

TOWN COUNCIL: WATER FOR MUDEFORD BEACH

RENTAL OR FREE DISCUSSION

Jubilee Committee Formed

HIGHCLIFFE CLIFFS: Cost of Work Prohibitive

C.T. February 23, 1935

Mudford Beach is ensured of a water supply this year; arrangements are now complete with the West Hants Water Co. There will, in addition to the rented taps, be one centrally placed, free.

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. HARTFORD.

Before the business of the evening commenced, his Worship the Mayor (Alderman Norman Barnes) spoke sincerely of the high place the late Alderman Hartford will ever occupy in the memory of his colleagues of the Council.

"He had served the borough as Councillor, Alderman and Mayor exceedingly well," said the Mayor. "We had grown up as boys and men, both imbued with love for the town and shared a mutual desire to legislate for its good. His work in the town and district has endeared him very keenly to many families, and the name of "Dr. Bertie" has brought comfort to many homes. We shall deplore his early death, but have happy memories of his life."

WATER SUPPLY TO MUDEFORD BEACH.

Alderman Perry Cawte, as chairman of the Beach Committee, submitted their recommendation that the offer of the West Hampshire Water Co. to supply water to the Mudford Beach be accepted. The company have offered to supply by meter at a flat rate of 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons from standpipes to be fixed at intervals not greater than 100 yards apart, wherever there are huts, and to make connections to the sanitary conveniences and the Black House. The estimated cost of the work to the West Hampshire Water Co. will be approximately £1,100.

They require that the Council shall guarantee a minimum annual payment of £66, including the water rates now received by the company from the house boats at Mudford.

They suggest that when the average annual consumption for three years exceeds 880,000 gallons the Council's liability to the company under any guaranteed payment plan shall cease.

IF THE BEACH "SLIPS"

In the event of a discontinuance of the supply due to the "disappearance of the beach," and before the Council's liability has ceased, the company, after crediting against the capital cost of the works the value of any pipes saved, less the cost of salving or saving them, shall share an equal portion with the Council the balance of such capital cost, less depreciation of pipes at 2½ per cent. per annum.

Alderman Cawte said that £66 per annum was not an exorbitant sum, and there are already 340 rented huts on the beach. Huts used for sleeping would pay 10s. per annum and day huts 5s. per annum, and each hut owner would have a water tap key.

Councillor Derham: What's going to happen to cause 880,000 gallons to be consumed? Why there won't be one third of that amount of water used.

Councillor Lane: I feel that the rental charges to hut owners are rather on the exorbitant side. A sum of 4s. a hut would be quite adequate. Again I feel there should be some discrimination made between residents who already pay rates elsewhere and visitors or those who reside out of the borough, and yet maintain a Mudeford beach hut. Christchurch residents should only pay half rates of this water supply,

I propose that 5s. non-residents and 2s. 6d. per annum for residents of the borough would meet the case.

There was no support for this.

TAP KEYS—OR FREE.

Councillor Oakley said that he thought the idea that each hut owner should have a key to the standpipes good, because it must be realised that the sum outlaid was considerable. "If you are going to open out and say we'll make it free wherever we have a hut, then it will not be such a desirable thing at all. If the taps are going to be left so that anyone can turn them on, or leave them open to children to paddle with and mess about generally and left running—then the 880,000 gallons, will soon be exhausted."

This money was an expenditure on behalf of one section of the ratepayers to benefit another section, and surely the cost was to be small enough to hut owners? Twopence halfpenny for twenty-four weeks for the supply of water.

It was not in the Alderman's contention a reasonable and proper thing for anybody and everybody to have access to the taps.

"It is not the way to use public money—to see what you can give away. That is the curse of this district. Every decent and proper person is pleased to pay for any service rendered or convenience they enjoy."

COUNCILLOR WRIGLEY ON BEAUTIFUL WATER.

Councillor Ellis Wrigley: I was at the Beach Committee meeting, and after two hours it was decided to accept the West Hants Company's offer, which I consider most reasonable.

The thing that appears to me to be despicable is that hut owners will be the only ones able to use the water. Hundreds of people who visit the beach are not hut owners—and are they to be deprived of a drink of water?

Have any of these members who uphold this "key" business ever been thirsty? (Reminiscent groans and cheers and voices, "Hurry on with the interval!" and "I could do with one now.")

This is all piffle (a voice: "Don't say it") to say the taps would be contaminated if children should drink from the stand-pipes. I venture to say that every member of the Council has drunk from a tap as juveniles—and as adults!

I've been only too pleased to drink water with dead animals in it (laughter) and others within a few feet—and I've drunk muddy water and I might have swallowed an eel or a crocodile! (Laughter and a voice: "Not the town's crocodile?")

At Highcliffe we have had free and open taps for eight years, and have never had any complaints. The public have free access to the water, and it has never been abused.

If what you say is true, then you must an inferior lot of visitors at Mudeford
I spoke to the Superintendent of the Highcliffe Beach to-day, and he bears me out that the free use of water has never been abused.

I sincerely hope that none of you will listen to the sound of the silver tongues, who will try and persuade you to deprive the casual visitors from getting a drink of water.

I remember not long ago that a member of this Council almost brought tears to our eyes over the cutting down of a tree, and it upset me so much that I tried to recite,

"Woodman spare that tree." (Laughter.)

Councillor Lane: Do it now!

Councillor Wrigley: Gentlemen, I implore you to let these standpipes go free of keys—give them free water, even if it is eight thousand odd or a million gallons. Don't listen to the argument that we give away too much. I implore you to vote for free water.

WATER WITH A KEY.

Councillor Markham: I am disappointed with Alderman Oakley. He advances arguments of publicity and guides and so forth, and meanwhile he proposes to play off one class of ratepayer on another.

If we have all this done, why should we devote it to the huts which are actually glorified lodging houses? I agree with Councillor Wrigley's remarks, it will be a sin to have water on the beach and a small child not able to get a drink.

Councillor Wyatt: You have just passed an advertisement for £4 for Mudeford Beach. What have you got to give them?

A Voice: Water—with a key!

You are making a profit on the beach, and there are people who go to the beach who cannot afford to pay for water. I absolutely disagree with Alderman Oakley's gloomy picture.

To take all this trouble to carry the water down to the beach and then only allow people who are paying you to drink it is wrong.

Councillor Galton: I agree to a very great extent with what has been said. Would it not be possible to have a standpipe free?

Councillor Spickernell: It is going to be a difficulty. How are we going to charge hut owners 10s. and then let everyone else have it free. Obviously, if you do that—you must let all have it free.

Councillor Spencer: That's right; I agree that there should be one or two free taps.

The Mayor: Much has been said about hardship for children, but no one will be any worse off, and the position would be precisely the same as before to the visiting public. You simply can't charge hut owners and then give the water free to others. We can't entertain any rates charge for water and then give a free supply.

Councillor Lapthorne: There can be no hut owner who would refuse a child a glass of water.

Councillor Shave: It was at the express wish of the hut owners that we have endeavoured to secure this water supply. Year after year we have been pestered. I would like to see the arrangement of two free stand pipes, as it is, we have to pay £66 a year and we must get it back.

Councillor Lane: There is room for compromise. I suggest that the clause be added to read, "and that a tap be erected in the outer wall of the Black House from which cups only can be filled."

Councillor Wrigley's eloquent appeal was calculated to soften the hardest heart. There would be no question of the indiscriminate waste of water if an aperture of say 6 inches square were made in the wall in order to admit only a cup.

This was the ultimate solution: that a tap shall be placed either on the wall of the Black House or elsewhere, so long as it is central, which by its erection shall permit only cups to be inserted.

TOWN BAND'S AL FRESCO ENGAGEMENTS.

The Town Band were granted similar facilities for them to play by the harbour on every Sunday and Wednesday evening during June, July and August.

STOUR COTTAGE PAVILION.

Alderman Russell Oakley brought forward the recommendation of the Municipal Committee regarding Stour Cottage and its conversion into a pavilion for the Recreation Ground.

It was proposed to erect a 2ft. rubble wall, surmounted by a 2ft. oak fence, on the southern boundary of the grounds of Stour Cottage, and subject to the consent of the County Council for the frontage of Stour Cottage being utilised by the Town Council pending the carrying out of the widening of Barrack Road.

It was planned to lay out the land between the building and Barrack Road so as to provide two entrances from the highway in the form of a circular drive, and to remove such trees as may be necessary for the laying-out of the frontage.

It was then suggested that tenders be invited, by advertisement, for the tenancy of Stour Cottage for a period of three, five or seven years, to include the sole right to sell refreshments in the Recreation Ground with the exception of four days in each year.

These four days the Council would reserve to themselves in order to cover the arrangements which occur annually (such as the Carnival), but in no case or upon any of such days would the tenant be prohibited from selling refreshments and teas. There would also be the right of a car park.

The tenant would have to keep the attached public lavatories clean.

In detailing these proposals, the Alderman said: "This frontage, as you know, has been sold to the County Council, and we have to get their consent (here the Mayor interrupted to explain such consent had already been received). Very well, this consent has been granted, I understand, and apparently the County Council have no objection—but don't run away with the idea that we have control of this frontage now."

Seconded by Councillor Galton, this was agreed to.

HONOUR FOR COUNCILLOR ELLIS WRIGLEY.

Councillor A. E. Shave, for the Highways Committee, said that the street (a cul-de-sac really) at Highcliffe and now known as Chewton Close, shall in future be named "Ellis Road."

Councillor Galton: Can you tell us how you arrive at that name? (Laughter.)

The Mayor: The real reason is that the very definite part Councillor Ellis Wrigley has taken in the debates and discussions of this Council.

Councillor Lane: Someone has suggested a suitable name would be "Saint Percy Road."

PRIVATE STREET WORKS.

It was resolved that Hurn Way, Bosley Way and Cross Way, and a portion of Stour Way (between its junction with Hurn Way and its junction with River Way), not being highways repairable by "the inhabitants at large," should be paved, and made good, and that the cost be apportioned against the premises fronting.

FAIRMILE ROAD AND THE GROVE.

It was agreed that the offer of the Bournemouth Corporation to surrender a strip of land fronting the Cottage Homes and a piece of land **at** the corner of Fairmile Road and Jumpers Road be accepted. The offer entails the re-instatement of fences.

It was further agreed that the negotiations of the District Valuer for land for the improvement of Fairmile Road "at a total cost of £730" be approved.

AN UNWANTED INCINERATOR.

The offer of Mr. K. Derham to purchase for the sum of £5 the incinerator previously used at the refuse dump, and to be delivered to the Avon Beach Cafe, met with some discussion, but it was finally agreed to with the exception that the Council do not undertake delivery.

HIGHCLIFFE CLIFFS GOING COAST EROSION INCREASING.

Alderman Percy Cawte, in advancing the decision of the Beach Committee to the effect that the offer of Dr. J. S. Owens, of London, to make an inspection of the cliffs of Highcliffe at a charge of 50 guineas, and to submit a report upon the most suitable method of protection, should be accepted, said : —

"The cost of purchasing the cliffs was between eight and nine thousand pounds, and through serious erosion they are being destroyed. Huts cannot be kept down on the beach. There have been many ideas and schemes in the last seven or eight years, but nothing has proved of lasting use or purpose, and therefore it is imperative that we should now have some advice as to the position we are in and what we have to face.

It is the property of the whole of the borough and ward four is now paying a very large sum independent of anything being done for Highcliffe. I think it is desirable for the sake of the ratepayers of the whole borough that Dr. Owens be brought down to help us.

Alderman Tucker, in seconding, said that as he saw the situation, it was the only thing to do. I don't think our Borough Surveyor would care to give you an opinion, it is entirely a matter for an expert. It is clear that something must be done.

Councillor Lane: We recently addressed a letter of inquiry to the County Council authorities, particularly asking for the advice of Capt. Bowers. He is the expert on land reclamation.

The Mayor: They cannot advise us. If we can put up a scheme they are prepared to assist us.

Councillor Lane suggested that if Captain Bowers were approached direct it was possible that this advice could be secured free.

In reply to a question, the Borough Surveyor said that Dr. Owen was one of the foremost authorities in the United Kingdom upon coast erosion.

Councillor Prichard expressed the opinion that the fee represents a large amount of money for "viewing the trouble," and he dreaded to think what the charge for remedying it would be.

The Mayor: No one knows. In view of the vast amount of money being spent in the Highcliffe area this should be left in abeyance. I don't care who or what expert comes down to view, it will still continue to fall.

Alderman Oakley: The question arises to my mind: is it really worth while in the present condition of our finances to get an expert down to tell us what to do? We are sure that it will involve a very great outlay of money. This erosion is actually nothing new; it has been going on for half-a-century. Let us wait and see what the result of the sewerage will have. A great deal of the trouble has been due to the percolation of water through the land.

It was decided to shelve the matter for three months.

THE KING'S JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

The Mayor brought forward the necessity for appointing a special committee composed of members of the Council to act with him as a "Jubilee Committee," and to invite townsmen to join them in devising suitable thanksgiving celebrations. The Ministry, he understood, would sanction a certain expenditure—"with a regard for economy."

On the suggestion of Councillor Prichard it was decided that the committee should be comprised of the Aldermen of the Council. This was further augmented by the inclusion of the chairman of each committee.