

**GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN  
HALL ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2002**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor  
Councillors D BROWN, M COHEN, A GOFF, Mrs H HULL, E KYNOCH, Mrs B MOORE,  
R NORRIS, S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, G WILSON  
Town Clerk: A J WELTON  
MaceBearer: M WILLIAMS

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors D COMBEN, Mrs P TYLER, and C VANE PERCY

**PRESENT:** There were 6 members of the public present.

**TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 6 occasions since the last meeting, the most pleasurable being the Gala Weekend and Picnic in the Park. The Town Clerk was to write a letter of appreciation to the Community Association. The Town mayor also reported that Cllr COMBEN had represented the Town on 1 occasion.

The Deputy Mayor reported that he had represented the Town on 3 occasions since the last meeting.

Cllr Mrs Hull arrived at 7.40pm

**02/046 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 May 2002 had been amended to include a decision made under Any Other Business. These minutes were signed. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2002 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

**02/047 MATTERS ARISING**

The Outstanding Actions List dated 18 July 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).

00/074 Cemetery. Action to complete the removal of inappropriate objects from grave spaces prior to restoration to full lawned status was still outstanding. It had been decided that re-turfing should be left until September at which time the remaining objects would be removed and stored by the Town Council for safe keeping or eventual return to relatives.

21 March 2002 AOB Automatic Telling Machine. The Town Clerk was to write to the Alliance & Leicester Bank to ascertain whether they had yet carried out a survey for a possible site for an ATM in the Town.

## **02/048 PRESENTATION ON LOCAL PLAN ALTERATION**

Dr M Bingham, Head of Planning Policy at Huntingdonshire District Council, had been invited to attend this meeting to respond to questions from Cllrs. Cllr WILSON set the background by explaining the stance taken by the Town Council concerning the Huntingdon Local Plan Alteration. Accepting that the proposed developments at London Road and Roman Way were beyond further discussion, he proposed to concentrate on the Wigmore Farm development. He suggested that the site was not needed but, taking a pragmatic view, asked if development of Wigmore Farm could be postponed to a later Plan. He said that the site specific reasons for objecting to Wigmore Farm still stood and requested that they be viewed on merit alongside the Hinchingsbrooke site. He went on to address the problem of transport, pointing out that the A14 was very close to the Town and indicating that more houses would place a greater demand on an inadequate public transport system.

In reply, Dr Bingham advised that the Government Inspector had endorsed the 2 original sites but HDC had inserted Wigmore Farm because it had been decided that development of Ramsey and the site at the former RAF Upwood should not proceed. Housing provision requirement figures had to be met and therefore there would be a deficit. Much consideration had been given to the objections but the Inspector reasoned that Godmanchester could take a bit more growth, notwithstanding the need to improve the infrastructure. Dr Bingham stated that HDC could not reject the Inspector's decisions unless arguments would stand up in a court of law. He further stated that HDC were not accepting the Inspector's recommendation for the allocation of the sites at Hinchingsbrooke, Bedfordia Fields in St Neots and in Somersham. Housing targets to the year 2006 had to be met. HDC had limited room for manoeuvre and, in future, there may not be any room. Responding to further questions from members of the Town Council, Dr Bingham stressed that it was completely impractical to develop the site at Hinchingsbrooke as access to the site was difficult, there could only be a limited number of houses on the site because of the trees.

Dr Bingham explained that there had been extensive debate over the development of Ramsey but that the projected rejuvenation of that town's economy had not been proven. He acknowledged that there were few opportunities to build on sites within Godmanchester and indicated that HDC would be producing a new Local Plan for the period 2006 to 2016, with the draft plan being produced in 2003. HDC had argued successfully for future development in the Cambridgeshire sub-region to be in and around Cambridge. Huntingdonshire should have to provide fewer houses than previously.

The MAYOR asked if there were any planning gains to be accrued under S106. Dr Bingham confirmed that there was general recognition that growth had taken place without the commensurate facilities and that there was scope for gains to be achieved.

Cllr WILSON referred to the Structure Plan 2016 in which the projected increase in population was 8800 whilst the increase in dwellings was forecast to be 9500 and asked if Dr Bingham could explain the imbalance between the two figures. Dr Bingham was unable to comment as a different department dealt with this aspect of planning at HDC.

The MAYOR thanked Dr Bingham for attending the meeting and for his explanations and answers to the questions he had had to face.

## **02/049 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR**

The Council had had an application from Mr D T Ashworth to become a Councillor. Mr Ashworth had been invited to attend this meeting and was asked to introduce himself and explain why he wanted to become a Councillor. Mr Ashworth indicated that he felt that residents of Godmanchester who lived in the direction of the Offords were under-represented on the Town Council. He was apolitical and could therefore represent residents' views without bias. The Mayor thanked Mr Ashworth for attending the meeting and advised him that the Council would let him know their decision as soon as possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.00pm to allow questions from the public.

Mrs C Simons informed the meeting that she had organised a traffic survey to be carried out in Godmanchester on Monday 22 July 2002. She also commented on the content of Dr Bingham's presentation. She indicated that one of the residents of Parcell Walk, which backs onto the proposed Wigmore Farm development, had a covenant indicating that there was no provision for access from Parcell Walk, notwithstanding that there appeared to be a "ransom strip" between two houses. Correspondence with the legal department at Huntingdonshire District Council had gone unanswered and the plan was to put matters in the hands of the ombudsman.

District Councillor C Looker said that the "ransom strip" leading from Parcell Walk to Wigmore farm had been tended to make it look like someone's garden. He also advised that the next approach from the residents should be to one of their District Councillors rather than to the ombudsman. He also averred that the planning process was "a judicial process masquerading as a democratic process". Mr Looker went on to outline his address to Cabinet and his further objections to the Local Plan Alteration.

The meeting reconvened at 9.15pm.

## **02/050 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

The Action for Market Towns organisation had written to the Town Council reminding them that annual membership was due for renewal. The MAYOR suggested that membership had not been particularly useful and the Council DECIDED that membership should be cancelled. The Town Clerk was to write to Action for Market Towns cancelling membership.

Following a letter of complaint about the state of the churchyard and the river from a former resident, Mrs Goodman, Cllr NORRIS was to draft a reply for the Town Clerk to send to Mrs Goodman.

The Town Clerk was to complete the questionnaire from CALC concerning audit regimes and return it as soon as possible.

Having received an estimate from Ashley & Foster for the re-erection of headstones in the London Road cemetery, Cllr COHEN volunteered to draft a letter to HDC inviting them to pay as the Town Council had clearly inherited the problem from them. In the meantime, the Council APPROVED the spending of up to £1446.00 for the re-erection of 27 headstones.

The Council APPROVED the estimate, from Fergusons, of £45.00 per application for the spraying of herbicide to the 50 trees in the cemetery.

The Council APPROVED the estimates from Fergusons for cutting the grass area at the Town Hall in the sum of £20.00 for the first cut and £15.00 for subsequent cuts; the application of herbicides to trees on The Avenue and the allotments at a cost of £35.00 but DECIDED to revert to 2 cuts per year for the Silver Street/Devana Park hedge.

## **02/051 ACCOUNTS**

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

## **02/052 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.

There would be a sub-group meeting between Cllrs BROWN, COMBEN and WILSON to discuss the Local Plan Alteration and any further approach to be made by the Town Council. Any agreed decisions would be passed to the Town Clerk for printing and forwarding to the relevant department after circulation to Cllrs for comment. The deadline was 8 August 2002.

Town Clerk's Note: The District Council has since advised that the consultation period has been extended by two weeks to Thursday 22 August 2002.

## **02/053 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS**

**Finance.** The WP had met on 2 July 2002. There had been discussion concerning the authority of the Town Clerk to make transactions on the various bank accounts following advice from the manager of Barclays Bank Huntingdon that, following the events of 11 September 2001, the Bank of England had tightened its regulations concerning authorised signatories on accounts. The bank manager had indicated that, strictly speaking, as the Town Clerk is not a signatory, he should not make any transactions on the accounts. Following discussion with CALC, it was discovered that other clerks had experienced similar difficulties. CALC advised that the setting up of a password to be used by the Town Clerk when making transactions against any of the accounts was probably the easiest solution. The Town Clerk indicated that, notwithstanding the advice from the bank manager, he had not had any difficulty subsequently making transactions on Town Council accounts. These transactions only involve the management of the accounts, not withdrawing monies from them. This authority remained with members of the Town Council, any two of whom had to sign cheques.

Correspondence had been received from the auditors, Moore Stephens, concerning the annual audit for the year ending 31 March 2002. There was no indication of the date when such an audit would take place. The Town Clerk was to seek clarification.

It was not intended to hold a WP meeting before the next Town Council meeting on 15 August 2002.

**Environment.** The WP had met on 2 July 2002. Cllr NORRIS reported that the painting of the railings and benches along The Avenue had been completed.

Artwork for the Town Signs was still awaited but had been hastened with HGTA; a quotation had been received from Malcolm Lane & Son for £1385 each, including posts and fittings. This had been approved at the 18 April 2002 meeting.

A quotation had been received from B E Welding for the repair of the finger post in West Street. It involved the removal of the sign, welding the pieces together, shot blasting, repainting and re-fixing at a total cost of £300.00. This sum was APPROVED.

In response to the letter from HDC concerning Small Scale Environmental Improvements, involving Church Place, the Council had strong reservations about what was being proposed and the financial implications. The Town Clerk was to write indicating an interest, asking for costed details, and would make a decision based on any reply.

In response to the letter from HDC concerning the Annual Parish Planting Scheme, the Council APPROVED the expenditure of up to £1000.00 for tree planting.

The quotation from Mr Bernasconi for the refurbishment of the Town Signs at the Riverside Mill and on West Street had been for £1180.80. The Council felt that this was expensive and referred the matter back to the WP for further investigation.

HDC had written to advise that they had undertaken an Advertising Bus Shelter contract, with proposed sites at Cambridge Road and at Cambridge Villas. The Council AGREED in principle and referred back to the WP to consider further sites, including Old Court Hall, providing that it did not impinge on building regulations etc.

Referring to the earlier discussions on the Local Plan Alteration, it was DECIDED that a formal approach should be made to the Police asking them to conduct speed checks in Godmanchester.

The next WP would be held on Monday 5 August 2002 at 8.00pm at 17 Porch Close.

**Property.** The WP had not met.

**Judith's Field.** The WP had met on 15 July 2002. It was suggested that the refurbishment plans be amended to move the kitchen from its present location to the small changing room. This proposal would add to the total cost of the present quotation. The Council APPROVED this addition subject to detailed plans and a revised estimate being submitted for consideration. It was AGREED that a small working party consisting of the following Cllrs would meet on Monday 22 July 2002 at 8.00pm at Judith's Field: The MAYOR, Cllrs

MOORE, SPENCER, BROWN, GOFF and COHEN, to agree the design specification and illicit an appropriate estimate.

In an attempt to combat the rampant vandalism, the WP had agreed in principle that it was appropriate to install security shutters at the rear of the building. It might be possible to apply for Crime Prevention grants. The WP would formulate a proposal for presentation at the next Town Council meeting.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr NORRIS informed the meeting that Cambridgeshire County Council had recognised the problems associated with the Godmanchester Swimming Pool and were looking at means of funding.

As Mr Ashworth had left the meeting, the Mayor invited the Town Council to vote on whether to accept his application to become a Town Councillor. The Town Council voted unanimously to accept Mr Ashworth. The Town Clerk was to write to Mr Ashworth to invite him to join the Town Council.

**THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 15 AUGUST 2002.**

The meeting ended 10.50pm Town Mayor