

Pre-meeting Reports
8th January 2013

- 170. Police Report.** The Chairman welcomed PCSO Philip Marshall, Suffolk Constabulary, who gave an overview of the crime statistics for December (attached). The meeting was interested in the drink drive campaign over the festive season and were pleased to hear that no-one breathalysed in Leiston over that period had proved positive. Overall, in Suffolk, 111 motorists of 1638 stopped (in December) were arrested for drink driving (compares to 102 out of 1118 in 2011) – 447 of these breath tests were carried out following road traffic collisions of which 31 were positive. Cllr Last was interested in response times but PCSO Marshall was unable to drill down the response times for Leiston only. The Clerk was asked to write to the Chief Constable to see if he could get these figures. The other issue raised was the increasing amount of cars regularly parking (and chewing up) grass verges in the town – especially on the grass area opposite 5-13 Aldeburgh Road. The PCSO was asked to visit the area and the Clerk asked to write and request more consideration.
- 171. County Report.** The Chairman welcomed Cllr Richard Smith who had nothing to report other than to pass on that his invitation for the new PCC to visit the Town for a public meeting had been accepted – date to be confirmed.
- 172. District report.** Cllr Nunn reported that the SCDC Core Strategy had been adjudged to be sound by the Inspectors (with certain modifications) but the Regional Spatial Strategy had just been abolished so there was more work to do with this and more consultation now needed. Mrs Bloomfield wished to point out the filthy state of Crown Street and also the narrowness of the path along Valley Road. The Clerk promised to pass both complaints on.
- 173. Public.** Cllr Mrs Nunn announced that Leiston had just been awarded FAIRTRADE TOWN status for a further 2 years having first been awarded that accolade in 2009. On behalf of the committee (many who were present) she presented the certificate to the Chairman as the award was made to the people of Leiston-cum-Sizewell.

During the above discussions, the time reaching 7.30pm, it was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Hawkins, and agreed, that standing orders be suspended to allow the public part of the meeting to be completed.

At a meeting of the LEISTON-cum-SIZEWELL TOWN COUNCIL
held in the COMMUNITY CENTRE, King Georges Avenue, Leiston, on TUESDAY,
8th JANUARY 2013, at 7.35 p.m.

PRESENT

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

- 174. Minutes.** It was proposed by Cllr Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed that the minutes for the meeting of 4th December 2012 be signed as a true record.

- 175. Apologies.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr Sparrow and Cllr Cooper.
- 176. Declaration of interests.** None declared.
- 177. Chairman's Communications.** The Chairman wished everyone best wishes for the New Year. He also announced the date for this year's Chairman's Reception as Friday 8th March.
- 178. Community Centre Car Park.** Members noted the new quote for the large area of the car park where the ponding occurs to be block paved instead of tarmac'd. It was felt that, with both quotes being similar, block paving would be the most environmentally sympathetic solution especially with regard to the flooding issues at the adjacent junction. It would also give greater flexibility with levels and make the area much safer in the winter months. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Geater and agreed to install 80 square metres of block paving (with associated base work) for a sum of £3,997.
- 179. Fairtrade.** The Chairman thanked the Fairtrade Committee for their continued dedication to ensuring that Leiston retained their Fairtrade Town status. There was a lot of work involved in promoting and complying with the Fairtrade ethic and he hoped some publicity could be gained for their efforts. Cllr Howard announced an event being held at the WI Hall on 7th March in aid of Fairtrade.
- 180. Land transfers – Allotments, King George Avenue Recreation Ground and Haylings Pond.**
- a) **Valley Road Allotments.** Members were pleased to be offered the allotments at nil cost. It was agreed that the standard clawback/overage provision should take account of any capital investment in the site by the Town Council but it was members intention for the site to continue to be used as allotments for the foreseeable future in any case. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Ginger and agreed that Leiston Town Council take up the offer of land transfer of Valley Road allotments from SCDC under the terms offered.
 - b) **King George Avenue Recreation Ground.** Members were pleased to be offered the opportunity to take ownership of King George Avenue Recreation Ground at nil cost. Members noted that SCDC intended to rectify the items identified by ROSPA as needing attention before the transfer and that they intended to pay a decreasing contribution toward the cost of maintaining the site over the next three years. With the standard overage/clawback provision also in place it was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Boast and agreed that Leiston Town Council take ownership of King George Avenue Recreation Ground from SCDC in accordance with the terms offered. Members hoped that negotiations could continue to try and take the Primary School Playing Field into Town Council ownership too although this was not offered at present due to the leasing arrangements with the Primary School. The Clerk was also asked to find out about rights of way to access the recreation ground.
 - c) **Haylings Pond Meadow.** Members were a little warier of accepting the transfer of Haylings Pond Meadow into Town Council ownership at nil cost. There were more unknowns involved with regard to on costs for this site than the others. Insurance and licences were satisfactory and risk assessments could be achieved OK but there were issues with the state of the car park and a niggling doubt about rights of way. With further negotiations requested it was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed that, in principle, the Town Council would like to take ownership of Haylings Pond Meadow from SCDC at nil cost once contributions and remedial works were agreed.

During the above item Cllr R Bailey declared a personal interest.

- 181. Leiston Library.** Members noted the report from the Clerk which explained the current position with regard to the Leiston Library Steering Group. The group, although committed and capable, did not have the appetite to form a constituted body with their own bank

account etc. and then undertake all the necessary administrative hurdles to join the IPS. They therefore requested that the Town Council consider becoming a member of the IPS (an easy procedure for the Council) and that they allow the steering group to be part of an advisory committee to the Council with responsibility for Leiston Library. Members were pleased that the group were still active and enthusiastic and, on a proposition from Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr R Bailey it was agreed that Leiston Town Council apply to become a member of the IPS and that they appoint the Leiston Library Steering group as an advisory committee to the Council. The Chairman and Cllr Howard currently sit on that group/committee.

- 182. Newsletter.** The Newsletter Committee were content that they had a some good ideas for the February issue and reminded members that 13th February was the deadline for any other articles that members may wish to contribute.

The meeting took a break for refreshment from 8.20pm – 8.40pm

183. Finance.

- a) **Accounts for payment.** It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Ginger and agreed that accounts presented in the sum of £21,797.64p along with £8,301.79p paid since the last meeting be approved for payment.

- 184. Precept.** Members noted the comprehensive notes and estimates that the Clerk had produced. It was agreed to examine the estimates first and set a working Precept before making decisions regards the effects of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme on this figure.

- a) The deficit for the Community Centre, Film Theatre and the General (administrative) Account was agreed at £116,400.
- b) It was agreed that £14,400 be included to cover the contract for our part-funded PCSO.
- c) It was agreed to include £14,500 to continue running the Youth Club for a further year and to cover small alterations to their new premises should security of tenure there be achieved.
- d) It was agreed to include £1500 to honour our agreement to become a member of the IPS and support Leiston Library.
- e) It was felt prudent to include £4,000 in readiness to enhance Haylings Pond Meadow for the community should the Council be offered it by SCDC. (Cllr R Bailey declared a personal interest in this item)
- f) It was agreed to include £20,000 in the Theatre Reserve to ensure the Council was able to respond to future projects and maintenances costs as required.
- g) With the imminent offer of transfer of ownership of the Valley Road Allotments to Leiston Town Council from SCDC it was agreed to include £4,000 to be able to enhance the site where appropriate.
- h) With the imminent offer of transfer of ownership of King George Avenue Recreation Ground from SCDC to Leiston Town Council members agreed to add £6,000 to the earmarked reserve for play equipment so that this site could be brought up to the standard of the Town Councils own recreation ground in Victory Road.
- i) The continued funding of Dinsdale Road Toilets caused some discussion as it was felt £10,800 was a lot to pay for this facility. It costs more than a more modern facility would due to its age and design but most members felt it was appreciated by many residents and was certainly well placed for the bus terminus in Main Street. Tourists were also very appreciative of it. The Clerk explained that SCDC, who own the toilets, were not currently willing to transfer ownership of the toilets to the Town Council so we could not replace or refurbish them yet. It was agreed, 10 to 2, however to continue leasing them.
- j) Members agreed to include £7,000 to be able to continue to support local organisations and charities that enhanced the community and well being of the town.
- k) £4,000 placed in the new projector reserve and £3,500 in contingencies.

Members agreed that, with all the above, a total of £206,100 would be required to carry through plans and business for 2013/14.

The Clerk then explained that the government had introduced a new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is due to come into force on 1st April 2013. In the past, residents eligible for Council Tax Benefit by virtue of being on a low income, could apply for up to a 100% discount of their Council Tax bill – this was funded in full by central government. From April the government expects District Councils to introduce a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to replace this Council Tax Benefit scheme but will only give them 90% of the previous funding for them to do this with. The District Council therefore has to now take into account how many households are entitled to benefit when assessing each individual town and parish so they can assess how much council tax they will collect. Without going into technical detail the Clerk explained that, unfortunately, Leiston was one of the hardest hit towns in Suffolk Coastal and would now have fewer households paying full council tax and therefore, to raise the same amount of money for our needs as last year, each of those households able to pay would now have to pay 37p a week more (Band D). This equates approximately to an annual rise in Council Tax from £1,552.24 to £1571.78 (an annual increase on £19.54) just to take the same amount of money. In Leiston the District Council worked out that, if the Council Tax did not go up i.e. remained at £1,552.24, then the amount of money they would receive to give to Leiston Town Council would be £29,681 less than this current year. Members were told that the government, realising that as a consequence of this new scheme, many towns and parishes would be in the same position as Leiston, decided to give a grant to cover this decrease in income. This in itself produced further consequences in that, if the town took the grant so the band D rate did not rise, their Precept would be set at a lower level on paper, in this case £29, 681 lower, so that next year, when the grant is not available, the towns and parishes would have to increase the band D rate then to attain their previous levels of income. A further complication, and a serious one for many towns, is that the government is about to cap towns and parishes as it has done District and County Councils. This would be unwelcome but manageable if we were capped at our current level but, if the grant was taken, we would be capped at the new lower level and then be unable to attain our previous level of income.

Members considered all the options open to them and decided to set the Precept at the level required to protect our income for next year (when capping could occur) but also, to take advantage of the government grant (which would otherwise be lost), it was decided to increase it by the amount of the grant (which would not have any affect on the band D rate) and use the extra £19, 681 to put in a Tax Base Contingency reserve to be ready for further cuts and schemes in the next few years so we are not placed in this position again. The grant was £29,681 but, although £206,100 was required this year, it was agreed to set the main precept level at £196,100, the same as last year, and use £10,000 of the grant to make up the rest thereby leaving £19,681 for the contingency fund.

The final precept was therefore agreed at £225,781 consisting of £196,100 taken from council tax payers and £29,681 taken from government. On a proposition from Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Howard it was unanimously agreed that we precept for £225,781 on the basis described above.

185. Planning.

- a) **C12/2477 – Single storey side extension to provide playroom, including removal of existing flat roof (above existing utility and rear lobby) and replacing with tiled pitched roof at 1 South Close, Leiston.** Members noted that the proposed extension did come forward of the building line but, due to the unique layout and positioning of this corner property, felt that it was not intrusive on the street scene and had no affect on any neighbouring properties.

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

- b) **C12/2372 – Proposed first floor and two storey alterations and extensions (to result in two storey dwelling), removal of existing outbuildings, and construction of a new garage block at 73 Abbey Road, Leiston.** Members were quite clear that this proposal to turn a bungalow into a two storey home in a row of bungalows was not acceptable. The height of the proposal in its self would cause a loss of amenity to the neighbouring properties and be out of place in the street scene. The second floor windows overlooking 75 Abbey Road were an intrusion that could not be condoned so members recommended refusal on those grounds too. A dormer approach might have

been acceptable but this property has room for, and demands, a bungalow with a bigger footprint. Cllr Hawkins abstained.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL

186. County Matters

- a) **Potholes.** Members reported a big increase in the number of potholes appearing. The Clerk asked everyone to report potholes either to him or the County Council as you couldn't always assume that they were known about and therefore would be repaired.

187. District Matters.

- a) **SALC.** Cllr R Bailey gave a report of the recent SALC Area Meeting where one of the main concerns to arise was the apparent scepticism shown for the Neighbourhood Planning process by Mr Ridley (Director of Planning at SCDC).
- b) **Sustainable Communities Act.** Cllr Bailey explained that the right for towns and parishes to submit proposals under this Act were under threat as their inclusion was being opposed by the Local Government Association. The Clerk was asked to write to the minister to express our view that it was our right to be able to submit proposals and to request he allows this to happen.

188. Correspondence.

- a) **CYDS.** Members noted the letter that was given to the Council in December and considered the request for interim help in funding a Councillor to attend the centre for 3 hrs a week until funding could be found. It worked out at £45 a week. Members discussed the issue and, on a proposal from Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Mrs Nunn, it was agreed to grant £270 for 6 weeks referrals.
- b) **Long Shop Museum.** Members noted the letter from the Long Shop Museum requesting grant aid but, as it was a detailed account of the current situation and it had only just arrived, it was felt members needed time to read the letter first so it was put off until February. Interests were declared however by Cllrs Hawkins, Nunn and Hodgson.

189. Questions to the Chairman.

- a) No questions.

There being no more business the meeting finished at 9.50 pm.

Chair -----

Dated -----