

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD IN HALL 2 AT THE PADDOCKS, LONG ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND
MONDAY 16th MARCH 2015 AT 7.00 PM.**

PRESENT:-

Cllr P May (Chairman), Cllr E Swann (Vice Chairman), Cllr J Anderson (Chairman of Environment & Open Spaces) and Cllr J Liddiard (Vice Chairman of Policy & Finance)

ALSO PRESENT:-

Cllrs P. Greig, R. Howard, D. Anderson and A Acott

APOLOGIES:-

Cllr N. Harvey provided his apologies due to another commitment and Cllr D. Blackwell and Cllr P. Mason were not present but gave no reason.

55 members of the public
Elaine De Can – Town Clerk
Ellea Hunt – Deputy Clerk
Laura Windley – Community & Events Officer
John Faires – Community Warden
Karen Smith – 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.

The community stalls present were CAVS, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, ECC Highways and the Watercourse Survey team, Essex Police, CISCA House, Neighbourhood Watch, Job Centre and NHS 111.

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

COUNCILLOR PETER MAY, CHAIRMAN, CANVEY ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr May welcomed all residents, guests and all the community groups who came along and supplied information stalls for the evening. Cllr May provided details of the Council's main achievements for 2014/15 such as employing two new Community Wardens, John Faires and Karen Smith who patrol the island acting as the eyes and ears of the Town Council. Both are part time covering Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. He explained that their experience and background makes them both ideally placed to make a real difference to make Canvey Island a better place to live and work. A number of educational events have been arranged this year including free micro-chipping for dogs in association with the Dogs Trust, which proved very popular and the PDSA were invited to come along for four days to carry out pet checks at four different locations around the island. The Council have also continued to work with the local schools on Wildlife and Conservation projects.

Cllr May explained that he and the Town Councillors were privileged to be invited on a tour of the Royal Hospital in London by the Chelsea Pensioners who attended the Armed Forces Day event and by the Port of London Authority to tour the estuary focussing on the significance of the waterway surrounding the island.

Cllr May was pleased to announce that the Town Council has received a prestigious award as part of the Local Council Award Scheme. This achievement recognises that the council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. This award demonstrates the Town Council goes above and beyond its legal obligations, leading its community and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

Cllr May confirmed that a new Town Guide for 2015/16 has been produced and the Council continue to produce quarterly newsletters and an Annual Report. It has also produced a leaflet giving details of what the Town Council does and a leaflet of Wildlife to be seen on Canvey Island which are all available free of charge from the Town Council office and website. The Council have formulated partnership agreements with Canvey's Big Local £1million who kindly donated over £3,000 toward the installation of the new benches and picnic benches at Canvey Lake and also with Canvey Island Wildlife and Conversation Group who have a management agreement with the Town Council to look after the Don Downes Nature Reserve located along Winter Gardens Path.

Cllr May confirmed that the residents who were affected by the severe weather on Canvey Island on the 20th July last year were able to claim for a three month discount from their council tax through Castle Point Borough Council to help them recover from the impact of the floods and that the Town Council were asked and agreed to make a contribution to the cost of this relief scheme.

Cllr May advised that the events for 2014/15 have been hugely successful with the Wildlife Event seeing more visitors this year than ever before, the introduction of pony rides and other animals to the event this year was also well received. The Armed Forces Day was again very successful attracting huge numbers of visitors from in and around Canvey Island and 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 Town Council made a significant contribution toward the renovation works of the war memorial at the Paddocks on Long Road, which was completed in September / October 2014 and looks fantastic and will be a great asset for next year's event.

The Garden Trail proved very popular for visitors again this year as there were lots of new entrants who all excelled themselves with their wonderful garden displays. The day was so successful that the proceeds of the event raised £1,092.73, which was donated to Castle Point Sports Club for the Disabled, the Council's chosen charity for 2014/15. The Town Council are also working again with the Dogs Trust to organise an information event in August 2015 which will be held at the Lake on the land at the rear of Cedar Road. 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 and two 20ft Christmas trees situated outside Canvey Library and the Haystack Pub looking really great. Special thanks go to Aspect Maintenance Limited and to Mr Burts Haulage Company who helped to install the trees. Cllr May also thanked the local businesses who gave donations towards the icicle lighting and mini Christmas Trees at Jones Corner this year. The power for the icicle lighting in Furtherwick Road was kindly provided by News For You and the power for the lighting of the three trees in Foksville Road was kindly provided by Anika Restaurant. The flower tower planter at Jones Corner was planted up with conifer planting and 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 Best Festive House competition proved popular and judging was difficult but the winner was Redvers Dudman who received £100, which was sponsored by Canvey Island Town Council.

Cllr May advised that this is the first year that the Town Council have organised and sponsored the Chairman's Awards which is an initiative aimed to recognise those individuals and organisations who have selflessly given up their time in the community to help others without expecting any recognition and making a significant contribution to the quality of life for residents of Canvey Island. These awards will be presented later in the evening.

The Town Council's grant funding scheme has been able to offer a total of £3,890.00 to local organisations in need of its assistance and the Council were able to achieve all of this in 2014/15 without raising its precept.

Cllr May finished by thanking the staff in the Town Council, because without their help and hard work the Council could not have achieved any of the above.

2. To confirm and sign as a true record the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 24th March 2014

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 24th March 2014 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

3. A review of the activities of the Council's Committees:

Environment & Open Spaces:

Cllr John Anderson, Chairman of Environment and Open Spaces advised that the committee has been very busy and is pleased with all of the work that has been done in this financial year to improve its open spaces for residents, and visitors to Canvey Island and will continue to make improvements to these areas over the coming years.

The Town Council has in place a programme of what it intends to do over the next 4 to 5 years for the local environment and it is working to bring the open spaces up to a high standard and are very proud of the work that has been completed in this last year over at Canvey Lake. Cllr Anderson advised that following the completion of the second phase of the lake enhancement works, the Town Council have committed to a 5 year reed maintenance programme to manage the reed growth by cutting and removing the root mass. Year 1 works were completed in December 2014 and further reed maintenance work will continue over the next four years. In addition to the creation of the new footpath on the South bank, the Town Council has now installed 7 new bollards at either end of the Lake to give protection from vehicles entering and damaging the environment and in partnership with the committee for Canvey Islands Big Local £1million, the Town Council has now installed 2 picnic benches and 5 new bench seats to the Western end of the Lake. The installation of these benches will enable visitors to the Lake, an opportunity to enjoy a picnic and rest at convenient locations on their walks through the area going toward the Town Centre. The Council has also purchased 6 new litter bins which were very much needed to the Western end of the lake and each bin has been strategically positioned to service both the public footway and newly installed benches along with 2 additional dog bins.

The Town Clerk and staff have secured further funding to continue with the enhancement works at the Lake from Essex Heritage Fund and £4,300 from the Community Initiatives Fund for new welcome and interpretation signage that will be installed this month and will provide updated educational information for visitors to this reserve.

The Community Wardens have enlisted the help of 9 volunteers who have joined Canvey Lake Watch, to be the eyes and ears of the Town Council gathering information about fly-tipping, dog fouling, and any suspicious behaviour or any issues of concern and report them to the Council so that these matters can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The Concord Beach Tidal Pool, where the Town Council work in partnership with the volunteer group Friends of Concord Beach, has proved very popular again this year with record warm weather throughout the summer. Special thanks goes to the Town Council 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. Regular health and safety checks are done and will continue to be done to make sure everybody using the pool is kept safe and we will continue to look at ways to ensure that this facility is preserved for the enjoyment of residents and their families and visitors for many years to come.

The Labworth Memorial Gardens and Bumble Bee Park on the seafront, continue to suffer vandalism, however, our grounds maintenance contractor continues to work with the Town Council to combat any incidents and continues to maintain these gardens in an attractive condition for the enjoyment of all who visit the gardens.

The Town Council, following a request from a member of the public has installed two new memorial plaques onto the wall of the central planter in the memorial garden, and will be reviewing the restoration of some of the memorial benches in the garden which have deteriorated.

The wildflower meadow at Tewkes Creek continues to flourish and the seeds produced by the existing planting will rejuvenate this area attracting an abundance of wildlife. The Council continue to keep the Town Centre decorated with hanging baskets and large flowering tubs throughout the year, and similarly at Jones's Corner.

4. 'CAVS' – presentation from Janis Gibson, CEO, Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services

Janis Gibson introduced herself and provided a presentation to the public informing that CAVS is a registered charity and a not for profit organisation. It was founded in 1994 and is celebrating 21 years. The organisation supports voluntary and community groups and is a provider of frontline community services. CAVS works in partnerships with local organisations and their representatives to meet community needs and to provide support services to those most in need and vulnerable. Its representatives attend strategic partnership meetings, to develop good integrated working relationships to enhance services for the health and wellbeing of the community, proactively highlighting where voluntary sector organisations' can play a role in supporting community and partnership support and raise awareness of issues that are challenging the voluntary and community sector.

CAVS support voluntary and community organisations by helping them develop their service offering funding advice and business planning, giving hints and tips for writing funding applications, assisting with networking opportunities and community events, i.e. access to services and profiling services at community breakfast events, providing a communication channel for membership, i.e. email alerts, newsletter distribution and assisting with marketing and training.

The projects that CAVS are currently working on are:

Befriending Service – this is funded by Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group. It has been operating for three years and now has over 130 volunteers befriending over 200 people. It holds an annual Volunteer Awards Event for volunteers and their friends and an annual Christmas gathering for those on the befriending scheme.

Be Safer Project & Hate Crime Network – this was developed five years ago as a one year pilot. It supports people with a learning disability in Essex to feel and be safer in the community, it assists stores, offices, businesses in towns engaged in this scheme and provides a safe haven and assistance if required and it works with Essex Police in relation to hate crime and incident reporting.

Children's Centres – these are a hub for families with children under the age of 5. Its purpose is to assist with child development and school readiness. CAVS manage five centres, Little Lions, Little Tewkes, Canvey Community Centre on Canvey Island with outreach services at Thorney Bay, Leigh Beck Infants School and Canvey Library and also home visits. CAVS work with Barnardo's, health visitors, Job Centre Plus, Midwives, Speech and Language Therapists, Adult Community Learning, Canvey Island Youth project and Family Lives. These centres provide a creative, fun play and positive parenting programmes.

Family Peer Mentoring – the pilot project was launched in January 2014 with funding from Essex County Council. Referrals are received from Family Solutions providing support to families to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence to cope with their daily life challenges. Volunteer Peer Mentors are provided to support a family for approximately six months and aims to use the community to build a support network and encourage families to consider becoming volunteers themselves.

Keep It Clear - working in partnership with Anglian Water to raise awareness of the issues when used fat and oil, food scraps and sanitary waste are put down plugholes and toilet bowls which causes blockages.

Who Will Care Awards - recognising volunteers, businesses or charities that have made an impact on Essex communities and improved the lives of others. There are six categories to choose from which can be found on the CAVS website www.castlepointavs.org.uk.

5. QUESTION AND ANSWER FORUM – Questions will be invited from members of the public relating to the parish of Canvey Island

Members of the public were invited to address questions to the Chairman in relation to the Town Council business or CAVS following the presentation.

Q: Have you heard who is going to look after the gardens by the War Memorial?

A: The Town Council have not been approached regarding the gardens.

Q: What is the Town Council doing to educate residents on the effects of litter in relation to the blocking of drains etc?

A: The Town Council are working with all partners and organisations that have a responsibility to attempt to prevent such occurrences.

Statement: A report has been made to the Environment Agency in relation to a tree that has been left in a dyke for several weeks; however, no action has been taken.

Q: It is not just the residents who are the cause of the litter it is also animals getting into the bags and the lorries allowing rubbish to blow off while in transit. What is being done about this?

A: ECC Highways are looking into netting rubbish trucks and lorries. If a lorry is to be found without the appropriate netting they will be fined.

Statement: The Borough Council's contractors should be educated as the equipment they use blows rubbish all over the place.

Q: The Borough Council have advised that their contractors are supposed to blow grass cuttings back onto the grass; however, this is not what is happening?

A: This will be reported to CPBC by the Town Clerk

Cllr E. Swann, Vice Chairman advised that the item regarding how can the Town Council educate the residents on the affect of dropping litter can be added to the next Environment and Open Spaces agenda for discussion.

6. CHAIRMANS AWARDS

Cllr May advised that the Town Council Chairman's Awards is an initiative to recognise those individuals and organisations who selflessly give up their time in the community to help others without expecting any recognition, making a significant contribution to the quality of life for residents of Canvey Island. There are three award categories which are:

- Citizen of the Year (over 18 years)
- Young Person of the Year (18 years or under)
- Community/Charity Group of the Year.

Cllr May presented the award for Community Group of the Year to the War Memorial Hall Committee who have raised over £30,000 for community projects and were instrumental in the War Memorial renovation project.

Cllr May present the award for Citizen of the Year to Michael Allwood as he is the Lead Coastguard for Canvey Island and has been for over 17 years and in his spare time is a first responder for Castle Point Ambulance Service.

Cllr May congratulated Michael and The War Memorial Hall Committee for their contribution to the community of Canvey Island and pictures were taken of all winners.

To close the meeting Cllr May thanked CAVS, all the organisations who attended with an information stand and all residents for attending and supporting the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Chairman
14th March 2016