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Contributors

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ELY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: The Chairman and Members,
Ely Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen - I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 1954:-

1. STATISTICS: During 1954, the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my report.

2. a. Ambulances: Two Ambulances are stationed at Ely both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council. One is for infectious diseases and the other for non-infectious diseases.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. Its fine record, on which I have commented in previous reports, remains unbroken, and it renders a great service not only in the Rural Area but in adjoining areas also.

The splendid record of the members of the Ely St. John Ambulance Divisions who man the Ely Ambulance, and those of the Littleport St. John Ambulance Divisions who man the Littleport Ambulance, deserve the highest praise, and I would wish to draw the attention of the Council to the grand service given cheerfully to the Community by these volunteers.

b. Nursing and Clinic Arrangements: These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to maintain their fine record of service.

c. Hospitals: (i) Tower House Hospital for Chronic Sick.
(ii) The Isolation Hospital.
(iii) The Grange Maternity Home.
These Hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

3. WATER:

(a) (i) The supply for Ely, including Stuntney, Adelaide, Prickwillow and Chettisham is obtained from two wells and one borehole at the Council's Waterworks at Isleham. The condition of the plant including the pumping and chloramine equipment proved to be satisfactory throughout the year.

(ii) The quantity and the quality of the water has also proved satisfactory.

(iii) There have been no major breakdowns during the twelve months.

(iv) Progress - even if slow - is being made with regard to the improvement of the waterworks at Isleham, and also the plans for additional water storage in the City. I hope to be able to report greater progress at the end of next year.

Increased water storage capacity in the City has been referred to in previous reports, and I wish once again to emphasise its outstanding importance.

(v) I am very glad to be able to report that, during the year, there have been no breaks in the 12 inch pumping main. For some years I have felt it my duty to draw to the Council's attention annually my feeling of anxiety as to the condition of this main, particularly of that portion running through the Soham gault, of which, there is evidence in existence of the type of deterioration which has been and is taking place. I know that the Council is aware of the state of affairs, and I hope the coming year will see its efforts to have this remedied carried forward with greater success.

(b) (i) Four bacteriological examinations were made during the year by the Public Health Service Laboratory at Cambridge, and all proved satisfactory.

(ii) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.

(iii) No contamination was discovered during the year and, therefore, no action in respect of this has been necessary.

(iv) 96% of the dwelling houses in the area are supplied with water direct from public water mains.

4% of the dwelling houses in the area are supplied by stand-pipe.

It is estimated that the percentage of the population supplied approximates to the figures given above for houses.

The two small schemes covering extensions to the two outlying properties at Clayway Farm and Brick Kiln Farm are not yet complete. Negotiations, however, are still in progress.

4. SEWAGE:

(i) Extensions:

No further extensions have been made during the year.

(ii) Sewage Disposal Works:

Plans with regard to these have been submitted to the Ministry, and informal approval in principle has been received.

At the request of the Ministry, plans for the installation of a Gauge at the Disposal Works, to allow of the estimation of certain technical details, are being proceeded with as rapidly as possible.

(iii) Once again, I have to repeat that the condition of the present Disposal Works remains unaltered; and it will be a source of great satisfaction to me when the alterations envisaged are carried out and a really satisfactory effluent is obtained. I am confident that the Council is doing all that is possible to push on with these plans.

(iv) Referring to the Prickwillow Disposal Works a humus tank was installed during the year which it is hoped will improve conditions considerably.

(v) So far as the few lengths of open water course, acting as public sewers, are concerned, I am glad to note that one of these is now being dealt with.

I shall be very satisfied when conditions permit of the complete abolition of all these.

5. HOUSING:

(a)	Number of houses which on inspection were considered to be unfit for human habitation or in a condition prejudicial to health	204
(b)	Number of houses, the defects in which were remedied in consequence of informal action	119
(c)	Number of representation made to the local authority with a view to:-	
(i)	The serving of notices requiring the execution of works	0
(ii)	The making of demolition orders	5
(iii)	The making of closing orders	1
(d)	Number of formal notices served requiring the execution of works	0
(e)	(i) Number of demolition orders made	2
	(ii) Number of closing orders made	1
(f)	Number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted	3
(g)	Number of houses demolished	
(h)	Number of formal notices served under the Public Health Act 1936	1

The Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954 which came into operation on 30th August 1954, makes special provisions for the speeding up of slum clearance and the improvement of dwellings. Slum clearance has been badly neglected during the past few years but now the Government has expressed a hope that Local Authorities will make an early start on the very big task of getting rid of those houses which have served their purpose as living accommodation. Obviously this is a long term project and it will take many years to accomplish.

Many houses can be brought up to a fairly modern standard by means of alteration and improvements, and this is a very useful method by which housing units can be preserved. Applications for improvement grants receive favourable consideration by the local authority.

In a few cases, houses which have been represented as being unfit for human habitation have been transformed into very pleasant houses by the owners, but at a very high cost.

It was expected that there would be many applications for certificates of disrepair under the new Act but the results were very surprising. During the year under review, only one application was made.

Once again, I must pay tribute to the amount of hard work put in by the Sanitary Inspector in house inspections.

I am afraid the small rents paid, and the attitude of tenants and owners will be a major headache in the Council's housing proposals for a long time. Many old houses in Ely and district are occupied by widows and aged persons who do not feel able to afford the rent of a decent modern home.

However, the next generation must receive a little consideration and it will be the duty of the sanitary authority to see that the children of to-day have a decent house in which to bring up their children.

During the course of the year the owner of some property in the City, on which a Demolition Order had been put by the Council, appealed against this Order. The Case was heard in the County Court when the County Court Judge, after hearing evidence given by the Council's Officers dismissed the appeal, thus confirming the Council's action.

6. SCHOOLS:

The year under review saw another outstanding event so far as the school accommodation in Ely is concerned. I refer, of course, to the start made on the building for the new High School on Downham Road.

7. MILK:

Generally speaking the milk supply position in Ely is excellent, most of the milk sold coming from tuberculin tested herds, or it is pasteurised or both. A small quantity of loose undesignated milk continues to be sold, I believe. I should be very glad to see this possible source of danger completely abolished.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

- (a) 142 notifications of infectious disease were received. The total is made up as follows:-

Pneumonia	18
Whooping Cough	9
Food Poisoning	49
Scarlet Fever	23
Infective Hepatitis	35
Glandular Fever	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	7

Total 142

Comparison of the 142 notifications of infectious disease received in 1954, with the 488 received in 1953, shows two interesting points:-

- (i) During the year there were no measles notifications, as against 378 in 1953.
- (ii) There was a small increase in the number of scarlet fever cases (1953 = nil: 1954 = 23). I am still of the opinion that early isolation tends to prevent the spread of this disease.
- (b) Disinfection of premises etc., is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported, or requests are received for any special reasons.
- (c) There have been no cases of Diphtheria in the District during the year, thank God.

I am afraid that this grand record will not be maintained for many more years, unless every child is innoculated against this disease during his or her early months. I am confident that the Council will continue to impress on all parents that it is their bounden duty to have this simple procedure carried out either by their family doctor or at the County Council Clinics.

- (d) Tuberculosis: 11 new cases were notified during the year. After making necessary adjustments, there are now the following numbers on the Register:-

Respiratory:

Non-Respiratory:

Male 24
Female 17

4
7

Compared with 1953, the total figures show an increase of 5 Cases, made up as follows:-

Respiratory:

Non-Respiratory:

Male 3
Female 2

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-

- (e) Food Poisoning: During the course of the year there were 49 cases of food poisoning in the City.

42 cases of this total formed an interesting group. They all occurred in an Institution in the City and were due to infection by a rather uncommon strain of organism - salmonella bovis morbificans. The position was complicated by the fact that most of the cases involved physically incapacitated children, nine of whom were also incontinent. This, of course, increased considerably the possibility of the spread of infection.

The Sanitary Inspector and I received every assistance from the Medical Officers of the Public Health Laboratory Service at Cambridge - to whom we are very much indebted - in our investigations. It was thought eventually that the infection arose from some infected meat, but this could not be established absolutely.

The Staff of the Institution co-operated in every way and with their assistance - for which we desire to thank them - together with that of the Medical Officer of the Ely Isolation Hospital, who admitted to Hospital for treatment the nine incontinent children, the outbreak was brought under control in a very reasonable time. I am glad to say that all the children recovered.

Of the remaining seven cases, six cases, all of the salmonella typhi-murium type, occurred in one family. Investigations showed that the most probable source of infection was some tinned soup, but unfortunately the tin, and the residue of its contents, had been disposed of before they came under suspicion.

I do wish that all members of the public would realise the importance of preserving the remains of any food, especially if from tins, which has been eaten just prior to an outbreak of gastro-intestinal upset affecting several members of a family simultaneously. Such food remains will then be available for proper examination, bacteriological and chemical, and important clues may be forthcoming as to the source of the trouble.

9. FOOD:

- (a) (i) 12 Premises are registered for the preparation of Sausages and Preserved Foods.
- (ii) 27 Premises are registered for the storage and sale of ice cream.
- (iii) The slaughterhouse at Willow Walk, formerly under the control of the Ministry of Food, passed into the hands of a Limited Company following decontrol and was licensed by the Council. Conditions have been improved slightly since the slaughterhouse passed into private enterprise.

- (b) Most foodshops nowadays are selling sliced meats such as corned beef and boiled ham. Special care must be taken with these foods and absolute cleanliness maintained by all who handle them. A person who fingers a pimple, boil, his nose or ears, or fails to wash their hands after going to the toilet and then proceeds to handle the contents of a can of processed meat may unknowingly cause great distress to a fellow citizen.

Managers and owners of foodshops have a special responsibility to the community for not only must they present a good variety of foods, but those foods must be clean - bacteriologically.

- (c) Hot water, soap and clean towels are an essential to any food shop and just as important as smart clean overalls. Of course these facilities must be used - and often.
- (d) Every effort should be made to kill all flies by any means available in food shops. Customers are advised to shop elsewhere if in their opinion a food shop is not maintained in a clean condition and the habits of owners, managers and assistants are not up to a proper hygienic standard. Action of this sort is one of the most potent forms of protest against unhygienic practices.

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

- (i) Insect Pest Control:

The usual disinfections have again been carried out where necessary and this year, once again, the numbers have been comparatively few.

- (ii) Shops:

Routine inspections of shops, under the Shops Act 1950, have been carried out as usual by the Sanitary Inspector. I would repeat the warning given in my Report for 1953, to that minority of shopkeepers whose premises still do not reach the minimum standards.

- (iii) Rodent Control:

278 Treatments were carried out during the year. The refuse tip rodent population has been kept in check and treatments are carried out every month. More co-operation is still required from local residents in reporting rodent infestations.

- (iv) Smoke Control:

Observations have been made during the year on all premises where smoke is emitted and action taken where necessary.

One establishment installed new apparatus to reduce smoke emissions and the results have been very promising.

- (v) Moveable Dwellings:

During the year 8 Caravans were licensed. I must again refer to the position arising from the presence of - what I have termed before - mobile agricultural workers.

As has already been stated existing legislation referring to moveable dwellings (Caravans etc.) is from all practical points of view useless in dealing with this problem; which, at times gives me much anxiety.

In my opinion, the time is long over due when legislation should be revised and greatly strengthened.

- (vi) Factories:

The usual routine inspections have been carried out.

(vii) Common Lodging House:

There is one registered Common Lodging House in the District. Following regular routine inspections conditions have been found to be satisfactory.

11. PERSONAL:

Once again, I wish to place on record my personal thanks to the Sanitary Inspector Mr. H. Smith, M.S.I.A., A.R.San.I. for all the very willing assistance he has given me, for which I am most grateful. The Surveyor & Water Engineer Mr. J. V. G. Shilston, A.M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E. etc., and his staff have continued to give me much helpful assistance and advice and I take this opportunity of offering them my sincerest thanks.

I have the honour to be,
Ladies & gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) K. S. MAURICE SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Urban District Council.

1st September, 1955.

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