

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD AT THE PADDOCKS, LONG ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND
MONDAY 30TH APRIL 2012 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:-

Cllr J. Liddiard (Chairman), Cllr P. Greig (Vice-Chairman), Cllr P. May, Cllr J. Anderson and Christine Neville, Funding Manager of Citizens Advice Bureau

ALSO PRESENT:-

Cllrs D Anderson, D Blackwell, L. Swann, R Howard, N Harvey and P Mason

50 members of the public

Elaine De Can – Town Clerk

Ellea Hunt – Assistant to the 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 JOAN LIDDIARD, CHAIRMAN, CANVEY ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL
Cllr Liddiard welcomed all residents, Cllr Jackie Govier, Mayor of Castle Point and all the community groups who came along and supplied a presentation stall for the evening (Citizens Advice Bureau, Friends of Concord Beach, Essex Fire Service, Essex Police, Family Mosaic, Canvey Library and RSPB. Cllr Liddiard advised that it had been another busy year for the Town Council and once again the staff have worked hard. She welcomed the additional member to the team Jess Fisher, Community Warden. Cllr Liddiard continued to advise that during the year the Town Council have formed partnerships with the 2187 ATC Squadron, Friends of Concord Beach, Transport Museum and the Island Boys and Girls Football Club. It distributed additional salt during the winter months of bad weather and received a grant of £500 for talks on the digital switchover.

During 2011/12 the Council have awarded grants to Canvey Carnival Association, Age Concern, Heritage Centre, Breathe Easy Group, Citizens Advice Bureau, Island Boys and Girls Football Club, Beatrice Littlewood House, BOPH and Canvey Schools Partnerships totalling £4,077.42.

Cllr Liddiard confirmed that taking into account the current economic climate, the Council have managed to keep the same precept as last year and there will be no increase this year.

The Town Councils aims and aspirations for the forth coming year are to work closely with the community of Canvey Island and its youth groups, to form more partnerships with groups and organisations and find more suitable office space, ideally a large enough building to enable us to accommodate a meeting room for public meetings which could be hired out to give the Council some income. The current office has become rather tight on space and with the amount of projects that we would like to take on; there is little space to expand.

2. To confirm and sign as a true record the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 7TH March 2011

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 7th March 2011 were **CONFIRMED** and signed as a true record.

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

Community Relations:

Cllr Peter May welcomed the attendees and advised that this is his first Annual Town Meeting. He advised that there are 4 members of staff and without them the Council would not achieve its goals. Cllr May advised that the Community Relations committee is all about team work and community spirit and this is what it has tried to deliver.

Community Events - The first Garden Trail was a great success. Armed Forces Day provided a great sense of achievement, the Council and supporting residents were very proud to honour their soldiers past and present. The Christmas event is getting bigger every year and is proving a great success using as much Canvey talent as possible.

Community Work - The Council have a new Community & Events Officer and Community Warden who are working very hard in the community. The Council is working with schools, youth groups, clubs of all ages and needs and local businesses.

Cllr May advised that additional events for 2012/13 will be the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Big Lunch and Citizens' Award. The Council would also like to continue working with the schools, community groups, residents, businesses, police, fire brigade and ambulance service.

Environment & Open Spaces:

Cllr John Anderson commented that when he became a town councillor he hadn't realised how many hurdles the Council had to overcome with each project as most environmental or open spaces projects require involvement from the Environment Agency, RSPB, wildlife groups, Essex County Council, Castle Point Borough Council and many other organisations. The main issue now is funding these projects and there is not enough money to be able to commit to all projects that residents want to see on Canvey Island. Cllr Anderson asked all residents present to advise the Council of any ideas that they may have so that it can be investigated as a possible project for the future.

Cllr Anderson advised that the Community Warden is a great benefit to the Council and is working with various groups and trying to get volunteers to help with projects such as litter picking and dog fouling education.

Cllr Anderson provided a brief report on the following:

Allotments - the Council is working with Castle Point Borough Council to transfer the additional land next to the Waterside Allotments which will enable it to increase the number of plots.

Tewkes Creek – the Council has been working with the Environment Agency to plant trees, create the Dutch ford and develop a sea water area for birds and working in partnership with the Borough Council have installed new picnic benches and trees.

Canvey Lake - unfortunately the dredging project has ceased due to the high costs involved but through the regeneration of the Town Centre there will be a link between the town and the lake which will be a great asset.

Seafront Gardens – Canvey 2000 started this project which was run by volunteers. CITC are working with CPBC who are working to bring the gardens up to standard before it is transferred to the Town Council to maintain and manage.

Skatepark – this has been a joint project with Legacy XS, CPBC, ECC and CITC. The Town Council pay the utility bills, cleaning and 1 youth worker.

Tidal Pool – the Town Council took over the management of the pool and have a 50 year lease with CPBC. The Friends of Concord Beach are working in partnership with CITC to ensure that the area is kept clean and tidy.

Cllr Anderson completed his briefing by advising that the Town Council have many projects that it would like to take forward but is in need of volunteers to assist CITC and the staff. If anyone is interested, please contact the Town Clerk.

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:

Q: Why does the Town Council not purchase the old Urban District Council offices?

A: The Town Council have been in discussions with the Borough Council and visited the site.

Q: The Town Council is brilliant but it needs more powers so it doesn't have to go to the Borough Council to seek permission all the time?

Q: Will the Localism Bill give the Town Council more power?

A: Yes the hope is that the Localism Act will give more power to local councils; however, it is not yet clear how this will work.

Q: What powers does the Community Warden have?

A: At present no powers, however, once the required course has been attended the Community Warden will have the power to issue fixed penalty notices. Although the Warden will continue with any education programmes to try to prevent these occurrences.

Q: During a Neighbourhood Meeting at CPBC the Police offered the services of the PCSO's to ticket dog fouling offenders, why wasn't this taken up?

A: This was only offered for a short period of time and not as a permanent resource.

Q: At a CPBC meeting where the Dog Control Orders were agreed the Borough Council advised that no community wardens would be employed to issue fixed penalty notices but traffic wardens would be given this power?

A: This question cannot be answered as this was not a Town Council meeting.

Q: Why was fishing withdrawn from part of the Canvey Lake?

A: The lake project is being reviewed by a separate lake committee which consists of two Town Councillors, two Cabinet members and one independent chairman from the RSPB. The decision to separate the fishing and locate it at one end of the lake was taken by the committee due to numerous complaints from residents.

Q: CPBC did a water vole survey 2 years ago which found no evidence, why are you now saying the water voles are a problem?

A: The Town Council is not aware of any survey completed by CPBC and the RSPB have visited the site and found evidence of water voles habituating the lake. This finding is not the only reason why the dredging project is not going forward at this time. Multiple agencies have been involved in this process and due to the complexity of the lake numerous considerations have had to be taken into account before any dredging work could take place.

- Overall cost of dredging (with a life span of approx 10 years)

- Location of the lake and the volume of silt to be removed (300 tonnes)
- Planning Application
- Flood Defence Consent
- Waste Consents
- Ecology Survey
- Environment Agency water flow rates
- De-oxygenisation of water (affecting fish)
- Removal of silt and additional costs of removal (including landfill tax)
- Footpath Closures
- Local Schools
- The only exits available of Denham Road or Cedar Road.
- Number of lorry loads required to removed silt from the site estimated at approximately 30 to 40 lorry loads per day for at least 30 days
- Bird nesting seasons
- Fish Spawning Season

Reasons for discontinuation

- Cost of dredging – up to approx £234,000 if not more
- Volume of silt to be removed (300 tonnes)
- Additional costs of removal off site (including landfill tax)
- Volume of traffic movement along Denham Road or Cedar Road.
- Flood management restrictions

A new proposed program of works is being reviewed and will benefit the whole community.

5. 'Citizens Advice Bureau' – Christine Neville, Funding Manager

Christine Neville provided a power point presentation and advised that the CAB is an advice centre. Some examples of the services they provide are bailiff visits, beauty parlour disputes, employments issues, neighbour disputes, birth benefits, bereavement payments and homeless advice.

The centre is open 27 hours per week and located in Long Road. The centre has many volunteers and relies on funding for its core services. Last year the centre had 3,260 clients and 2,287 were from Canvey Island. Central Ward appears to be in need of the majority of the advice and the debt advised to CAB in this ward alone is £300,000.

Q: Do you think that Thorney Bay Caravan Park is the reason for the increased numbers in Central Ward?

A: The Caravan Park is not in Central Ward so will not be included in the figures advised.

6. OPEN 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.

Sandra Durrant advised that an evening event was taking place on the 31st January 2013 to commemorate the Canvey Flood and celebrate the 60 year anniversary of the War Memorial Hall.

Q: Residents who use wheelchairs are finding it increasingly difficult to use the pavements as they are in such a bad state and the drop kerbs are not low enough?

A: The Council recognises this problem and if you report specific incidents to the office the staff will report this to the highways department at Essex County Council.

To close the meeting Cllr Liddiard thanked the staff for arranging the Town Meeting and thanked all residents for attending and supporting the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chairman

22nd April 2013