

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2002

PRESENT: Councillor R NORRIS Town Mayor
Councillors D BROWN, M COHEN, A GOFF, E KYNOCH, A LOOKER,
S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, Mrs P TYLER, C VANE PERCY, G WILSON
Town Clerk: W D BUTTERWORTH

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs B MOORE, Mrs H HULL, D COMBEN

PRESENT: One member of the public.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had represented the Town on 6 occasions since the last meeting.

The Mayor announced that 12 enquiries and 2 applications had been received for the post of Town Clerk. The closing date for applications was 26 February 2002. Short-listed candidates would be interviewed on the evening of Tuesday, 12 March 2002 and it was intended that the successful candidate would take up the post on 2 April 2002.

He reminded everyone that the Annual Town Meeting would take place at 8 pm on Thursday, 7 March 2002 in the QES. The guest speaker would be Mr Doug Christison from the Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association. Notices advertising the meeting were already posted around the Town but councillors were also asked to encourage people to attend. WP Chairs were reminded to prepare their reports for presentation at the meeting. Any Chair unable to attend should provide the Mayor with a script that could be read out to the public.

Councillors had each been given a form for the nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2002/2003. Completed forms should be sent to the Town Clerk by 1 April 2002 at the latest.

The Mayor announced that he would be opening the new play park at 11 am on Tuesday, 26 February 2002.

He also announced that he would be holding his Charity Dinner on 26 April 2002 at the White Hart. Invitations would be sent out in the next few days. Contributions of prizes for the raffle would be welcomed.

02/007 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2002 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record.

02/008 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Actions List dated 21 February 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 KYNOCH voiced his continued strong objection to the refurbished play-area on the Recreation Ground stating that it was too near his and other properties on Post Street. Councillor KYNOCH believed that he had not been adequately consulted. The Mayor responded that the project had been planned for nearly 2 years, had been discussed in Council many times and had been fully documented in the Minutes of several Meetings. Councillor SPENCER reminded Councillor KYNOCH that he, Councillor KYNOCH, was present at the WP meeting that had decided on the style of the play equipment to be purchased. Finally, the Mayor stated that the new equipment was on the same site as the old, was no higher than the original units and had been properly procured.

99/048(2) New Town Guide. Councillor SPENCER declared an interest and left the Council Chamber. Councillor VANE PERCY reported that a second meeting of the WP had been held. He produced a draft layout of the “front” of the guide and offered his thanks to Councillor SURSHAM for his superb hand-drawn map that would form the reverse of the sheet. Specifications for printing had been sent to several local printers and 4 compliant bids had been received. It was AGREED that an initial print run of 2000 copies would be required. All the bids were duly considered and the lowest, from KallKwik in the sum of £475 plus VAT, was ACCEPTED. Councillor VANE PERCY would make the final corrections to the drafts before the material was passed to the printers. It was also AGREED that a charge of fifty pence would be made for each copy of the guide when it went on sale. The Mayor offered his formal thanks to Councillor VANE PERCY and Councillor SURSHAM for all the work they had done to produce the document. Councillor SPENCER then rejoined the meeting.

Councillor VANE PERCY left the meeting at 8.03 pm

00/066 Env – Garden of Rest. It was AGREED that work on this project should be delayed until Autumn 2002 to allow a more even spread of effort and resources.

02/009 CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence listed at [Appendix A](#) not covered by the WP reports was addressed:

The Council noted the letter of thanks from Planning Aid.

The Council noted the NALC paper updating “Quality Parish Councils”

The Council noted change of date for the meeting of the Standards Committee.

It was AGREED that the Town Council’s Spring Clean 2002 would take place on Saturday, 6 April 2002 at 10 am. The Town Clerk was to make the arrangements. Councillor BROWN reported that Huntingdon Marina had offered the loan of a punt to allow debris to be removed from the water along The Causeway.

The Council noted the latest NALC information on the National Training Strategy and the particular reference to the fact that costs would have to be borne by councils.

The Council noted the letter of thanks from DEFRA for the Godmanchester contribution to the Quality Councils consultation process.

The Council noted that the mobile police station would visit Godmanchester on 30 April 2002. The waste recycling officer would also be present.

The Mayor agreed to review the NALC draft Service Level Agreement and comment on any major concerns.

The Council considered the fee proposal for QES consultancy. Several views were put forward about how the central heating system could best be repaired or replaced. The Town Clerk was to obtain a second quotation and further advice about possible technical solutions.

The Council noted the update from the NHS Primary Care Trust and AGREED that it should be invited to give a presentation to the Council towards the end of the year.

The Council considered a request from the Baptist Church for financial support for the Rock Solid Youth Club trip to the Residential Activity Centre. Normally, under the Town Council's policy of considering such S137 requests only twice per year in June and December, this should have been deferred until June 2002. However, the bid was time critical insofar as the Club had to commit to a booking by the end of February. There was considerable debate about whether to support the request. The Council accepted that the bid was valid under the terms of S137 but several members were concerned that taking a bid outside the well proven twice-yearly procedure would create an unwelcome precedent and undermine the approach in the future. Finally, a majority vote of 7:3 agreed to treat the bid as an exceptional case because of the time limit. However, the Town Clerk was to make the unique nature of an award at this time clear to the Baptist Church and ensure that all future applicants adhered to the June/December rule.

It was AGREED that Godmanchester Town Council would contribute £12.50 to the refurbishment of the 5-way footpath marker. Offord Cluny Parish Council would provide a bill in due course. The Mayor reported that the money would come from the Parish Paths Partnership Grant for which he had already applied.

The matter of the provision of ornamental town signs was discussed at some length. In principle the Council supported the idea but there was some debate about whether there should be 2, 3 or 4 signs. Councillor SURSHAM reminded the Council that there was already good quality sign at the end of the Town Bridge coming into Godmanchester. However, this did not record the Twinning information. The entrances along London Road and Cambridge Road had no suitable signs but the road from the Offords did have one of reasonable quality. The quotation for 3 signs had been received but the cost of 4 was not to hand (the unit cost falls as the quantity increases). The matter was referred to the Environment WP to finalise the recommendation.

The Mayor had agreed to attend the Vital Villages Seminar.

The requirement to prepare the Godmanchester input for the TIP was referred to the WP.

Councillor Mrs TYLER left the meeting at 9.01 pm

02/010 JUDITH'S FIELD

The Council had received a number of critical letters relating to the cleanliness and general condition of JF. The building has 2 main uses. First, as a sports facility for the many football teams in Godmanchester, which, under the terms of the lease, was always its primary function. Second, it was used by the pre-school and was available for hire for private functions. Unfortunately, these two widely differing roles were largely incompatible as the footballers invariably trailed mud everywhere during the wet weather, while the pre-school needed a pristine building. The toilet areas, which were also poorly ventilated, were a particular concern. Moreover, the fabric of the building was not good. This was due in part to fair wear and tear, in part to very heavy-handed use and in part to considerable and ongoing vandalism. The furniture was reaching the end of its useful life and lack of storage space for cleaning equipment was another area of difficulty.

Planning any form of refurbishment had been hampered by confusion about when the Godmanchester Rovers were going to move to Bearscroft and what use other teams hoped to make of Judith's Field in the future. The Rovers might move at the end of April 2002 but a formal letter of intent was still awaited.

The matter was referred to the JF WP for detailed consideration and recommendations. The WP would meet on Wednesday, 6 March 2002 at 7.30 pm at JF.

02/011 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

The District Audit for the FY 2000/2001 had been completed and there were no major observations. The list of minor comments by the auditor had been circulated to all councillors together with the list of the Town Clerk's actions. Councillors were asked to accept the comments and agree that audit was satisfactory and complete. AGREED.

The Town Office photocopier had finally failed after several months of erratic and unreliable performance. It was 4 years old and was beyond economical repair. A new machine had been purchased and the old machine disposed of for the scrap value of £5. APPROVED.

02/012 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.

Concerns were once again raised about the Park Lane caravan site. The Town Clerk was to seek further clarification of the terms relating to "Touring caravans" and "summer months". He was also to request a copy of the site licence and inquire whether long-term residents were paying council tax.

Councillors BROWN, KYNOCH, LOOKER and WILSON volunteered to attend the Development Plans Seminar at Pathfinder House on Wednesday, 20 March 2002.

Councillor SURSHAM left the meeting at 10 pm

02/013 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Finance. The WP had not held a meeting.

Recreation and Amenities. Councillor SPENCER reported that the refurbishment of the Recreation Ground play area was complete and the official reopening would be at 11 am on Tuesday, 26 February 2002. Representatives from WREN, The Godmanchester Community Association and Sears Publishing had been invited to attend. He proposed that the new facility be called the Golden Jubilee Play Park. AGREED. He further proposed that the log-park play area be formally known as the Millennium Play Area. AGREED. The Mayor then proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor SPENCER for masterminding the Golden Jubilee Play Park Project and for bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Environment. The WP had not met. The Mayor proposed that a new bench be purchased to replace the one that had been destroyed by vandals at the end of The Causeway. The Town Clerk had contacted the lady who had donated the original bench and she had agreed that an all-metal unit would be acceptable. She had also offered to pay half the cost of the replacement. The Council noted the generous offer but DECIDED that the Town should bear the cost. The Mayor had identified a Georgian seat with wrought iron ends and “2002” highlighted in gold as the most suitable replacement. He asked that up to £500 be approved for the purchase, delivery and installation of the new bench. APPROVED.

Councillor COMBEN had inspected the shrubs at Devana Park and had advised the Town Clerk that only the shrub roses needed pruning. The Town Clerk was to seek a quotation for the work from Fergusons and, at the same time, inquire when the hedge on Silver Street would be cut back and when the conifers in the London Road Lawn Cemetery would be lopped.

Property. Councillor SURSHAM had reported the latest progress with the Church walls, gates and railings project. The Diocese of Ely had granted the Faculty and the 3 planning permission conditions imposed by HDC had been satisfied. The contract with the builder had been finalised but not yet signed. A sample of the brickwork and mortar had been provided and approved. Unfortunately, the metalwork contractor was unwell and would have to undergo an operation in February. Consequently, the advance payment had been retained until he had recovered. Overall, work on the site was now expected to start after Easter 2002. In the meantime, one of the 2 unsafe Poplar trees on the site had been removed. The second was to be removed in due course.

Cemetery. Councillor COHEN and Mrs Hakimi had attended HDC for a morning’s training on cemetery administration. Mrs Hakimi would undertake a further session at Huntingdon Town Council in late February. The various record books required to administer the cemetery had been identified and those would be transferred to Godmanchester at the end of March. However, the HDC Index to Register of Burials contained entries for several cemeteries and only photocopies of pages containing Godmanchester entries would be provided. Councillor COHEN asked for approval to purchase a new index for Godmanchester at a cost of £123.50 plus VAT. APPROVED. Councillor COHEN also volunteered to copy the photocopied entries into the new ledger and so provide a complete record. A fireproof cabinet may be need to store the ledgers.

Work on the new Garden of Remembrance was delayed slightly until Councillor COMBEN had finalised the specification. However, 3 suitable companies to do the work had been identified and they would be invited to tender in the near future.

Judith's Field. The WP had not met.

Other Representative Groups.

CALC/NALC. Councillor KYNOCH had attended a seminar on information technology (IT) where the need for parishes to provide public IT facilities had been discussed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor BROWN reported that he had attended his Councillor training day and thanked the Council for funding his participation. The agenda had included a session on the new Ethical Framework and Codes of Practice. Councillor BROWN asked if the Council was aware of the implications to the Town Council. The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council would be invited to formally adopt the new Code of Practice at its meeting in April 2002 and that the other steps would be taken over the following 2 months in accordance with the deadlines laid out in the various papers and guides.

**THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 7 MARCH 2002
THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 21 MARCH 2002.**

BOTH MEETINGS WILL BE GOWNED

The meeting ended 10.28 pm Town Mayor