

ASHBY, HERRINGFLEET AND SOMERLEYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Item 6 (12.3) PC Meeting 6/9/18

The Cottage,
The Street,
Somerleyton,
LOWESTOFT,
NR32 5QB

Tuesday 24th July, 2018

Tel. No: 01502 732377
parish.clerk@ashvillages.org.uk

Dear Mr. Reeves,

Re: Station Lights at Somerleyton Station.

I am writing to you on behalf of Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton Parish Council, to voice concerns about the lights at Somerleyton Station.

You will be aware that these lights have recently changed so that they are now on all night. The Parish Council has received a number of complaints about this new situation. These complaints centre on those whose sleep has been disturbed by the lights shining into their first floor rooms throughout the hours of darkness; but also those who are concerned that wildlife is being affected. The station is in a remote, tranquil location on the edge of the marshes and close to the River Waveney.

The Parish Council has discussed the situation twice, at meetings in May and July. A complaint has been sent through your national complaints system. At their meeting in July the Parish Council resolved that I should contact you again to restate local concern and opposition to these lights, and to request that you respect your neighbours at this station and return them to a timed system as soon as possible.

The strength of feeling locally about this issue of light pollution should not be underestimated. The village has elected not to have street lights in the interests of wildlife preservation. Last year, we consulted with parishioners in the development of our Neighbourhood Plan and a majority of respondents cited the protection of their environment and the welfare of wildlife as a fundamental concern. The belief is that the switching on of these lights permanently through the hours of darkness has in effect urbanised a remote rural location.

Somerleyton Station is a vital and popular resource, accessed by a long and unlit lane. We appreciate that Health and Safety concerns are crucial. Our belief, however, is that as trains only run through and stop and at Somerleyton until 11.20pm, there should be no need to illuminate the platforms for long after this time, as the likelihood of anyone straying on to the station after this time is very low.

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One last concern voiced by parishioners is that there seemed to be little consultation locally about this significant change. This leads us to wonder whether important wildlife organisations, such as the Bat Conservation Trust were consulted. We understand that your guidance on the changing or installation of station lighting is specific on this matter. We would need to be reassured that this guidance was followed.

I hope that you will be able to address these concerns. Our station is well-loved and the flowerbeds on the platforms are tended by local people. It is a shame that it has now become a source of discontent. Our next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 6th September. I hope that we can resolve this matter before that date.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Read
Parish Clerk