



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL  
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SUB COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF A MEETING  
HELD AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY  
ON THE 25TH AUGUST 2021 6.30 pm

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PRESENT:

Mrs A Bennett – Tourism & Town Centre Manager.	Cllr S Bellow (Chair)	Cllr A Arnold
Cllr E Every	Cllr I Lindsay	Mr M Chinery-Colyer
Miss L Newstead	Mr Philip Eden	Mr I Newstead

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs S Jay and Mr J Dennick

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY AND MATTERS ARISING

Mr Eden queried whether the last meeting should have taken place as Cllr Bellow was the only Councillor present. Cllr Bellow confirmed the meeting was quorate as co-opted members form part of the Committee.

Mr Eden said that the minutes were irrelevant until this had been checked with Mrs Jay. Cllr Bellow then proceeded to ask if the last minutes were accurate. Mr Newstead was unhappy with how the minutes were relayed and said that many things were incorrect. Mr Newstead also proceeded to say these minutes should not be made public as they were inappropriate. Mrs Bennett took the minutes and recorded the meeting. It was agreed that maybe this was taken out of context, and Mr Newstead said he would be responding to the minutes, and Mrs Bennett agreed these would be investigated. Cllr Every requested the structure that Mr Newstead uses. Mr Newstead explained that this is all available in the EMP. Cllr Every requested that everyone has a copy. The minutes remained un-signed and this will be discussed at the next meeting. Pages CLS 003 and CLS 004 refer.

4. BUDGET UPDATE

Members noted the budget update that had been tabled.

Mr Eden raised the subject of raising the precept, mentioned in the previous meeting. Cllr Every made a comment that all City of Ely Council members are aware of a deficit and this needs to be communicated to the sub-committee in the future. Due to covid there have been sufficient losses, and this must be addressed moving forward. What could not happen is the precept being raised. Cllr Bellow closed the conversation by commenting on the large deficit and thanked Mr Eden for his input.

Further comments regarding the budget were good news about the tree and securing the tree for £1600. Cllr Chinery-Colyer added he was excited to see the tree. Cllr Bellow questioned the carry forward isn't mentioned in the budget, and this needed to be checked with Mrs Jay. Mr Eden agreed that parts of the budget were missing and Cllr Bellow, mentioned she would raise this. Cllr Lindsay raised the question that the switch on event could not happen under the current budget and the COVID situation expected toward the end of the year. Mr Eden mentioned that this should be discussed under item 6, and that other festivals were taking place, much bigger than the Switch on.

Cllr Lindsay disagreed, and it was mentioned that other festivals were LFT tested by Cllr Every, and risk-assessments would be carried out, but it would be highly unlikely to manage this for the Switch on event.

#### 5. TO RECEIVE UPDATE FROM LIGHTING GROUP

Mr Chinery-Colyer mentioned he would like to organise a BBQ at the yard, to get everyone together for ideas. He also mentioned that the request for the lights has been made with Mrs Jay, and that Mrs Jay mentioned that it would be very difficult to get hold of them due to their origin being China. There are a lot of lights to utilise, and a plan needs to be made. Mr Chinery-Colyer was waiting for Mrs Jay to respond. Mr Chinery-Colyer has had an initial look to try and sort the lights out but would like to have a work 'get together' to devise a plan. He reassured the sub-committee that it would all work out, but some of the old lights are un-reliable. Mr Chinery-Colyer agreed there was no spare money. He also mentioned that he would be sending an email out regarding volunteers and reported that Mr Jeremy Reeve maybe able to help (Mr Reeve is the Co-Chair of the Cathedral Business Group) and suggested that Cllr Bellow perhaps discuss this with him. It was agreed that this meeting would be arranged. Lakenheath volunteers are not available. Mr Chinery-Colyer also mentioned that a neighbour has a contact at Lakenheath and that he would try that avenue. Cllr Bellow welcomed the news that the local businesses are wanting to get involved which would be good, and Cllr Lindsay supported this.

Cllr Arnold asked Cllr Bellow about forms for new volunteers, this is in working progress and if there are many new volunteers, that needs to be done. Mrs Bennett mentioned she would use Visit Ely as a way of advertising for volunteers to assist. Mr Chinery-Colyer mentioned he needed all the current volunteers' details checked, and this was agreed. Cllr Bellow would pull a role description form together.

Cllr Bellow thanked Mr Chinery-Colyer for his comments and that it was very positive.

#### 6. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FOM THE SWITCH ON GROUP

Mr Newstead said he was prepared and ready to proceed if he could. He also mentioned that if a low-key event was held, many people would still attend, contradicting the point of safety, hence crowds of people and no measures. Both Mr and Miss Newstead said you either "do it, or don't". A photo, or a video would be more appropriate, and videos could be sent to Mrs Bennett for Visit Ely. Other community events were discussed. On-line, non-event would be better. Mr Eden agreed with Mr Newstead. He mentioned that if something low-key was to happen there would be no guarantee how many would attend, and it may be thousands. Miss Newstead referred to the Tourism and Town Centre Committee discussing the budget and covid being the issue, then nothing should proceed if these were the issues. Cllr Arnold disagreed and mentioned that a small event, with charity stalls would be nice, with the City of Ely Band, would not draw the crowds. Mrs Bennett mentioned that advertising was key, no assumption can be made as to who will attend and mentioned that whatever the event was to take place, posed a risk. With Eel Day/Apple Day, the numbers are unknown.

Cllr Every suggested that the local businesses should be involved and energised and encouraged to stay open, keeping it to families. No fun-fair would solve the problem of many teens attending. Mrs Bennett mentioned that she has had conversations with businesses, and they are keen to be involved. Miss Newstead mentioned that if you did anything similar again, many would arrive whatever blueprint you used. Mrs Bennett again mentioned there would be no attempt at labelling the 'smaller' event the Switch On. Miss Newstead again stressed that the time of year people will be expecting the big event to go ahead. Mr Newstead mentioned that minimum numbers would be 3000 all at one go. Mr and Miss

Newstead said NO to putting event on and that they are keen to do, so it was a great shame. Any mention of the lights going on, there will be thousands turn up as that's been expected over the last 20 years despite the pandemic.

Cllr Every asked the questions about H&S issues, and asked Mr Newstead if this was a public health risk. Mr Newstead said he referred to the 'blue book' where the number of people were measured per square meter. This is used to calculate potential numbers. This principle has been used every year and Mr Newstead then gave examples of previous years. Cllr Every thanked Mr Newstead for the information as did Cllr Bellow.

Miss Newstead again mentioned that safety is fore-front. She hoped that the Tourism and Town Centre Committee would appreciate that when they mention that the big event wouldn't happen, this would be considered. Miss Newstead mentioned that collaboration via Facebook would be useful, between both Visit Ely and Switch on pages for generating interest from Charities.

Mr Chinery-Colyer questioned the Eel Fayre and how it was contained, Mrs Bennett replied by explaining measures that were put in place as we were under Step 3, and this was successful.

Cllr Bellow then proceeded to get a vote. Mr Eden said he would worry that any event would draw thousands, that the lights should just go on, and no event. Cllr Arnold disagreed a small event, advertised right, would be fine. Cllr Lindsay agreed, but said he would refer to Mrs Bennett, Town Centre Manager for Visit Ely and the financial risk was too high, together with safety. Mr Newstead said that this would be just a 'late night shop' – if businesses were encouraged to stay open with special offers. Members discussed previous years, of going down the High Street, and this changed when the activity was all on Market Square. Mr Chinery-Colyer said the lights could be turned on 'anytime' not that date and said something low key could happen and would be nice for the community. Cllr Every mentioned you can't under-estimate what we don't know.

Miss Newstead suggested a 'video' with shop traders/volunteers saying it's not happening, but Merry Christmas – no congregating should happen at all. Mr Newstead said no to an event. Mrs Bennett was happy to put a low-key event on, but concerns were raised about time scale.

The meeting concluded with a smaller event taking place agreed, some clarity as to what exactly would happen was needed, but this would be discussed at the next Tourism and Town Centre Committee meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no any other business.

#### 8. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

October 5<sup>th</sup> – Maltings Ely at 6.30 pm (changed from 6<sup>th</sup> October)

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm