

List of Public Questions for 26/09/24 Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee

Question 1: Barney McCullagh

The planned relocation of the Grafton Centre's Ping Pong Parlour to the Malle's unit 55 creates more problems than it solves. The new premises are scarcely big enough to accommodate two tables. The mammoth interior square pillars that are characteristic of the Centre, puts internal space at a premium. By contrast, the current premises are big enough to accommodate ten tables. The parlour has in this sense become a victim of its own success. With tables freely available, the popularity of the parlour has grown exponentially, so much so that the facility has long since become a 'de facto' community centre where English, Chinese, and Central Europeans (to name but a few) congregate to play, talk, and socialise. Whilst the beneficiaries of this initiative are grateful to Table Tennis England and the Grafton Centre for their original investment, there is now much uncertainty surrounding the venue's new 2-table operation. Will a booking system be introduced? Will would-be players form queues outside with no guarantee of gaining access to a table? Clearly a 2-table venue will be unworkable in the long run. This is where the Council could make a difference. Could it not dedicate a premises in central Cambridge to the provision of free Table Tennis for all? Ideally the site should be inalienable and devoted in perpetuity to the practice of the sport both by the townspeople and those living in South Cambridgeshire.

In essence we fear that the relocation of the Table Tennis parlour will be the thin end of a wedge that will lead to the extinction of our burgeoning 'community'. There is a further issue to be considered. I am one of many Parkinson's sufferers throughout the world whose symptoms have been alleviated by playing Table Tennis. So strong is the link between the sport and Parkinson's that there have already been four Ping Pong Parkinson's World Championships with a fifth scheduled to take place in France this October. Thus, investing in a 10-table centre will show that Britain, and Cambridge in particular, are active in, and committed to, a movement towards health through sport and self-help. Indeed the

disencumbering of the NHS from part of its responsibility for the treatment of Parkinson's coupled with the individual sufferer's assumption of responsibility for his or her own physical health can only be a good thing. This empowerment of the individual only requires a one-off initial investment to be effective. We therefore urge Cambridge City Council, either in tandem with Ping Pong England or on its own initiative, to acquire, equip and maintain a 10- or 12- table Ping Pong facility for the use of those living in Cambridge and its environs.

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Question 2: Minjie Ding

Question 2a

I am resident in Cambridge. Night parties/Night noise become a big issue in Cambridge. However, Council's current organisation cannot deal with the noise complaint efficiently or sufficiently. Following are the news about night noise.

1.1 BBC news on 21 Sept, police called to 'house party goes wrong' at Cambridge, The ambulance was called, which caused extra work to NHS.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c8dj9rn2m93o>

<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambs-party-leaves-local-residents-24517511>

1.2 the Guardian news in 2021 Noisy neighbours spark 67% rise in police complaints, the complaints tripled in Cambridgeshire.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/19/noisy-neighbours-spark-67-rise-in-police-complaints>

Council doesn't have night team to deal with noise nuisance immediately, which made vulnerable people suffering from mental

disorder, and the further useless complaint procedure and officer's inaction, cause extra burden to NHS. Although victims can take legal proceeding against noise nuisance, Council doesn't help victims to get the noise makers' name, which made the legal proceeding impossible. Any plan for council to solve this problem?

Other council's solution:

I did research on 294 local authorities. (36 metropolitan districts, 32 London boroughs, 62 Unitary authorities and 164 district council in England.) There are 70 councils have the night team to deal with night noise nuisance immediately. I don't know why Cambridge City council cannot deal with it? Funding cut is not an excuse.

Let's take Bristol as an Example. Bristol university, council, police were worked together to manage the night parties. Police will attend the night party and fine them. This will lead the party animals to have parties in the club and pub. They will spend money there, which will revitalise the economy. At the same time, police can have some income instead of asking the parliament to give them more funding. Working class, vulnerable people can have a good sleep, in which the working class can work more harder, earn more money, pay more tax to the government. The vulnerable people don't need to see doctor for anxiety, heart disease etc. As night party can trigger lots of mental disorder. having a night team, leading people to club, can release burden for NHS.

Question 2b

Cambridge City Council plan to merge with Peterborough council and also another partnership, I would like to know the progress of that. And for the new organisation, is there any plan to solve the bureaucracy (local authorities inaction)? If we don't address this problem, no matter how much tax the working class will pay, we'll never solve the financial mismanagement problem.