



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

22ND APRIL 2013

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COUNCILLORS

WEST WARD

William Burton	48 Forehill, Ely, CB7 4AQ	Tel: 610032
Richard Hobbs	16 Bernard Street, Ely CB6 1AU	Tel: 610955
Nigel Clarke	3 Herons Close, Ely CB6 3EF	Tel: 664612

EAST WARD

Brian Ashton	"Spero", Vineyard Way, Ely CB7 4QQ	Tel: 663027
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Elisabeth Every	80 Barton Road, Ely CB7 4HZ	Tel: 665815

SOUTH WARD

Jenny Chaplin	9 Hills Lane, Ely CB6 1AY	Tel: 610574
Shirley Overall	2A Hills Lane, Ely CB6 1AY	Tel: 610649
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NORTH WARD

Philip Eden	27 Williams Close, Ely CB7 4FQ	Tel: 650408
Elaine Griffin-Singh	29 Forehill, Ely, CB7 4AA	Tel: 658530
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Christine Jones	2 King Edgar Close, Ely CB6 1DP	Tel: 654160
Janice Mackay	9 Frankland Walk, Ely CB6 1TH	Tel: 659267
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Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor William Burton

Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT 2012-2013

The Committee members are: the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, immediate past Mayor and the Chairs of all other committees.

The Committee is responsible for the Council finances, legal matters, Local Needs Housing Scheme, communication, staff recruitment and welfare.

I am pleased to report that the Council's expenditure will be within its total income. A result achieved through close monitoring of the finances by the Clerk, who works closely with Councillors. We have adopted a balanced budget for 2013-2014, with a rise in the City of Ely's element of Council Tax of 2.1% - well below current inflation which stands at 2.8% (ref. Bank of England).

We are pleased to have been able to support many voluntary organisations within our community, when funding from statutory bodies has been drastically reduced to this sector. It is never possible to support all who apply, but we did make grants totalling £12033.75 to 26 groups.

This year has seen the Council acquire the Maltings Cottages from ECDC on a long lease basis. These may form part of the Riverside re-organisation and general support to the Council.

The Council has also made a positive offer on the old Magistrates Court House building and the negotiations are now in hand proceeding apace with a view to relocating the Council office and services there, together with the formation and presence of a Community Hub.

Our negotiations with ECDC regarding the Riverside are ongoing, with our intention being to take over the management of this area, which includes gardens, moorings and public access in general.

I am confident that future Chairmen will take forward the continued development of the Council and the delivery of its services and amenities for the community of Ely.

I wish to thank my fellow Councillors for their support over the year. Thanks also go without reservation to the Clerk, Tracey Coulson; Assistant Clerk, Sarah Jay and Administrative Assistant, Marianne Pickering, for their diligent and professional assistance to Councillors, myself and the community.

Cllr W Burton
Chairman of the Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT 2012-13

The City of Ely Council members sit on one of two Planning Committees that meet every two weeks. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor attend all of the meetings. As the current Mayor sits on the Planning Committee at East Cambs District Council, the Deputy Mayor has Chaired all meetings. The Committees can only make recommendations as it is the District Council Planning Department that determines planning applications.

The number of plans reviewed over the year has been steady considering the current climate. We have made adverse recommendations on relatively few plans to support growth and our local construction industry. Many refusals relate to contraventions of policy around signage in the city centre. In the event of a large planning application, the planning committees merge to allow for comprehensive discussion and decision-making. On occasion we have made representation to ECDC's full Planning Committee.

During the year we have had presentations from land-owners and developers, as well as from East Cambs District Council, to gain our input into future plans for Ely. We very much appreciate the openness and determination on the part of all concerned to ensure that the City of Ely Council can contribute to producing plans for the future. It is important that plans are of the highest quality and that necessary infrastructure is in place and in a timely manner.

Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh

REPRESENTATIONS ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The City Council has representatives on various organisations within the City of Ely.

These organisations include Needham's Foundation, City of Ely Allotments Association, Trinity Dole Charity, Ely Museum, Access Group, High and New Barns Steering Group, City of Ely Perspective, Parish Transport, Prickwillow Village Council, Paradise Sports Centre, CCTV Partnership Board, Standards Committee, Ely Market Town Transport Strategy and the Ely Neighbourhood Panel.

Cllr William Burton
Chairman of the Council

RECREATION AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE REPORT 2012-13

Recreation

This year has seen the installation of a new Multi-Use Games Area to the High Barns play area. This is for the older children to have an all weather surface to play on throughout the year. There has been a full review of play areas conducted to gauge what future works need to be carried out to the existing areas. This report has been used to compile a list of works, which involves replacement and repair to existing equipment and surfaces. It is hoped a rolling programme of replacement and repair will be carried out during the next few years, as a result of identification of the equipment which needs replacement and will be done on a priority basis. The team has diligently carried out the daily and weekly safety inspections of equipment and the daily cleaning of the sites, so they are respectable and safe for public use. Any maintenance required has been carried out in a timely manner.

Cemetery

There has been a large capital investment this year in the provision of new building for storing the equipment we hold. In addition the existing workshop has been upgraded to provide a safer workshop, storage area and welfare facilities. At the same time the boiler system was renewed to replace the old existing system. With the replacement boiler being more efficient, this should help reduce energy costs. All water pipes on the cemetery site were upgraded from lead to plastic.

A new system of staffing was employed this year, where the council has employed 2 part-time seasonal workers to cover the period from April to October. This was as a replacement of one whole time post. The new system proved very successful last summer because of the weather conditions meaning additional grass cutting was required to both cemetery and recreational areas. In addition the temporary workforce enabled more maintenance work to be carried out, under the guidance of the full time staff.

The remedial works to unsafe headstones has continued and approximately half of those identified, as being unsafe have now been repaired. The remainder and any newly identified unsafe headstones are now made safe on a temporary basis, before permanent remedial safety repairs take place.

It is hoped that during the next financial year, the existing roadway system in the cemetery will be extended to the area which is now being used for new burials. No hard surface exists in this area, which makes access difficult for mourners and funeral staff, especially in wet weather.

Cllr Nigel Clarke

Chairman of the Recreation and Cemetery Committee

STREET FURNITURE COMMITTEE REPORT 2012-13

The Street Furniture Committee is responsible for responding to requests from the public, and/or other Councillors, regarding items of street furniture such as dog waste bins, seating, bus shelters, notice boards, signage etc and the maintenance of existing items within the ownership of the City of Ely Council. Similar items are in the ownership of other local authorities and developers, and are thus not the responsibility of the Committee, but suggestions and concerns can be considered through debate leading to comment and joint working with partners.

Following the completion of an audit of street furniture across the city, a bulk order of dog waste bins was ordered to achieve a discount on purchase. During the year, damaged dog bins have been replaced plus a number of new provisions especially around the Country Park area and approaches, in line with public requests.

The scheme which allows a business or member of the public to sponsor new seating has been very successful. Two benches have been ordered and paid for by members of the public, one placed on Lavender Green and one in Fore Hill car park, as memorials to family members.

East Cambs District Council is in receipt of Section 106 monies from the Sainsbury's Ely development which has been allocated for the provision of cycle racks. The Street Furniture Committee has inputted into suitable sites for further cycle rack provision.

The District Council are also in receipt of Sainsbury's Section 106 monies allocated to city centre improvements particularly around the Fore Hill area. Members of the Street Furniture Committee have gathered some ideas and suggestions for street furniture etc which has been forwarded to the District Council as a basis for discussion.

A request was received from Witchford Parish Council for the supply of a bus shelter adjacent to the Lancaster Way Business Park. Sponsorship was thankfully gained from partners and, despite several problems with contractors due to issues with the site the provision of a shelter should be forthcoming in the near future.

Notice board requests from Prickwillow Village Council and The Voice, Barns Residents Committee have been considered and agreed, with recommendation for funding from Section 106 monies. Funding was agreed and the notice boards will be supplied and installed shortly.

It had been envisaged that a licensing scheme for street trading outside of cafe/restaurant premises in the city centre was to be created by Cambs County Council during 2012-13. It had been decided that the City of Ely Council, via this Committee, would accept responsibility for the day to day monitoring and liaison with business owners, with a soft touch approach, to facilitate fair and safe working practices. To date, Cambs County Council have not completed nor implemented a scheme and the future of the initiative is uncertain.

I would like to thank the members of the Street Furniture Committee for their support and input during the year and to our hard-working maintenance and administration teams.

CLlr Elaine Griffin-Singh
Chairman

April 2013



City of Ely Council
Ely in Bloom Committee Report 2012-2013

The committee comprised of Councillors Chaplin, Arnold, Yates and Overall, along with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex. officio members. Other members were City of Ely Councillors, business and local organisation representatives who were co-opted to the committee. District Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith continued as a member, Councillor Shirley Overall as Chairman and Councillor Jenny Chaplin as Vice- Chairman, under the leadership of the Council.

During the summer the City looked a mass of colour, with baskets, planters, tiered towers, tubs, barrier baskets, flower beds, and "Welcome to Ely" signs planted in tones of red, white and blue to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. The City of Ely Council sponsored extra flower beds in the garden on the corner of Back Hill and Broad Street, which is competently maintained by the Helping Hands team, funded by the Volunteer Centre.

It was the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Ely Military Band, the tubs on the Market place were planted in soft red and gold (their uniform colours), to celebrate this occasion and thank the band for all their hard work over the years.

A new window box was commissioned for the City of Ely Council building, to match the trough in Ely War Memorial.

The Ely War Memorial trough was planted in red and yellow to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore.

The Ely in Bloom committee sponsored a commemorative tree (British Hornbeam) in Jubilee Gardens to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

After the success of the Ely in Bloom Flower Competition last year, the committee decided to add a new category:-

Best Resident's basket / window box / container. This was a pleasure to judge, it really showed how much work residents do to adorn their properties. The other categories were as before:-

Best Volunteer Group Flower Bed; Best Commercial Hanging Baskets / Containers / Window boxes;

Best Sheltered Housing Community Garden; Best Public House / Inn Floral Display; Best Shop Window display and Overall Winner.

The winning contestants from all the categories met up at a reception, in large numbers, this was good to see. They received well deserved praise and acknowledgement for their hard work. As Chairman of the committee I would like to thank them and all the judges for their time and commitment.

Ely in Bloom committee will continue to encourage other partnerships and discuss any new ideas put forward by the public, to further the Ely in Bloom projects. Businesses and local organisations in Ely continue to provide floral displays for all to enjoy. The committee wish to thank the District Council Parks and Open Spaces team, District Council, and Ely City Council for their co-operation and financial support.

As Chairman I wish to thank all members of the committee who attend our meetings, your help and support is much appreciated. Thanks also go to the City of Ely Council office and other sections of the Council staff for their help, making my job an enjoyable one.

Cllr Shirley Overall
Chairman – Ely in Bloom Committee

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE REPORT 2012-2013

The Christmas Lights committee consists of Councillors and co-opted volunteers. The volunteers are representatives from the Lighting and Switch-on event teams.

The lighting team is responsible for the erection and display of the lights. The team meets throughout the year to service the old lights, fixtures and fittings, and decide on the display and any new lights and features that may be required.

The switch-on team is responsible for coordinating the evening, which has become very popular over the years. This year was no exception.

This year's display was not without its problems. Following the lighting maintenance contract being awarded to Balfour Beatty by Cambridgeshire County Council, we were asked to supply details of the load of the lights to be used on the lampposts. This information was given, and we were advised we would need to structurally test each column before any additional loading could be erected. The City of Ely Council felt it was unfair that it should have to pay for this, as it had already paid for the loading information. A definitive response from Balfour Beatty as to whether or not features could be hung on the lamp posts was not received, and the Committee looked at alternative sites that could be used. It was decided that icicle lights would be attached to guttering from Fore Hill corner to the Cloisters, and multi-coloured lights from there to Costa. Icicle lights would also be put around three sides of the central building on the Market Place, plus additional features fixed to the walls.

Ring pull tests of the anchor points were also undertaken and repairs where necessary, were made. The number of features used across the streets was also reduced to comply with the structural engineer's calculations. Those that were not going to be needed were offered to the retailers to use for this year.

Initially, progress in erecting the lights was not as quick as had been hoped, as some of our usual volunteers were ill and unable to help. However, USAF Mildenhall supplied volunteers, and we are very grateful for all their help.

Despite everything, the display and the switch-on evening were a great success. However, none of this would be possible without the enormous effort put in by both teams, and the City of Ely Council is extremely grateful to all those involved.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their continued support, and Tracey, Sarah and Marianne for all their help and patience throughout the year.

Cllr Jenny Chaplin
Chairman
Christmas Lights Committee

YOUTH FORUM

In the course of the last year a Youth Forum has been established consisting of Councillors and representatives of Youth Organisations.

An interactive website has been created and is edited by the youth members. The aim is for youth organisations to insert their details, contacts and activities to make youth throughout the City and surrounding villages aware of what is available to them.

The website was launched in February at a Youth Fair where organisations had stalls and entertainment was provided in the Market Square. It is intended to build on this success by having two more fairs in the near future

Cllr John Yates
Chairman

CITY CENTRE COMMITTEE

At the beginning of the year and following publication of the Portas Report a City Centre Forum was established to give the community an input into making the City Centre more sustainable in the future. The general economic downturn and changes in the shopping patterns of the public give rise to significant challenges particularly to small shopkeepers.

The Forum has now become a Committee, consisting of representatives of recognised organisations in order to provide a more focused approach. Pressures such as business rates, rents and utility costs have been identified and examined and remain under discussion.

Tourism with an increase in footfall is a service that is felt could be improved and talks with ECDC have commenced. Replacement and improvement of signage is also underway.

Cllr John Yates
Chairman

CCTV PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP REPORT 2012-3

The CCTV Partnership has now been up and running very effectively for over 2 years, having recruited and trained a number of volunteers and PCSOs. The process is managed by a paid Co-ordinator, working 21 hours per week who oversees the operation of the system, reviewing procedures and practices, marketing and recruitment.

The Steering Group comprises Councillors Yates, Burton, Clarke, Griffin-Singh and Every, together with Soham Town Council, the local police, East Cambridgeshire District Council and the CCTV Co-ordinator, with Cllr Every as Chair and Cllr Yates as Vice-Chair.

The benefits of increased coverage for observation, due to an increased combination of volunteers and PCSOs has resulted in very positive feedback from the members of the partnership, including a letter from Sir Graham Bright, Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner, giving his full support for the scheme and stating that 'we believe we get enormous benefits from having the CCTV cameras in Ely and Soham'. The continuation of a very positive relationship between police and volunteers has included joint training for new police on CCTV procedures.

Recruitment of volunteers remains a high priority and we are currently interviewing six volunteers and have a further list of six who have shown interest following a recent advertising campaign and 'drop in' session. This is very encouraging. Further events and activities are planned both in Ely and Soham to build on the current level of awareness.

A technical review has recently been undertaken to identify the effectiveness of the current equipment, whilst considering further implications which take into account the new technology as it emerges. This will be further widened to establish partnership needs designed to determine future developments and budget implications. Discussions are in hand with ECDC concerning the 'hand-over' of their cameras to the other partners.

Through regular monitoring and review, we strive constantly to improve our coverage, effectiveness and efficiency working together with our partners.

The Partners are very positive about the CCTV system and the benefits it provides for the local community in terms of a deterrent and to the police for assistance in operational issues and are committed to extending the service as budgets and personnel allow.

As Chair, I would like to thank all Partnership members and volunteers for their support and hard work throughout the year, and look forward to further developing the project for our mutual benefit.

Cllr Elisabeth Every
Chairman
April 2013

LOCALISM ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

This was a new working group set up during the current year in response to the new Localism Act, which enabled parish councils to look at providing services and maintenance of areas already operated by others.

The main focus of this group has been to look at various opportunities and to gather any background details and information that is available and to then be able to pass this on to Full Council so that an informed debate can be conducted

So far the group has looked at:-

Maltings Cottage

This is a building which has been in decline for a number of years and severely impacts on the visual appearance of the riverside area. Negotiations have been completed and a lease document has been signed with ECDC, which will enable this building to be renovated and brought back into use.

Larkfields

The City of Ely Council was contacted when present owners were looking to close this facility. We looked at numbers and its value to the community and thought it would be possible to run it. This was conveyed to present owners who also had a further in depth look at the building and decided to retain ownership, resulting in the building being retained for its original use, which was brilliant news for all those organisations which use Larkfields.

Ely Magistrates Court

This is still ongoing, but ownership by the City of Ely Council is getting nearer. It has been a lot of work to get the numbers together, to enable those that are negotiating the sale, to ensure they are working from as well informed position as they can be. The building has the potential of providing a hub for Ely groups with the City of Ely Council offices in attendance.

Riverside

We are currently looking at taking over responsibility of the riverside area, which is an important part of the Ely scene for both residents and tourists. More work is required before this can be resolved

Cllr Nigel Clarke

Chairman of the Localism Advisory Working Group

ELY-RIBE COMMITTEE

Report to Annual Parish Meeting - April 2013

The last year has been a relatively quiet one for the Association. However, we did host a visit from representatives of our twin town last June, when a small party of Danes made a visit to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee weekend. Given the reverence with which Danes regard their Royal family, they were very familiar with the atmosphere of celebration and community spirit that was evident through the weekend. They participated in events in the city, as well as joining us for a 'Big Lunch' in Queen Adelaide Village Hall on the Sunday. Our thanks go to the Mayor and Mayoress, for their welcome to our guests in the Council Chamber.

Since then we have had two specific requests for twinning contacts, firstly from a Danish choir who would like to visit Ely, and secondly from the Ely Cycling Club, who are now in contact with their counterparts in Ribe.

At last year's Parish Meeting, I made reference to the need to consider the future development of the Association and of the twinning arrangement. I met with members of the City Council's Administration Committee to discuss their aspirations, and we are grateful for the confirmation of ongoing support from the City Council. Last autumn, we joined councillors at one of their Saturday morning market events, and as a consequence managed to recruit a small number of additional members. We need to repeat this exercise in the coming year.

Unfortunately, the ongoing issues with public access to the Ely-Ribe Tapestry at the Maltings are still unresolved. However, we will continue to press for a resolution to the problem, either within the amended contractual arrangements for operation of the Maltings, or possibly at another location in the City if the situation at the Maltings becomes untenable.

Mr Gareth Hughes
Chairman

CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT FOR ELY CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2013

2013 is looking as if it will be an exciting time at the allotments. We now have our own website www.elyallotments.com which allows us to keep interested plot-holders up-to date with developments as they happen. The newly formatted magazine is proving to be very popular. It includes coloured photographs for the first time and we are planning to introduce more topics. Many people receive their magazines by email which saves paper and decreases costs.

Once again the A J Fenn cup for best allotment in Ely went to a New Barns plot-holder. In a closely contested competition the winner was for the first time a woman – Vala Carter.

One of the proposed routes for the by-pass includes a roundabout which is very close to Bridge Fen. The committee are discussing with the planners access to the site from the road and the provision of footpath for those who walk and cycle to the site.

The current number of plot-holders on individual sites is as follows.

Site	2012	2013
Canterbury Ave	9	9
Bridge Fen	104	110
New Barns	43	50
Upherd's Lane	45	46
Back Hill	2	2
TOTALS	203	217

The waiting list is currently 16. This decrease does not reflect a change in demand for allotments. It occurred because several of our older plot-holders, who still had 20 poles have hung up their spades and the plots have been divided up. In spite of the challenges of climate change the weather has not been blamed as a reason for giving up plots. It has been illness and moving for employment reasons. Bridge Fen is not a first choice for would-be tenants because they need to use a car to get there, rather than perceived risk of having their things stolen. With the current economic climate they prefer to wait for inner-city sites. Rather than have several vacant plots Bridge Fen, a decision was taken to allow some new but experienced tenants to have ten pole rather than the usual five pole plots.

We would like to thank the City Council for their support, particularly Cllr Nigel Clarke who represents the Council at the committee. We would also like to thank the Neighbourhood Panel for making the sites a police priority and the Police, particularly PCSO Barb Neil for taking time to advise us and their increased vigilance, which has led to a marked decrease in thefts from Bridge Fen.

CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2012/2013

Due to the insufficient time between the yearend on the 31st March 2013 and the publication of this report for the Annual Parish Meeting on the 22nd April, it is not possible to produce the year end accounts summary. Therefore, information is provided in the form of pie charts, which show the income and expenditure of this Council.

A detailed summary will be available shortly from the Clerk.

	2012/2013	2013/2014	
	£	£	
Gross Expenditure	411,395	424,581	
Income	100,409	104,090	
Net Expenditure	310,986	320,491	
Contribution to/(from) balances	(0,00)	(24,874)	(ECDC's parish contribution)
Amount of Precept	310,986	295,617	



