Play Areas.** Members noted the letter from SCDC enquiring whether Towns and Parishes would be interested in getting involved with taking over the running or ownership of play areas and other facilities currently run by SCDC. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the relevant officer involved with the

divestment programme and find out a bit more detail on what was being offered or proposed.

92. **Sizewell Beach Management Meeting of 11 October.** Members noted the minutes of the recent management meeting that took place at Sizewell and asked the Clerk to chase up three issues that were raised. It was hoped that the gas bottles laying around by the fishermen's huts would be removed sooner rather than later, the disabled bays would soon be advertised and the information board would be progressed soon too.
93. **Flagship Housing – allocation issues.** It was heard that there were real issues with residents using the Gateway Home Choice lettings allocation system for social housing in our area. The Common Register, set up by the previous government, provides for a partnership of District Councils and Housing Associations to work together to manage the lettings of the housing stock. Residents have to bid for houses that come free each week and these bidders could be from as far afield as Maldon or Great Yarmouth for properties in Leiston. Although it may be convenient for many for this process to take place online some residents cannot access that system and find it difficult to join in the process fairly by using the telephone it appears. A perception still exists that you are actually at a disadvantage in your home town as other, non-local, bidders are seen to win Leiston properties all too often and this spreads the discontent and misunderstanding of the system. The other issue of concern for members was the decrease in benefits that are being proposed alongside the increase in rents of affordable housing stock up to as much as 80% of the commercial rent. This was very worrying.
94. **Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group.** Members noted the letter from the SPLG asking for endorsement of the statement of their aims and objectives. There was nothing controversial in the document that detracted from what was expected here in Leiston so, on a proposition from Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Hodgson it was agreed to endorse the statement as a member of the SPLG. Cllr Hawkins abstained.
95. **Finance.**
a) Accounts for Payment. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Boast and agreed that accounts presented in the sum of £11,252.81p along with £8,631.08p paid since the last meeting be approved for payment.

The meeting adjourned for 15 minutes from 7.55pm until 8.10pm

96. **Planning Matters.**

a. C11/2257 – Erection of extension to existing workshop/garage building to provide larger building for workshop and storage of vehicles and machinery and staff room facilities (existing building to be demolished) at Cakes and Ale Caravan Park, Abbey Lane, Leiston

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

b. C11/2362 – Replace existing flat roof with pitched roof above garage and utility and associated internal alterations at 5 Red House Lane, Leiston.

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

c. C11/2367 – Erection of front extension at 63 Abbey Road, Leiston.

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

97. **County Matters.**

- a. **Overgrown hedges.** The matter had now been cleared up with the County Council having to carry out the work themselves in Buller/Roberts Road (and then

invoicing the householder) and EDF finally instructing their contractor to clear Lovers Lane.

98. **District Matters.**

- a. **SALC AGM – Motion put forward by Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council.** Cllr Bailey explained how he had worked with the recent SALC Area meeting attendees to put together the following motion; “That SALC requests that NALC lobbies Government to reverse the negative impact on the availability of affordable social housing caused by factors including the reduction in contribution to Housing Associations and the failure to make appropriate use of empty properties which could be used for housing local people.” He apologised for the short notice but hoped members would support the motion so it could be put forward to the SALC AGM the following week. Members did indeed support the motion and understood the timeline. On a proposition from Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Ginger it was agreed to allow the motion to be proposed by Leiston Town Council.
- b. **Victory Park.** Cllr Howard reported that the streetlights on Victory Road were being shielded by two trees which needed trimming back.

99. **Correspondence**

- a. **Sheltered Housing – weekend Warden cover.** Members noted the very comprehensive explanation received from Flagship Housing as to why the weekend warden cover is being withdrawn from Paxton Chadwick and Charles Adams Close. It was unfortunate but the alternatives being suggested and pursued by Flagship, although not as good, were possibly affordable. The most interesting appeared to be the good neighbour scheme that Suffolk ACRE seemed to be involved with. It was requested that the Clerk ask Suffolk ACRE to come and brief the Council on how this might work and what was involved.
- b. **The Sizewell and Leiston Karate Club.** Members noted the request for funding from the Karate Club and the reasons for it. On a proposition from Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Last, it was agreed to grant £100 to the Karate Club to help with their expenses.
- c. **Christmas Lights – request from LBA.** Members noted and appreciated the work being done by the Leiston Business Association to increase and renew the Christmas Lights display around the Town and were pleased to see that, this year, there was going to be a good display. They noted that the Council had contributed the £3,000 set aside for erecting the lights this year toward buying a new outfit of lights which will be put up by LBA volunteers. Finally, they noted the request from the LBA for the Council to consider contributing a similar sum next year to further increase the coverage of new lights for Christmas 2012. Members were sympathetic to the idea that, like 16 years ago, a contribution from the Council for purchase would benefit the town for many years to come as long as the LBA volunteers continued to put them up. It was felt however that there should be partnership funding from the businesses in the town toward the next phase and agreed to look at a possibly putting a figure in the estimates on that basis.
- d. **Upper Abbey Farm – restoration.** Members noted the update from EDF on what work was currently taking place to secure and restore Upper Abbey Farm. It was good to see the District Council’s Conservation Officer involved and there now seemed to be a will there to protect and then restore this listed building.
- e. **EastFeast – community allotment project.** Members noted the e-mail from Mrs Yvonne Moores from eastfeast which explained how she was bringing together various partners and organisations in and around the town to set up a community allotment project using CYDS old allotment on allotment 75 and 76 VRN.

100. **Questions to the Chairman.**

- a. It was confirmed that blood donor sessions at the LTAA would continue as before with the addition of a mobile unit to provide extra capacity.

- b. The coach outside the Homeguard Club (minute 82c) was there on police advice and would continue to park there on match days.
- c. Cllr Bailey asked the Chairman to enquire with the Leiston Business Association as to whether they were interested in running a loyalty scheme in view of the increase in car parking charges in the town.
- d. Cllr Mrs Nunn asked the Chairman to remind everyone that the Fairtrade Steering Group were running a stall at the Christmas Fayre on 3rd December and that she hoped to see everyone there.
- e. The Chairman was asked to find out how many empty properties there were in Suffolk Coastal and how many were being looked at by SCDC for bringing back into use to help with the affordable home situation.

There being no more business the meeting finished at 8.51pm.

Chair

Dated
