

Pre-meeting Reports
6th January 2009

145. Police Report. The Chairman welcomed PCSO Jackie Abbot, Suffolk Constabulary, who gave members a thorough report on criminal activity in the town during December and over the holiday period (report attached). Cllr Howard thanked the Police for their proactive policing over the holiday period and asked for more detail on the non public assaults (assaults that do not constitute public disorder) and on the domestic incidents. Cllr Ginger brought attention to the East Anglian article which gave the impression PCSOs did not issue any fixed penalty notices. Sgt Richard Gubbins explained how the article referred to a particular type of ticket whereas over 400 a month equivalents of the old non endorsable tickets had been issued (parking, litter etc). Jackie had, herself, issued 40 to 50 tickets since coming into post although she always tried to talk to and educate people before resorting to fixed penalties.

146. Leigh Jenkins – Business manager for Suffolk Constabulary. The Chairman welcomed Leigh who gave a short overview of the part funded PCSO scheme before taking questions. He covered why the Police Authority wanted to introduce the scheme and the benefits the partners gained from being involved. Basically, the Authority felt that, by offering the scheme, there could be twice as many PCSO's on the streets for the given sum they had available to fund PCSOs than if the scheme was not available. It had worked very well throughout other parts of the country and would be a guaranteed way for a community to ensure they retained a dedicated PCSO despite abstractions etc. Members were concerned that, like before, when more officers were gained for Leiston it didn't take long before they were transferred to Lowestoft – they sought assurance that, although they appreciated the part funded officer was ringfenced, did this then free up the Authority to abstract other members of the current Neighbourhood Team much easier? Leigh assured members that this would not happen and that the current team would be kept at full strength as well as guaranteeing that 80% of the extra, part funded officers time would be spent frontline on the street. There would be a service level agreement that detailed this and also what would happen in case of sickness etc. The Chairman thanked Mr Jenkins for coming and invited him to stay and watch the formal part of the meeting when members would decide what to do.

147. District Report. Cllr Hawkins had nothing to report.

148. County Council Report. The chairman gave apologies on behalf of Cllr Ron Ward.

During the above reports, the time reaching 7.30pm, it was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Bailey and agreed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the reports to be completed.

At a meeting of the LEISTON-cum-SIZEWELL TOWN COUNCIL
held in the COMMUNITY CENTRE, King Georges Avenue, Leiston, on TUESDAY,
6th JANUARY 2009, at 8.02 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs A. V. Nunn (in the chair)

Councillor D. E. Bailey

Councillor B. A. Barnes

Councillor D. R. Boast

Councillor C.S. Ginger

Councillor T. J. Hawkins

Councillor T. E. Hodgson

Councillor W.H. Howard

Councillor J. Morrissey

149. Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Bailey and agreed that the minutes for the meeting of the 2nd December 2008 be signed as a true record.

150. Apologies. Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Cllr Geater, Cllr Mrs Geater, Cllr Parker, Cllr Huxley, Cllr Nunn and Cllr Cooper.

151. Chairman's Communications. The Chairman addressed members thus "During December I enjoyed the Leiston British Legion Christmas Extravaganza. This was held as usual at the Film Theatre and attracted a large number of people. I attended the Leiston High School presentations. It was an excellent evening, pupils being presented with their awards and some winning extra ones. Three ex-pupils gave presentations on how their careers have shaped out since leaving Leiston High School and their Universities. It was an inspiration to us all and a credit to their School. There were several guests and a few students missing due to illness. Christmas Eve I attended our Carol Concert in

the Old PO Square. This was very well supported, in spite of the icy wind, and Father Christmas was mingling with the crowd. The British Legion Band were excellent and to quote a man standing next to me ‘they did us proud’ The Square with all the Christmas lights looked very smart, an annual event that we can be proud of. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy and Peaceful New Year. We can only hope that the Credit Crunch we find ourselves in will not affect our residents and the Town too greatly.”

152.PCSO Partnership. Cllr Howard put forward the main objection to committing Town Council funds to this project in that he, like many others felt that they were taxed enough already by the Police Authority and that the Authority should be responsible for the correct level of policing within their budget. Cllr Bailey agreed and felt that we already had a first class police service in the Town and, that if the problems Leiston faced got worse, the Police should respond accordingly and draft in officers from elsewhere. It was pointed out that the PCSO role was a very different one to a Police Constable and that they were proving to be very good at community liaison and at getting to the heart of the low level nuisance that blights many peoples lives (and which would not attract the time or attention of a PC). Members were fully aware of the value that PCSO Abbot had added to the Towns policing and noted that another PCSO would be able to be on the street even more and would also cover the times PCSO Abbot was on rest days or leave etc. Cllr Hawkins pointed out that, should the Police Authority raise their element of Council tax by £7 a household you could guarantee Leiston would not see any extra officers or resources that that extra money bought. However, £7 on the Precept would guarantee a full time extra officer on the beat in Leiston who, even better, would be tasked to concentrate on those issues agreed with and by the Town Council to be residents priorities. He felt this was an opportunity that should be taken. Cllr Hodgson, although dubious, agreed that the opportunity was one that had some merit and felt that it should be given the two years to see whether the benefits matched the outlay. A commitment of £14,000 per year for two years needed to produce results. Cllr Ginger felt that the Town would definitely benefit from another PCSO and proposed that the Council enter into an arrangement with Suffolk Constabulary to part fund a PCSO for the Town for the next two years. This was seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed by 7 votes to 2.

153.Possible purchase of a speed camera for use by the Leiston Safer Neighbourhood Team. This item was put on the agenda by Cllr Nunn who had seen first hand how valuable the camera was to the patrol he had accompanied on his familiarity day with the Leiston police. It was felt that, if the Leiston Aldeburgh Safer Neighbourhood Team held two cameras instead of just one, they would be able to make more use of them (i.e. one would always be to hand rather than at the “other” police station thereby making it more likely to be taken out.) Members were sceptical of going down this path as it was argued that it was not really appropriate for a Council to start buying equipment for the police. It was agreed however to leave it on the table to see what Aldeburgh’s reaction might be as they would have to fund half of the gun.

154.Standing orders and Code of Conduct. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Hodgson and agreed that standing orders be amended as follows;

replace

70. At all meetings of the Council, the Chairman may at their discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, adjourn the meeting so as to allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.

with

70A. At all meetings of the council, the Chairman may at his/her discretion, and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted. Such sessions form part of the Council meeting in law and shall be duly minuted. The Code of Conduct, which was adopted by the Council on 5th June 2007, shall apply to members of the council in respect of the entire meeting. Where, however, members of the council exercise their rights pursuant to SO 70B, below, members of the public shall be allowed to attend the meeting to (a) make representations, (b) answer questions or (c) give evidence relating to the business to be transacted.

and

70B. At all meetings of the Council, the Chairman may permit members of the council (including co-opted members as defined by s.49 (7) Local Government Act 2000) who have a prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business to be transacted at that meeting to (a) make representations, (b) answer questions or (c) give evidence relating to the business to be transacted. Such sessions form part of the Council meeting in law and shall be duly minuted. The Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on (insert date) shall apply to members of the council in respect of the entire meeting.

After some discussion it was proposed that a separate meeting be called to discuss the future structure and procedures to be employed at meetings to facilitate the new changes vis-à-vis members with prejudicial interests speaking.

155. New Nuclear Build. Members noted the proposed informal visit by Mr Bryant and Dr Norfolk (British Energy) on 8th January. The Clerk would attend and brief members at the next meeting should no-one be able to make it.

156.. Fairtrade Update. The next event was still on for 26th February – more details at the February meeting.

157. Newsletter. It was noted that the deadline for articles for the next newsletter was 13th February.

The meeting took a break for refreshments for 20 minutes from 8.40pm – 9.00pm.

158. Finance.

- a) **Accounts for Payment.** It was proposed by Cllr Hodgson, seconded by Cllr Barnes and agreed that accounts presented in the sum of £10,815.10p along with £8,253.20p paid since the last meeting be approved for payment.
Cllr Howard declared an interest in cheque number 309476 and Cllr Hawkins in cheque number 309474
- b) **Annual Risk Assessment Review.** Members discussed the report presented by the Clerk and asked relevant questions to assure themselves that they were satisfied with its content. It was proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Morrissey and agreed that members accepted that a proper and thorough risk assessment had been carried out covering all physical, financial and governance risks which the Council could reasonable be expected to encounter and that appropriate measures were in place to cover or reduce those risks where possible.
- c) **Internal Audit and Internal Control Review.** Members noted the report on Internal Controls, the report from the Internal Auditors on their visit in December and the Clerks recommendation for appointment of next years Internal Auditors. It was proposed by Cllr Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Hodgson and agreed that Heelis and Lodge be appointed as Internal Auditors to the Council for 2009/2010.
- d) **Review of actual Income and Expenditure against budget.** Members noted the half yearly actuals and compared them to the year's estimates to ensure things were on track. The Clerk explained the difficulties of producing a more frequent comparison due to the operations in the Theatre not being linear. Members did comment that the monthly Financial Report did in fact give them a very good indication of where the Council stood even though it did not contain the detailed comparison.

During the above item, the time reaching 10.00pm it was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed that Standing orders be suspended to allow business to conclude or until 10.30pm.

159. Precept.

- a. **Core costs** – After two adjustments members agreed to the figures presented by the Clerk to cover the core costs anticipated to run the Community Centre, the Cinema and the general expenditure incurred by the Clerks office. A sum of £2000 was added to the anticipated income from refreshments at the Cinema and the estimated interest from the Council's reserves was adjusted down by £1,000 to take account of the current financial climate. This came to £117,075. Members then discussed the possible capital projects they wished to contribute to in the coming year item by item, voting on each at the time as to whether they were added or deleted from the final estimates. Proposals and voting are not detailed for each item below, just the decision and, where requested, a recorded vote.
- b. **Community Centre** – There were two items kept in - £1,000 for window replacement and £1,000 for enhancing the heating system – the money needed to complete the fencing was postponed to another year.
- c. **Members "e" connectivity.** It was agreed to buy computer equipment for those members who do not have any (2) and to contribute annually toward the internet connection of each member (where other councils do not do so) to enable the Clerk and Members to take advantage of the huge amount of government that is now done on the internet. In the £2,430 put aside was provision for training.
- d. **Cinema** – After the success of introducing a Dolby Digital sound system the year before last and completing the adapted toilets members noted the £5,500 they had put into the estimates last year to replace the fascia as they looked at the possibility of adding £3000 to that to provide halo lighting around the letters on that fascia. It was felt that the £9000 they had set aside already this year for shop conversion was enough expenditure so this was postponed..
- e. **Allotments.** Members agreed to include £2,000 in the estimates to carry on tidying up both allotment sites and to be used to progress the fencing and tap provision.
- f. **Highbury Cottage Footway** – Members discussed the current position with regard to trying to get a safe footway from Waterloo Avenue to Highbury Cottages and to save residents and their children walking along a dangerous road. It was agreed last year to put £10,000 into an earmarked reserve to be added to and to be ready to contribute to the construction of a pedestrian footway along the B1119 in the future. A further £10,000 was added this year.

- g. **Christmas Lights.** Members noted the costs that could be incurred should the Council not be able to find a suitable sponsor for the Towns Christmas Light Display next year and decided to put £2,000 in the budget to ensure the continuation of the lights next Christmas.
- h. **Play Equipment.** Members noted that the Victory Park project was now complete and that there was a healthy reserve. It was felt though that this should continue to be topped up as any new project would certainly cost more than the current reserve as it stood. There were a number of projects that could be considered in the near future so £5000 was added to the reserve.
- i. **Dinsdale Road WC's.** Members put £9,200 into the estimates to continue running the Toilets in Dinsdale Road for a further year.
- j. **Part funded PCSO.** Members had, earlier in the meeting, earmarked £14,000 for the next two years to part fund a PCSO.
- k. **Partnership Fund.** Members put a further £3,000 into the partnership fund in readiness for any advantageous situation where partnership funding would gain benefit for the Town.
- l. **Grants.** Members agreed to put £5,000 aside again for donations and support of the Town's local organisations and charities that do work in the Town.
- m. **Contingencies.** £3,500 was set aside for contingencies.
- n. **General Reserves.** The Clerk informed members that he was comfortable in taking £5,000 from the anticipated general reserves at year end to offset the precept. This would leave approximately £70,000 in the General Reserve all being well which would be sufficient to cover the advised figure of half the Council's annual expenditure. On a proposition from Cllr Hodgson, seconded by Cllr Ginger it was agreed to take £5,000 from general reserves to offset the precept for 2009/2010.
- o. **Precept.** The Clerk informed members that the Precept needed to carry out ongoing business, provide the agreed level of service and to carry out the above capital projects for 2009/2010 would be £182,305. This figure took into account the agreed contribution from reserves and, on a proposition from Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Hodgson, it was agreed to precept the District Council for £182,305 for 2009/2010.

During the above discussions Cllr Ginger declared a personal interest in all matters affecting the Cinema. Cllr Barnes declared a personal interest in the allotments

160.Planning Matters.

- a. **C08/232 – Conversion of premises (currently Class A1 shop) to two shops and one additional residential unit at 17A High Street, Leiston.** Members did not mind the proposal to split the shop into two but were very concerned about the use of the rear of the shop being converted to residential accommodation. The two bedrooms indicated did not have any windows which was felt to constitute a real lack of amenity plus members did not wish to see any more residential units in this area of town without the maximum 1.5 car parking spaces. This one has nil.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL

- b. **C08/2251 – Alterations to doorways and paths for improved access at Sizewell A Power Station, Sizewell.**

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

Members agreed to defer all further business until Tuesday 13th January at 7.30pm in the Community Centre.
The Clerk asked for one item of correspondence to be considered.

161.Correspondence.

- a. **Liaison with Essex and Suffolk Water.** Members noted the reply from the Distribution Manager for Essex and Suffolk Water inviting members to the Lowestoft Offices for a briefing on the items that they had queried at their October meeting. It was agreed to accept the invitation and to include Mr Taylor in the party as he had raised the concerns in the first instance.

There being no more business the meeting finished at 10.45 pm.

----- Chair

----- Dated