



## Feline fine at exotic cat show

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Left: Flip Miller with sphinx cat Jamilla at the 14th Exotic Cat Show championship at Tydd St Giles community centre, on Saturday.

Inset: Barbara McEwen, show manager, with Joyce Johnson and Pat Blacklock, members of the show support team.

Pictures: STEVE WILLIAMS



Cllr Peter Lagoda.

## Councillor's wife must return £23k or go to prison

A county councillor's wife has been ordered to pay back more than £23,000 following her conviction for benefit offences or risk going to prison for 10 months.

Maria Lagoda has been told she must pay the money within six months whilst her husband, Councillor Peter Lagoda, has been told he must pay back £1,950 for his role in the offences. He, too, faces prison - for 30 days- unless he pays the cash on time.

At a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing last month, Maria Lagoda, of Cocketts Drive, Wisbech, was told she must pay back £23,075 to Fenland District Council and the Department of Work and Pensions within six months.

Last March, Mrs Lagoda admitted six counts of failing to notify a change in circumstances for the purpose of obtaining benefit.

She failed to notify Fenland District Council that Cllr Lagoda was staying with her in Appledorn Walk, Wisbech, and later at Frinton Way, Wisbech.

She collected £24,861 in housing, income support and council tax benefits that she was not entitled to.

Cllr Lagoda, who won his Wisbech seat at the 2013 election, told Fenland District Council in 2009 he was living in Heacham, but was instead living with his then girlfriend, now wife, Mrs Lagoda, in Frinton Way.

# Mayor's apology after 'rip off' taxi fare jibe

The mayor of Wisbech has apologised to a taxi driver - and council colleague - after claiming cabbies charged "rip-off" prices to customers on Christmas Day.

The comment was made at Wisbech Town Council on Monday when Councillor Michael Hill mentioned he had taken a woman to Peterborough Hospital on Christmas Day to visit her husband, who suffers from dementia.

But UKIP councillor - and taxi drivers' leader - Dave Patrick said the mayor's comment was "offensive" and a "slur".

Cllr Hill said: "I made the comment as the taxi price shocked me. It was not a direct insult to Cllr Patrick.

"I was just surprised at how much it cost.

"Cllr Patrick was clearly upset and I apologised to him on the night. If he would like I will give a written apology."

Cllr Patrick said: "I believe his statement has brought his position

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of mayor and that of the council into disrepute.

"He has also brought into question the integrity and honesty of all taxi drivers who worked hard on Christmas Day, giving up their own time meeting the needs of people wishing to visit their families."

He said that many taxi drivers, including him, capped prices on Christmas Day taking a Peterborough journey down from a metered rate of £90 to £70.

"The mayor's comments are disrespectful and a slur to those working hard to provide a service," he said.

A Fenland District Council spokesman said: "The rules on what taxis can charge are clear. For bank holidays, including Christmas Day, they are £6.60 for the first mile and 40p for every one tenth of a mile after that.

"These are double the normal



Cllr Michael Hill, the mayor of Wisbech.

rates. The licensing committee agreed these fees in April 2012.

"Customers should only pay what is displayed on the meter, or less."

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