

**At a meeting of the LEISTON-cum-SIZEWELL TOWN COUNCIL
held in the COMMUNITY CENTRE, King Georges Avenue, Leiston, on MONDAY,
27th NOVEMBER 2006, at 7:30p.m.**

PRESENT

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

Councillor D. Bailey

Councillor B. A. Barnes

Councillor C. D. C. Blowers

Councillor A M Cooper

Councillor C.S. Ginger

Councillor Mrs J. I. Girling

Councillor W. H. Howard

Councillor T. E. Hodgson

Councillor Mrs D Y May

121. Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr Ginger, seconded by Cllr Cooper and agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2006 be signed as a true record.

122. Apologies. Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Nunn, Cllr Geater, Cllr Hawkins, Cllr Mrs Geater and Cllr Huxley.

123. Christmas Lights. Members were concerned that there did not appear to be any movement so far this year to put up the Christmas lights in the town, hence the calling of an emergency meeting to discuss the situation. Members heard that there was indeed nothing being done to erect the lights and went on to investigate if there was anything the town council could do to retrieve the situation or to help in any way. The facts, as far as could be established, were that the Business Association were now basically dormant and therefore, as they owned the lights and had organised everything in the past, had done nothing on the organisational or administration front to date this year to get them up. The volunteers who helped each year might possibly still be available but the lights had not been checked, the brackets had not been tested and there was no insurance in place.

It transpired that, in the past, volunteers had started looking at and checking the lights in early October and then co-ordinated the electrical and mounting teams to all be ready for late November to put them up. Members realised that, if they started now they would be over six weeks behind the normal schedule and, if everything could be organised as quickly as possible and outside contractual help brought in, the earliest a light could go up would be 7 days before Christmas day. It was felt that this was an unrealistic target though, especially as they had no idea of the state of the lights (reportedly getting slightly brittle and fragile), had no idea whether any contractor help would be available to do the technical work (testing the brackets and electrical connections etc.) and no idea of the cost. The Council had only budgeted for replacement lamps on the necklace they put up on the Council Chambers and to pay the electric bill for the Towns Christmas lights in the form of a donation to the Alde Valley Lions. Anything above this would have to come from contingencies.

Everyone agreed that it would be disappointing if no lights were put up this year but the majority of members realised the magnitude of the task and the risk involved of taking on the responsibility and felt, realistically, that they would have to accept the situation this year and concentrate on encouraging the town to get together to plan for next. It was deeply disappointing that the children wouldn't see the decorations this year but it couldn't be helped. It was hoped that individual businesses could make an extra special effort this year by decorating their own premises and creating seasonal displays.

A key point members wished to highlight was the exceptional contribution over the past years of everyone who volunteered their help and expertise to make the towns lights such a magnificent display in the first place so that they would be missed so much. The recent headlines on the cost of lights in neighbouring towns of over £13,000 highlighted even more the valuable volunteer time that had so generously been given to date in Leiston. It was hoped this spirit could be harnessed again next year.

On a proposition from Cllr Girling, seconded by Cllr Cooper it was agreed that the Council put a consideration into the estimates for 2007/2008 to be used as appropriate to kick start any organisation that

comes forward to take on the responsibility of the lights for next Christmas. This could be as partners or as a Town Lights Committee (like Beccles where all the community groups get together throughout the year to fund raise and organise the lights). It was also agreed to put Lights onto the Agenda in September 07. It was further agreed, on a proposition from Cllr Bailey, seconded by Cllr Cooper, that an advisory committee be set up to investigate the state of the lights, find out exactly what would be required to put them up painlessly next year and to report back to Council when complete. Cllr Bailey and Cllr Cooper were joined by Cllr Howard, Cllr Girling and Cllr Blowers on the committee. Finally members agreed with Cllr Howard and Cllr May that the best that could be done would be to decorate the Old Post Office Square this year and ensure a Christmas tree went up on High Green. Cllr Ginger wished to have it minuted that he did not wish to be associated with the decision.

124. Finance

a) **Accounts for Payment.** On a proposition from Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr May, it was agreed that accounts presented in the sum of £5,157.22p be approved for payment.

125. Planning Matters

- a) **C06/1945/FUL - Demolition of existing buildings to enable erection of two and half storey building to provide two shop units and six residential units; erection of three single storey dwellings and two one and half storey dwellings (revised scheme to C05/1382) at 98-100 High Street, Leiston.** Members realised that, although they felt the same way about the size and form of the proposed building, that it would not have any sway with the planning authority as permissions had already been granted (C05/1382). They did however wish to point out the inadequate car parking provision and the degradation of amenity for the resident above the Cinnamon Restaurant to the South of the development. The changes were a slight improvement however. Members were informed of the standing instruction for the clerk to request that the proposal be referred to the NII but Cllr Howard wished for that to be minuted again and, along with Cllr Ginger and Cllr May, asked that the clerk record their wish that this, and the fact that the reason we do that is because of the evacuation plan, also be noted.
- b) **Greater Gabbard sub station.** The Clerk warned members that the new application for the Greater Gabbard sub station would be discussed at the next meeting. There were lots of plans to look at and an extensive Environmental Statement to take in which would all be on display in the Council Chambers until 5th December.

There being no more business the Meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

----- Chair

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