

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD IN HALL 2 AT THE PADDOCKS, LONG ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND
MONDAY 24TH MARCH 2014 AT 7.00 PM.**

PRESENT:-

Cllr D. Anderson (Chairman), Cllr P. May (Vice Chairman), Cllr J. Anderson, Cllr J Liddiard and Lucy Shepherd Flood and Water Management Essex.

ALSO PRESENT:-

Cllrs P Greig, D Blackwell (arrived at 7.25pm), L. Swann, R Howard and A Acott
56 members of the public
Elaine De Can – Town Clerk
Ellea Hunt – Deputy Clerk
Geraldine Vallis – Community & Events Officer
Jess Fisher – Community Warden

The evening started at 6.30pm offering light refreshments and offering the public the opportunity to visit the community group stalls that were on display.

1. 'A review of the Town Council's year, its achievements and its aspirations for the future'

COUNCILLOR DOREEN ANDERSON, CHAIRMAN, CANVEY ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Anderson welcomed all residents, guests and all the community groups who came along and supplied a presentation stall for the evening (Papworth Trust, Neighbourhood Watch, Cisca House, Essex Police, Essex County Council Highways and Flood and Water Management Teams). Cllr Anderson provided details of the grants totalling £4,500 for 2013/14 and the partnerships that the Council has set up during the year.

Cllr Anderson detailed the Council's main achievements for 2013/14 which were two prestigious awards for all of its efforts, the EALC highly sought after Community Engagement Award and to encourage responsible dog ownership during National Pet Month the Best Local Authority Award. The Council arranged a number of educational events including pond dipping at Canvey Lake with children from Canvey Junior School, National Poop Scoop Day and two free micro-chipping for dogs events, both in association with the Dogs Trust, which due to its popularity will be coming back to Canvey Island next month offering more free micro-chipping for dogs. The Port of London Authority were invited to the seafront bringing with them their educational Riverside trailer and the Environment Agency joined the Community Warden and a local Police Community Support Officer in patrolling Canvey Lake checking for Fishing Licences.

The Council continues to work very hard to bring its open spaces up to standard and are very proud of the work that has been completed in this financial year over at Canvey Lake, at Tewkes Creek and also the seafront gardens.

The Events for 2013/14 have been hugely successful with the Wildlife Event seeing more visitors this year than ever before even with the previous days' heavy rain trying to hamper the Council's efforts. The Armed Forces Day was again very successful attracting huge numbers of visitors from in and around Canvey Island. Thanks must be given to the Ministry Of Defence who donated £2,000 in grant funding towards the cost of day and of course to all the participants and volunteers who attended. The Garden Trail proved very popular for visitors again this year as there were even more entrants who all excelled themselves with their wonderful garden displays. The day was so successful that the proceeds of the event raised £1,273.55, which was donated to the Canvey Community Archive as the Council's chosen charity for 2013/14. The Christmas event went extremely well attracting the most visitors that we had ever seen to the Town Centre. This year the Town Council provided additional

festive lighting in the town centre, with the trees on the corner of Foksville Road and Furtherwick Road being lit up for the first time and the addition of multi-coloured lighting to the 20ft Christmas tree situated outside of Canvey Library. Special thanks go to Pinnacle who donated the two 20ft trees for the Town Centre. The flower tower planter at Jones corner was beautifully decorated with lighting to make it look like a Christmas tree and the mini wall mounted trees on the buildings really brightened up the area. The Christmas shop front competition proved popular again and judging was difficult but the winner for 2013 was Canvey Supply Company's High Street store, who received £100 in vouchers, which was kindly donated by the Knightswick Centre.

The Council again managed all of its achievements in 2013/14 without raising its precept. The chairman said a personal thank you to the Council staff as in her opinion it could not have achieved any of this without their help and hard work.

The forthcoming events for 2014/15 are the Wildlife Day on 31st May, Armed Forces Day 28th June, Garden Trail on 19th July and the Christmas light switch on 29th November.

2. To confirm and sign as a true record the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 22nd April 2013

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 22nd April 2013 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

3. A brief report from the Environment & Open Spaces committee chairman:

Cllr J. Anderson, Chairman of the Environment & Open Spaces committee advised that the committee has been working hard to improve its open spaces and it has now completed the second phase of the two phase enhancement works at Canvey Lake and are working on formulating a five year reed maintenance programme. It has secured further funding to continue with the enhancement works at the lake from Veolia North Thames Trust, totalling £13,123, which will be used to re-create a path along the South Bank of the Lake and a further £5,000 from Essex Heritage Fund and £4,300 from the Community Initiative Fund for new welcome and interpretation signage which will provide updated educational information for visitors to the reserve. Two new litter bins have been installed on either side of the Denham Road Bridge, modified to include rat baiting stations to combat the rodent problem and replaced two broken dog fouling bins. The Council will be replacing more broken litter and dog fouling bins in the future.

Cllr Anderson confirmed that along with the Town Council staff and volunteers they dug out, enlarged and replanted the four sea front beds, which are doing well and looking wonderful. The Labworth Memorial Gardens and Bumble Bee Park have suffered mindless vandalism again this year; however, the grounds maintenance contractor continues to work with the Town Council to combat any incidents and continues to maintain the gardens in an attractive condition for the enjoyment of the residents and visitors. The Town Council, following a request from Mr Heatherson's family, have recently dedicated a memorial plaque to Vince Heatherson who was instrumental in designing the gardens as part of Canvey 2000 and a permanent memorial is now in place to recognise his efforts.

The Concord Beach Tidal Pool proved very popular this year with record warm weather throughout the summer and special thanks was given to the staff for all their hard work in ensuring that the management and maintenance of this tidal pool keeps it open during the busy summer period. The council will continue to look at ways to ensure that this facility is preserved for the enjoyment of visitors and residents for many years to come.

Work commenced at Tewkes Creek, in partnership with Castle Point Borough Council to create the much anticipated Wildflower Meadow which started in October 2013 preparing the land and sowing the meadow seeds, with a mix of Flanders poppy seeds to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the First World War.

It has been a very busy year for the Town Council and it is pleased with all of the work that has been done in this financial year to improve its open spaces for the residents and visitors to Canvey Island and it will continue to make improvements to these areas in the next financial year.

4. OPEN FORUM – Questions will be invited from members of the public relating to the activities of Canvey Island Town Council

Members of the public were invited to address questions to the relevant committee chairman. The following questions were raised:

Q1: Congratulations on the progress of Canvey Lake. Can you explain why the Town Council are struggling to find money for the lake being that it is a surface water storage facility which falls partly under the responsibility of others?

Answer: Cllr John Anderson - The Town Council and Town Clerk have developed a good working relationship with the Environment Agency who are aware of their responsibilities at the lake and are continuing to work with them to maintain and enhance it.

Q2: We need to promote awareness about the impact of throwing rubbish into the dykes and waterways because it is one of the causes of the August floods.

Answer: Cllr John Anderson - I agree that people should be educated about throwing rubbish into the dykes and the impact that it has.

Q3: Can we have an update on the activities of the Community Warden?

Answer: Jess Fisher - I am concentrating my efforts on litter at the moment and am gathering evidence on an incident at Canvey Lake and am hoping by next week to catch the culprit. I am setting up a volunteer group called Lake Watch asking people to be the eyes and ears of the area and we had our first meeting a few weeks ago. I patrol the island regularly and complete health and safety checks at the Lake and the Tidal pool. I'm also involved with the dog fouling awareness campaign and provide talks on littering etc to schools and groups and I am also looking into organising a Keep Britain Tidy campaign for the WW1 Commemorations this year.

Q4: Who is responsible for the flooding and the pipe work at Smallgains Playing Field? It hasn't flooded this year.

Answer: Cllr Peter May - I am the Vice Chairman of Island Boys & Girls Football Club and we have usage rights on the Smallgains field. The pipe work has been cleared by Essex County Council but there is no one taking responsibility for ownership and we are trying to resolve this.

Q5: Shouldn't it be the people who put the pipe in that takes ownership for it - Castle Point Borough Council.

Answer: Cllr Peter May - Castle Point Borough Council will not absorb the costs if it is not their responsibility. Castle Point Borough Council is continuing to improve this area and they have just planted 200 – 300 trees over there.

5. 'Flood Management' – presentation from Lucy Shepherd, Flood and Water Management Essex.

Lucy Shepherd introduced herself and provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Flood and Water Management team's goals and responsibilities. She confirmed that she recognises that Canvey Island has been severely affected by surface water flooding; however, she advised that she is unable to promise that it will not happen again. Lucy confirmed that Essex County Council along with the flood and water management teams have learnt from last year's problems and are reviewing all issues and looking at ways to combat these problems but need to promote community reliance as the Councils are

not being given the finance and resource to solve all the issues that are required but progress is being made. Lucy advised that there is an element of local authority and land owner responsibility to ensure that their land is resilient in the future. Essex County Council is the lead local flood management authority; however, it does require local partnerships in order to achieve the required goals by sharing the responsibility and resolving the issues. Lucy confirmed that a study had been undertaken in consultation with key partners to understand the cause and effects of surface water flooding and agree the most cost effective way of managing surface water flooding in the long term.

6. QUESTION & ANSWER FORUM – Questions will be invited from members of the public relating to Flood Management

Members of the public were invited to address questions to Lucy Shepherd.

Q1: No matter how many times the roads flood, nothing is done?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - Until funding has become available, maintenance is limited. The roads that flood regularly require investigation. Highways regularly cleanse the gullies and deal with enquiries – particularly about roads that have been flooded on a regular basis. No work can take place until we find out the authorities who have utilities underground.

Q2: One of the roads that regularly flood is Furtherwick Road and around the seafront?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd – During last August, a crew was supplied with jetting machines for three and a half weeks on those particular roads and there were a number of breaks in the pipes which have been recorded under the programmed planned drainage maintenance which is being worked on.

Q3: Does anyone investigate why roads flood?

Answer: ECC Highways - Highways cleanse all of the gullies on a yearly basis and carry out ad hoc maintenance throughout the year. Currently we are going through a back log of defects. During the flooding in August we cleared a number of problems and highlighted defects including breaks in pipes, works to repair these defects will be carried out within the next couple of months.

Q4: I was at a recent conference where the speaker was Sir Michael Pitt who said that is it would be prudent to build on a flood plain, which is insane. Sir David King agrees that it would be madness. There is a distance between what happens at ministerial level and what happens in Councils – how can this be resolved? Can you elaborate on how development will alleviate flood problems?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - Flood plains refer to river and sea water and need to be managed differently to surface water. Development can alleviate surface water flooding problems by including sustainable drainage solutions within that development to hold back the water.

Q5: This is a fluffy presentation but you have the power to enforce nothing. Where does the buck stop?

Answer: For Surface Water flooding it would stop with ECC. Other Agencies have a duty to co-operate with the Flood Management Team but there is no power to enforce. Essex County Council needs to obtain more funding in order to carry out works. We are currently carrying out modelling works in Canvey with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to help find solutions to the flooding problems.

Q6: There seems to be too much time spent on feasibility and appraisal work, models don't stop water?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - Modelling justifies a solution to the problem. We are promoting resilience support for people who have been flooded. We offer information on flood prevention and give information on government funding that is available to them for flood protection.

Q7: Scott Wilson's Flood Development Statement said that you cannot create sustainable drainage solutions on Canvey Island. £1.4 billion needs to be set aside to protect Thames Gateway 2100. Can you not say that you don't want any more building work on Canvey Island as it is a flood plain? The island cannot cope now, there are proposals for a further 2,000 houses, how will the surface water be managed?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - For new developments from April the Environment Agency and National Policy Framework will have to approve plans and if a developer cannot prove that the development will not increase the risk of flooding in that area, the plans will not be approved. Phil Spearman - The EA do not have the power to stop development as it is only a consultee.

Q8: Open ditches – How do you manage the Health and Safety risks if a child falls in?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - There is always going to be an element of risk and you cannot remove that risk altogether but you can design it to reduce the risk such as planting around it to prevent access.

Statement: Thanked Lucy for her presentation. Canvey is a bit special – last year it flooded four or five times with several people's homes being flooded. There is a high water table on Canvey Island. If you dig into the ground you will hit water relatively quickly. People are afraid to claim on their insurance because their premiums will go up. There are small measures they can take such as air bricks to stop the flooding.

Q9: People are getting flooded more and more and depending of the number of times that they claim for flood damage this can affect people's ability to be insured and so there is a worry that they will be uninsurable?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - We need to educate people about resilience to flooding and the types of flood protection products that is available to them.

Statement: Communications need to be improved in the event of an emergency. At the last flooding incident when the emergency services were tried to be called they were always busy.

Q10: I have been on the Castle Point Borough Council's Planning committee for some time now and wonder if you can please explain to me the reasoning behind permitting one bungalow to be demolished and then replaced by 4 No. 4 bedroom houses on the site?

Answer: Phil Spearman, EA - As long as the residual risk is low and families can seek refuge in a second storey site of the dwelling and the evacuation plan for the families is safe this would be acceptable.

Q11: Rain and surface water flooding are more of a problem on Canvey Island than tidal flooding?

Answer: Phil Spearman, EA - Flood Risk Assessments look at floor level requirements and increasing flood risk to surrounding properties to the development site.

(Lucy Shepherd) Managing and assessing existing surface water risk of the site is a gap in the planning application process when looking at new risks when a development is proposed.

Q12: By increasing the number of dwellings increases the volume of people and will produce more sewage. This will introduce more waste and sewage water into the drainage.

Answer: Jonathan Glerum - Anglian Water - Surface water entering the drainage system is more of a problem than increased sewage and waste water.

Q13: Will a Highways Officer attend if a councillor reports a problem? I am the Winter Gardens Ward Councillor and I have presented Cllr Rodney Bass with over 100 photos showing over 60 faults and I am waiting for a Highways Officer to meet me on site to get these problems fixed. They are a hazard to my residents. I have met with the County Councillors on site and the MP has met me on site and I want to know if you will come out to meet me on site or I will be forced to take you the Ombudsman. I don't want to but I will.

Answer: It was recommended that Cllr May discuss this with Highways after the meeting.

Q14: This is a question for Highways – you come out to fill the potholes in with tarmac and then brush it with stone chippings, these chippings wash away into the drains and block the drain which then causes flooding?

Cllr D Anderson explained that Highways were not here this evening to discuss potholes or other road defects, only to discuss drainage issues.

Q15: Does modelling take into account drains that are broken and ditches that are filled in or is this just a desk exercise?

Answer: Lucy Shepherd - Our investigations include both real and anticipated data to create the models. Essex are moving toward self help tools both through their website and accessing the customer care team but are still available if we are needed.

The Chairman asked residents to pose any further questions to Lucy Shepherd, Highways, Environment Agency and Anglian Water after the meeting.

To close the meeting Cllr Anderson thanked the Flood and Water Management Teams, County Councillors, Castle Point Mayor and residents for attending and supporting the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chairman

16th March 2015