

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON
THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2002**

PRESENT: Councillor R NORRIS Town Mayor
Councillors D BROWN, M COHEN, A SURSHAM, Mrs P TYLER,
C VANE PERCY
Town Clerk: W D BUTTERWORTH

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs H HULL, D COMBEN, S SPENCER, G WILSON

PRESENT: No members of the public.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTION

The Mayor reported that he had represented the Town on 10 occasions since the last meeting.

He reminded the Council that the Annual Town Meeting would take place on Thursday, 7 March 2002 in the QES. He asked the Chairs of the WPs to prepare a short verbal report to be given at the meeting.

Chairs

He announced that he intended to have a formal dinner towards the end of April 2002 and hoped that as many councillors as possible would attend. He would provide more details at the next meeting.

All

The Mayor announced that the Town Clerk had given formal notice of his intention to retire at the end of the current financial year. The Mayor proposed that a small sub-committee be formed to oversee the advertising of the post, the production of the job-specification and the short-listing of candidates. A panel of Councillors would be appointed to interview the short-listed candidates. After the interviews, the sub-committee would present its recommendation to the full Council for ratification. The Mayor would chair the sub-committee and proposed Councillor Mrs MOORE and Councillor WILSON as the members. AGREED. The Town Clerk would advise the sub-committee on the content of the job specification.

02/001 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2001 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record. There had been 2 amendments to the original draft; "January 2001" in item 01/077 was changed to "January 2002" and "1 April 2001" in item 01/081 – Cemetery was amended to "1 April 2002".

02/002 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Actions List dated 17 January 2002 was reviewed. The following matters arising from the last meeting were incomplete or required further action: (actions assigned to WPs are dealt with in the appropriate report).

Councillor VANE PERCY arrived at 7.47 pm.

99/048(2) New Town Guide – Councillor VANE PERCY reported that the draft text had been written and the trial photographs taken. Councillor SURSHAM had completed the "3-D Map". The WP had identified a couple of issues relating to the printing technique to be employed and had obtained 2 quotations for typical work. However, as the cost was likely to be only a few hundred pounds a full competitive tender would not be necessary.

Councillor SPENCER, who had declared an interest in regard to the project, was providing advice on modern printing techniques. A WP meeting was needed to finalise the draft, decide on the preferred style, quality and technique for the printing and seek a quotation for the recommended solution. The WP was asked to consider whether the Town Guide should be free to the public or if a small charge should be made. The WP would meet at 8 pm on Monday, 28 January 2002 at Island Hall.

**Cllr Vane
Percy**

00/080 (Environment) Street Signs – The survey had been completed and the results sent to HDC for action. The Mayor proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor GOFF for carrying out the work. Closed.

00/047 (Fin) JF Interim Plan – It was DECIDED that this item should be absorbed into the routine work of the WP. Closed.

00/047 (Environment) Causeway Furniture – HDC would consider the proposals and the possibility of a grant towards the project at a meeting to be held on 21 January 2002.

01/071 – Quality Town Council consultation paper – The Mayor asked that all comments should be passed to him by 7 February 2002 at the latest.

All

02/003 CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence listed at Appendix A not covered by the WP reports was addressed:

The Queen's Golden Jubilee – The Mayor reported that he was contacting the Community Association to consider possible celebratory events. The local churches had also indicated that they would like to be involved. Councillor TYLER volunteered to be a member of any Jubilee WP or committee that might be formed.

The Council noted the letters of thanks from the Godmanchester under 12B-football team and the Quakers. Mr Foren had also sent a letter of thanks for his personal gift; the Mayor stated that he would welcome contributions from councillors for the gift.

The Mayor reported that a meeting had been held to prepare an Agenda for the Twinning Business Meeting to be held in Wertheim.

Councillor BROWN asked for approval to attend the CPRE Planning Applications Workshop at a cost of £25.00. APPROVED.

Town Clerk

The Council noted the HDC procedures for the promulgation of the Standards Committee Agenda.

The Mayor reported that the Royal Town Planning Institute had asked that for comments on the recent free Planning Aid Service provided to the Godmanchester Town Council. The letter had also sought a donation towards the work of the charity. It was felt that the Service had been prompt, comprehensive, useful and of a high standard. It was proposed that a grant of £50.00 would be appropriate. AGREED.

Town Clerk

The CCC request for an appraisal of its complaints procedure would be actioned once details of the procedure had been received.

Town Clerk

The Council noted the concerns expressed by Mr Leney about the way in which the Town Council made awards under S137. The Town Clerk had replied to Mr Leney.

Councillor VANE PERCY volunteered to review the Godmanchester entry for the Huntingdonshire District Guide 2002/2003 to meet the deadline of 1 February 2002.

**Cllr Vane
Percy**

It was DECIDED not to send a delegate to the Countryside Agency Conference on ICT and rural areas.

The Mayor encouraged all Councillors to send their comments on the CCC budget for 2002-2003 directly to Shire Hall using the Freepost address provided on the Green Flyer.

All

02/004 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

Town Clerk

The Business Meeting to plan the next Twinning Youthfest and overall Twinning Agenda for the next 2 years would be held in Wertheim from 31 January to 3 February 2002. The Mayor asked for approval for his airfare (£81.00) and for 25% of the airfare (£20.25) for the chairman of the HGTA. APPROVED. It was noted that, in future, there would be a greater emphasis on cultural events.

Town Clerk

Smith's of Derby had withdrawn their invoice for the annual maintenance charge for 2001 because the work was included in the replacement of the mechanism. The charges would be reinstated for the period ending 31 December 2002. The Mayor reported that the annual servicing for 2002 had been carried out and that the new mechanism had already detected and compensated for 10 power interruptions with a commensurate saving in call-out charges. The Mayor also announced that the church bells would be silenced for the next month while bells were rotated to even out the wear caused by the clappers.

Councillor BROWN asked for approval to attend the CALC Workshop for Councillors to be held on 9 February 2002 at a cost of £25.00. APPROVED.

Town Clerk

02/005 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix C were considered. The Town Clerk was to advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

Town Clerk

The Mayor reported that he had held further discussions with HDC about the Town Council's proposals for additional off-street parking. It had transpired that HDC had misunderstood the original request, assuming that large car parks were being proposed rather than small lay-bys. As a result of the discussions there would be a site meeting on 23 January 2002 to consider new lay-bys on The Avenue and in Betts Close.

02/006 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Finance. The WP had not met.

Recreation and Amenities. The Town Clerk reported that there would be a site meeting at the Recreation Ground play-area at 9 am on Tuesday, 22 January 2002 to finalise the schedule of work for the new facilities. Councillor SPENCER and the Mayor would attend. The agreed schedule would be sent to WREN to enable the landfill tax grant to be progressed.

Environment. The WP had met on 8 January 2002; Councillor COMBEN had provided a written report which included the following recommendations:

That the results of the Street Sign Survey be sent to HDC and CCC together with a letter stressing the H&S implications. AGREED.

Town Clerk

That the Town Clerk respond to Mrs Marsden's concerns about horses using the public footpath adjacent to Monks Pit advising her that the footpath orders would be made in January 2002. Subsequently, the Town Council would ask CCC to

Town Clerk

erect signs showing the route to be a footpath not a bridleway. AGREED.

That the Town Clerk approach the Countryside Agency to see if the Local Heritage Initiative might be invited to contribute to the Parish Church walls, gates and railings project. [Note: The Agency will not consider retrospective applications and, in any event, grants are orientated towards projects with a large degree of “hands-on” involvement from local people.] NOTED.

That the contents of the HDC letter about flooding in Godmanchester be noted but that no further action was required at this time. AGREED.

That the wooden memorial bench on The Causeway that had been destroyed by vandals recently be replaced by the Town Council but with an ornamental steel unit. AGREED. The Town Clerk was to seek agreement from the original donor [Note: approval received]. The Town Clerk was to obtain quotations for suitable replacements.

Town Clerk

That consideration be given to the purchase of 3 new Town Signs to be sited on the approach roads reflecting the history of the Town and its twinning association with 3 towns in Europe. The Town Clerk was to obtain a quotation for the units and seek approval in principle from the Highways Authority. AGREED.

Town Clerk

That a vote of thanks be given to Councillor GOFF for his help in clearing up the appalling mess of the Osier Bed after its “occupation” in the autumn. The Mayor proposed a similar vote of thanks to Councillor COMBEN for the same work. CARRIED.

Property. Councillor SURSHAM advised the Council that SITA had written to the Council to confirm that ENTRUST had registered the Parish Church walls, gates and railing project. The licence from the Diocese of Ely had also been received and work could go ahead while the Petition for Faculty was being processed. HDC still required 3 pieces of information relating to the conditions of the planning permission and these would be provided. However, the requirement for listed building permission had been withdrawn by HDC. English Heritage had inspected the site and given its approval to the project.

Cllr
Sursham

Councillor SURSHAM recommended that the initial payment to Mr Chatters, already approved by Council to enable him to purchase the steel, be released. AGREED. It was noted Mr Chatters had been compelled to revise his estimate due to an increase in the price of steel in the months since the original quotation. This was in accordance with the terms of his first quotation. The new figure was £17,713.19 plus VAT. However, this increase was more than offset by the decision, approved by the DAC, to use the hot stamped rail head finials rather than the special copies. The overall costs, therefore, remained within the budgeted and voted sums.

Town Clerk

Councillor SURSHAM had prepared a detailed schedule of works for the project together with a schedule of costs and payments. These had been agreed with the contractor and would be sent to SITA as required by the landfill tax scheme. The Town Clerk was to draft a press release to highlight the generous SITA award. The Town Clerk was also to arrange with the Civic Society for a cheque for £3,000.00 to be sent to SITA to satisfy the third-party funding condition of the award.

Town Clerk

Councillor SURSHAM estimated that the work would start on site in March 2002 and would take about 3 months to complete. However, work on the fabrication of the railings and other metalwork would be carried out off-site in February 2002.

Cemetery. The WP had met on 5 January 2002 in the cemetery. An area had been identified to set the standard for the overall work. The Town Clerk was to advise

Town Clerk

Fergusons accordingly. The style and layout / orientation of the Garden of Remembrance was decided and Councillor COMBEN had agreed to prepare the detailed specification for the competitive tender.

Cllr Comben

The preparation for the transfer of the responsibility for cemetery from HDC was continuing. Councillor Cohen and the Assistant to the Town Clerk would be having a morning's training at Pathfinder House on 5 February 2002. Huntingdon Town Council had offered further training. HDC would place the appropriate notices in the local press. However, it was recommended that the Town Council place a formal paid notice in the newspapers at the end of February. Finally, the Town Clerk was to draft a letter to all known nexts-of-kin reminding them of the need to comply with the lawn cemetery regulations from 1 April 2002.

Cllr Cohen

Town Clerk

Judith's Field. The WP had not met.

Other Representative Groups.

CALC/NALC. There were no reports to hand.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Mayor reported that the swimming pool still struggled to remain within its budget. A new committee had been formed and included a high proportion of members with current business expertise. It was hoped that this, together with possible financial support from the LEA and CCC, would enable the community facility to be retained. The Mayor observed that all swimming pools were notorious for failing to balance income against expenditure because on the one hand they were expensive to run and maintain, whilst on the other hand, users wanted modest entrance fees. He went on to stress the need for comprehensive business plans for all major projects that incurred running costs and, in particular, for any that the Town Council undertook.

The Town Clerk was to investigate the recently erected LED signage on Cambridge Street to ensure that any applicable planning regulations had been met.

Town Clerk

Councillor BROWN asked who had responsibility for clearing rubbish out of the water along The Causeway. It was explained that the Mayor and the Town Clerk regularly litter-picked the area and that the water was "spring cleaned" each year by councillors and other volunteers. Sadly, no sooner was the work done than bottles, cans and other waste was thrown in again. Rubbish out-of-reach from the bank was more problematic. The water was shallow but using waders stirred up so much mud that it was impossible to see most of the objects. Councillor BROWN volunteered to see if it would be possible to borrow a punt to collect the trash without disturbing the sediment.

Cllr Brown

Councillor TYLER asked the Town Clerk to provide the Godmanchester website with up-to-date lists of the Town Council and the Council Meetings for 2002.

Town Clerk

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2002.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm

Town Mayor