

## Minutes and things (22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012)

The draft minutes of the 14th May F & P meeting hadn't been posted on the Interweb by 17th July, so the highlights you missed include:

Someone called Norman Cutting spoke regarding the possibility of using redundant allotment land for temporary parking (maybe even a park'n'ride), the lack of newsletters, the lack of updating of the Town Council web site, the 'consultation' regarding the new parking zone (admit it, they have decided, it will happen, remember the hospital 'consultation and promises?') and as the working party keeps forgetting to meet, offered to help them out.

The Festival of Light will be on 2nd December this year, Mr Gary Cox was appointed as Town Clerk, subject to a six month probationary period. Finally, the Town Council has taken on a full repairing lease on the Lagley Meadow Youth & Community Centre and just has to resolve the thorny problem of the NHS using the car park. That should keep the new clerk out of mischief!

It seems that County have suddenly realised that 'localism' might actually happen, so the Conservative controlled County Council has produced a survey for Town/Parish Councils to complete. As we an overwhelming Conservative controlled Council, it seems they do not know actually what the relationship is between the first & third tier authorities. I confess to wondering exactly where this might lead to after nearly 40 years since re-organisation happened.

Meanwhile, back in our real world, the government is doing it's best to keep the elderly in their place. The one thing we can be sure of, is that we will get older as time goes by and the chances of never needing any assistance to continue living a reasonable quality of life are almost nil.

As usual, the problem seems to be looked at in isolation. We all know that the 'good' days are gone for a while and we really cannot keep expanding the economy for ever and a day as Einstein had a theory that matter cannot be created, only changed. The economists interpreted that theory along the lines of adding value will allow everyone to get 'richer' forever and a day. If you believe that, then I suggest you start reading something else.

Talking about the elderly (well, I was, at least) let's go back and see if we can identify where we went wrong. Talking to some of my older relatives, it seems that if a lady worked, once she got married, then she was 'sacked'. Then the WWII came along, and it was deemed to be in the national interest that women could work even though married and even to the extent that they could actually do many of the tasks previously only done by men. The war came to an end but because so many had been killed, the government encouraged women to have children, by introducing a family allowance. Unfortunately, it takes a while for children to grow, so in the 50s, another cunning plan was put into action. This was to encourage some of the inhabitants of our overseas territories to come and settle here and help fill the gap between our ageing population and the younger ones coming along. This worked fairly well and the country slowly rebuilt itself - remember the value adding earlier?

Sadly, it seems the government then lost its way, did not stop the financial incentive to produce children following the war, wages were allowed to rise by percentages rather than fixed amounts (well done, Trade Unions!) and one could argue that the right to be paid in coins of the realm being removed encouraged banks to believe they could do no wrong - still a view as I write, but not sure about everyone else.

Which neatly brings us up to date. The problem needs a change in attitude by us, the government, the trade unions and business. I suppose the ideal would be a form of devaluation - 'but the pound in your pocket will not be affected' - as someone on television once said. We all keep expecting more money in our pocket to exchange for the ever increasing cost of 'things' we need/want. Sit down and think for a second. It's a never ending spiral where the rich get richer at the expense of the rest.

For the time being, let's just wonder why the 'top' people in large companies get paid a bonus for not doing their job, draw a huge salary in case they get tempted to leave and work for someone else, deny that they have any idea what goes on in their company. It's nice to hear that shareholders are starting to rebel. It's a start!

I will continue this, next month.

Our local MP, David Gaulk, has been a good boy and started preaching the 'message' that 'we are all in it together', but suggesting that instead of fighting the big, wealthy companies and individuals, we should help the banks out by not using cash - again!

I know I have got this wrong, but I was rather under the impression that it was up to the trader how they actually conducted their affairs, rather than customers making life difficult. It must be easy to follow the paper trail when you set up things called direct debits, standing orders or just write a cheque when we pay for the simple things in life such as electricity, water, gas, telephone etc. There must be millions sloshing around in VAT or just business taxes where the service (and therefore the liability) is provided on our small, cramped and over populated island and is reported to be avoided (maybe just legally evaded) by the nasty free press. But then, these organisations have the will and the money to make it worth while, whereas, our David, correctly, understands that his very future in government relies more on the support of these organisations than the residents who pay for a service in coins of the realm. Remember the small shareholder rebellion regarding directors fees and 'bonus'.