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Contributors

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Etheldreda House,
ELY.

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 1956:-

1. STATISTICS: During 1956, 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.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area, and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value.

As in previous years, the Ely and Littleport St. John Divisions provide attendants for all three vehicles. This work is done voluntarily by members in their spare time. I often wonder if the public generally realises how much it is indebted to these men and women.

- (b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements: These are the same as for previous years. The District is much indebted to the District Nurses for their willing and efficient efforts.
- (c) Hospitals:
 - (i) Tower 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) 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.

It must be remembered, however, that the chloramine plant is getting older, and it will be necessary to consider plans for its replacement, in the not too remote future.

Revised tenders for the new borehole were obtained in December 1955. These have been submitted to the Ministry of Housing & Local Government, and are awaiting approval.

3. WATER: (cont.)

Once again, it is my duty, as in previous years, to draw attention to the inadequate water storage provision in the City. Progress continues, but too slowly in my opinion; and this is no fault of the Council. The necessary plans are not yet completed. Each year sees an increasing degree of urgency.

The quantity and quality of the water has proved satisfactory.

During the course of the year a "split" occurred in the 12 inch pumping main, which fortunately could be, and was repaired in a few hours. Considering the condition of parts of this main, it is indeed fortunate that nothing else more serious happened during the year.

During the year Metal Pipe Line Endurance Ltd., examined the pumping main and adjacent soil. The Company's report confirmed our previous knowledge, to which, I have made specific references in past years.

On the basis of the above report, plans have been prepared for the renewal of about one-third of the main: and in December these plans were submitted to the Ministry.

I sincerely hope that 1957 will see this extremely necessary and essential work carried out.

- (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) 97% 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.

These figures are based on estimation, but I am of the opinion that they give an accurate presentation of conditions prevailing.

4. SEWAGE:

- (i) Extensions:

Extensions were made during the year to Dove House Way, and to the new Housing Estate, High Barns.

- (ii) Sewage Disposal Works:

Interim discussions with the River Board and the Ministry of Housing & Local Government have taken place during the year. The preparation of plans proceeds, albeit slowly.

I must put on record, yet once again, my dissatisfaction with the Disposal Works and with the effluent obtained. It is no fault of the Council which is fully aware of the position, that greater progress is not made.

It always strikes me as curious that whereas the Council can obtain financial help to build houses, it is apparently increasingly difficult - even, perhaps impossible - to obtain financial assistance to remove efficiently the sewage from these and other houses.

- (iii) The Prickwillow Disposal Works has operated reasonably satisfactorily during the year.

4. SEWAGE: (cont.)

(iv) The Cambridge Road open watercourse has been piped during the year.

The open watercourse between Lynn Road and Downham Road will be due for attention in the very near future.

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	55
(c)	Number of representations 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	12
	(iii) The making of closing orders	3
(d)	Number of formal notices served requiring the execution of works	0
(e)	(i) Number of demolition orders made	1
	(ii) Number of closing orders made	3
(f)	Number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted	2
(g)	Number of houses demolished	0
(h)	Number of formal notices served under the Public Health Act 1936	3

The year under review has seen greater activity in the reporting of unfit houses with a view to demolition orders being made. This is part of the programme which will go on for 10 years. When the new houses are ready for occupation it is hoped to re-house the occupants of these houses.

During the year an inquiry was held into the Council's first Clearance Order. It is very satisfactory to note that this was later confirmed by the Minister.

No inquiries were made about certificates of disrepair and those provisions of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954 allowing owners to increase rents after carrying out repairs do not appear to have been used very much in this area.

Building on the new housing site, now named High Barns has gone forward during the year, and by December 32 Houses and 4 Flats were completed. I feel that the site at High Barns is a most pleasing one, particularly as regards outlook and altitude.

6. SCHOOLS:

This year has seen the new High School on Downham Road, nearly completed. Apart from this fact, I do not wish, this year, to make any further comments.

7. MILK

The majority of milk sold in this area is either pasteurised or T.T. or both. A very small amount is produced by persons keeping one or two cows and this is often given to their employees. There does not appear to be much control which can be exercised over this practice.

Sometimes, I wonder if it is realised by those concerned, that the Milk & Dairies Regulations (1949) are not just an expression of opinion on the part of the Authorities, but are, in fact, definite legislation, contravention of which lays those concerned liable to severe penalties.

These Regulations, covering the production and storage of milk, the cleaning and storage of all equipment, utensils, appliances etc., connected therewith, have now been in force for a sufficient time to render a plea of ignorance of them, quite ridiculous.

I sincerely wish that members of the public would invariably report every case of dirty or insufficiently cleansed milk bottles to either the Public Health Inspector or myself, so that necessary action can be taken.

On the other hand, members of the public must play their part, and use milk bottles only for milk. If I personally, or the Public Health Inspector have occasion to notice milk bottles used for other purposes, it will be our duty to report offenders to the Council.

I still notice many milk bottles left outside houses, on the pavement or doorstep. This is a filthy habit. I feel that it is very hard on milk producers and dairymen that, whereas they can be severely penalized for using dirty bottles, the general public are not liable to be so penalized for making milk bottles filthy, or permitting them so to become.

If proper Regulations governing this sort of behaviour were in force, it would be a great help to the Council and its Officers.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

(a) 25 notifications of infectious disease were received. The total is made up as follows:-

Pneumonia	13
Whooping Cough	7
Erysipelas	2
Scarlet Fever	1
Measles	1
Virus Encephalitis (Infective)	1
	—
Total	25
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(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) No cases of diphtheria occurred in the District during the year. A very very satisfactory state of affairs, which can only be maintained so long as the percentage of children immunized against diphtheria is kept at a high level. It is the duty of all concerned

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES: (cont.)

with children to make sure that those in their care are adequately immunized either by the Family Doctor or at a County Council Clinic.

Further, vaccination against small pox is highly desirable, in these days when travelling, particularly by air transport from countries where small pox is prevalent has become so much more common.

(d) Tuberculosis:

12 new cases were notified during the year. After making necessary adjustment, there are now the following numbers on the Register:-

<u>Respiratory:</u>	<u>Non-Respiratory:</u>
Males: 30	-
Females: 20	4

Compared with 1955, the total figures show an increase of 5 cases.

9. FOOD:

(a) Premises:

(i) 12 premises are registered for the preparation of Sausages and Preserved Food.

(ii) 29 premises are registered for storage and sale of Ice Cream. There is no ice cream manufactured for sale in the area.

(iii) There is one private slaughter-house in the district. Meat inspection is carried out by a Veterinary Surgeon. Several complaints were made about the loading of slaughter-house refuse on to a lorry in the public highway. This was cleared up by arranging for a smaller lorry to collect the refuse and this could be loaded inside the slaughter-house yard.

(iv) The following is a list of food handling premises in the area:-

Butchers	12
Restaurants, Cafes and Snack Bars	8
Bakers and Confectioners	4
Grocers	12
Greengrocers	11
Licensed Premises	41
Sweets and Tobacco	10
Wet & Fried Fish	5
Wholesale Warehouse	1
School Kitchens	4
General Stores	17
Ice Cream	2
Mineral Water Manufacturers	1
Brewery	1

(b) Food Hygiene:

The Food Hygiene Regulations 1955 came into force on the 1st January 1956. If these are conscientiously operated by food handlers great strides will be made. Unfortunately there are too many people looking for loopholes in the Regulations to find what cannot be required rather than what can be required. A more positive approach must be achieved and this can only be done by education.

9. (b) Food Hygiene. (cont.)

Consideration has been given during the past year to instituting a programme of education in food hygiene.

When condemned, the food concerned is buried, but meat is sent to a processing Factory as has been the custom for some years.

During the year 98 visits have been made by the Public Health Inspector. When necessary, I have accompanied him. In some cases, advice has been sought, and I would like it widely known in the District that the Public Health Inspector and I much prefer to give advice before, rather than be forced to consider asking for action and the possible imposition of penalties after the Regulations have been contravened. In some cases, however, I regret to say, that it is obvious advice and assistance will be disregarded, and notice will be taken only when direct action is threatened. This is a sad commentary to make on human nature, but in some cases it is only too true.

In certain food shops a very great advance has been made, and those premises, in my opinion, deserve to be mentioned by name. In these instances, improvement has been largely assisted by the co-operation of employers. On the other hand, some employers desirous of doing their duty by their customers have been let down by slack and grubby employees.

Referring to my comments in my Report for 1955. I am still disgusted at the conditions under which food is kept, cooked and served in some houses that I have occasion to visit. Food can be as readily infected and rendered highly dangerous at home, as in a shop, and the public should be aware of this.

- (c) Once again, I would draw attention to the need for special vigilance by those who handle and sell processed meat (Corned Beef, Ham etc.).

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

(i) Insect Pest Control:

All necessary disinfestations have been carried out during the year, and no unusual problems encountered.

(ii) Shops:

The Public Health Inspector has, under the Shops Act 1950, during the year carried out routine inspections. Some improvement has been noted, but there is still much room for improvement.

(iii) Rodent Control:

170 treatments were carried out during the year. Your rodent operator is well known in the area for the good work he does and many of the complaints are dealt with by him in an informal way. He has recently been devoting more time to inspection of properties, particularly agricultural properties.

(iv) Smoke Abatement:

No serious smoke nuisances had to be dealt with during the year. However, careful attention to the smoke emissions from a few premises will be necessary in the future.

(v) Moveable Dwellings:

Conditions have improved at two places where caravans are kept. The average number of caravans in the District is 11. It seems that people easily tire of this as a permanent way of living.

10. (v) Moveable Dwellings: (cont.)

As I have stated before, under existing legislation, it is impossible adequately to deal with any Public Health problems arising from the use of caravans. I assume that one day, amending legislation will be considered, but until then, our hands are virtually tied.

(vi) Factories:

There are 13 non mechanical and 57 mechanical factories in the register. Routine inspections have been carried out and minor defects only have been found to need attention.

(vii) Common Lodging Houses:

There is one licensed Common Lodging House in the town. The premises are clean and appear to be well run.

(viii) Swimming Pool:

The condition of the Swimming Pool is satisfactory, but extra care is always exercised during a long hot spell of weather. The Chloramine Plant requires watching, as it is getting old, and will require replacing in the near future.

11. PERSONAL:

In February 1956 Mr. Roy E. Smith, A.M.I.P.H.E., M.A.P.H.I., who had been appointed Public Health Inspector, took up his appointment. No Medical Officer of Health could be more fortunate than I am, to have a colleague such as Mr. Smith with whom to work. He is invariably accessible, always helpful, and inevitably cheerful, and I put on record my grateful thanks to him for all his very efficient help since he came to Ely.

I am also grateful, as in previous years, to the Surveyor & Water Engineer, Mr. J. V. G. Shilston, A.M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E. etc., and his staff for all the assistance and advice which has been so willingly given to me.

I have the honour to be,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) K. S. MAURICE SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Urban District Council.

27th August, 1957.

