

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

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor
Councillors D T ASHWORTH, M COHEN, D COMBEN, A GOFF, Mrs H HULL, E
KYNOCH, Mrs B MOORE, R NORRIS, A SURSHAM, C VANE PERCY and G WILSON
Town Clerk: A J WELTON

APOLOGIES: Councillors D BROWN, S SPENCER, Mrs P TYLER

PRESENT: There was 1 member of the public present.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr SURSHAM arrived at 7.32pm.

The Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 4 occasions since the last meeting. Notable among those occasions had been the retirement function for the Lord Lieutenant. She announced that she intended to make a small present to the Lord Lieutenant, to be paid for from her Civic purse. Similarly, the Mayor thanked those councillors who had been able to be present to mark the occasion of Remembrance Day, despite the inclement weather on that day.

The Mayor informed the meeting that she had received an e-mail that afternoon from Cllr Mrs TYLER formally resigning as a Councillor. The Town Clerk was to inform the appropriate authorities at HDC. Additionally, the Town Clerk was to send a letter of thanks to Mrs TYLER mentioning, in particular, the valuable contribution she had made to Twinning.

Cllr Mrs MOORE arrived at 7.35pm.

The Mayor reminded councillors that there was to be an HGTA Christmas Dinner and Dance on 30 November 2002 in the Commemoration Hall, Huntingdon and urged their support.

The Mayor also announced that there would be a Children's Christmas Carol event on School Hill on Saturday 7 December 2002 at approximately 6.00pm and again asked councillors for their support.

POLICE PRESENTATION

Due to Operational commitments, PC Carter, the community policeman had sent his apologies.

Town Clerk's note. PC Carter contacted the Town Office the following morning to apologise. He had made an arrest shortly before the meeting and had to process that. He informed the Town Clerk that there had been a number of arrests recently in Godmanchester, some for motoring offences and some for theft and criminal damage. He felt that this was a beginning and that such action might start to have a deterrent effect in the neighbourhood.

There was then a lively discussion on the subject of youth problems in Godmanchester. Over the previous weekend there had been a number of incidents involving large gatherings of youths that had involved the police. Cllr Mrs HULL advised that Outreach was hoping to start to operate in Godmanchester soon and also stated that the Chair of the Community Safety Group had indicated that there might be some finances available to provide assistance against vandalism. Cllrs Mrs MOORE asked if consideration had been given to using Judith's Field as a "drop-in centre". She also proposed that the Town Clerk should write to the youth workers in Godmanchester, offering support from the Town Council. This was APPROVED. It was also suggested that the Town Clerk should write to CCC deploring the lack of financial support to provide facilities for the youth of Godmanchester. APPROVED.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that he had had an approach from the community policeman who had offered to hold a "surgery" twice weekly in the QES, on a Monday morning and a Tuesday evening. This offer was accepted and the meeting AGREED that the facility should be offered free of charge.

The meeting instructed the Town Clerk to write to both "One Stop" and "Unwins" urging them to consider earlier closing times until the vandalism had ceased. Similarly, he was instructed to write to the Trading Standards Officer asking him to carry out research and action on under-age purchasing of alcohol in the town.

The meeting DECIDED that the Town Clerk should write to Huntingdon Housing Partnership concerning their relocation policy and asking them to consider whether it was appropriate to relocate en bloc.

02/077 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

02/078 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Actions List dated 21 November 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):

02/009 Environment. Cllr NORRIS had received the various twin town insignia and had sent them to the contractor, Messrs Malcolm Lane for the appropriate action.

Cllr Mrs HULL stated that the Community Safety Group had intimated that it might be appropriate to install CCTV at Judith's Field and that there may be finance available for such a project. The Judith's Field Working Party was to prepare a submission for an application for a grant from SITA.

02/079 CORRESPONDENCE

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

02/080 ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk explained that the Huntingdon Constituency Conservative Association had had to cancel their booking for the use of QES on 16 November 2002. Accordingly, they had requested a refund of the fees, which they had paid in advance. The sum was £19.50. The Town Council APPROVED the refund.

The Town Clerk advised that a booking for the Judith's Field facility on 10 August 2002 had had to be aborted because of the vandalism on the previous night. The hirer had moved the function to the Comrades' Club and was now seeking a rebate of the fee for Judith's Field, which had been paid in advance. The sum involved was £13.50. The rebate was APPROVED.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that he had hoped to present the end of year 2001/2002 financial accounts for approval at this meeting but had been unable to reconcile the balances. The sticking point appeared to be HDC accounting for the Cemetery. He hoped to present them for signature at the next meeting.

Cllr Mrs MOORE notified the meeting that CALC had published recommendations for revised rates of pay for the Town Clerk and his Assistant. These were in two bites; the first was backdated to 1 April 2002 and the second was effective from 1 October 2002. Cllr Mrs MOORE recommended that the Town Council ratify the new rates of pay. The Town Clerk's hourly rates would increase from £6.69 to £6.90 from 1 April 2002 and from £6.90 to £6.96 from 1 October 2002. Additionally, the Town Clerk's supervisory element would rise by £3.75 per month from 1 April 2002 and a further £1.25 per month from 1 October 2002. The Town Clerk's Assistant's salary would increase from £344.87 per month to £355.25 per month from 1 April 2002 and from £355.25 to £362.18 per month from 1 October 2002. APPROVED.

Cllr Mrs MOORE advised the meeting that the Town Clerk had now served his six-month probationary period and asked the Town Council to ratify his appointment. APPROVED. However, it was noted that the hours originally authorised upon taking up appointment were not sufficient and it was recommended that the Town Clerk's hours be revised to 75 per month from the beginning of his employment. APPROVED. The Town Clerk and the Mayor and Cllr Mrs MOORE then signed the Town Clerk's contract of employment.

Similarly, there had been a recommendation from CALC that ancillary workers should also receive new rates of pay. Because these workers were not paid by the hour but by a fixed sum each month, the Town Clerk had calculated the percentage increase recommended by CALC and had applied it to the wages currently being paid to the caretakers at £250.00 per month. This meant that they would receive £260.00 per month from 1 April 2002 and £265.00 per month from 1 October 2002. These new rates were recommended to the Town Council and were APPROVED.

Traditionally, the Town Council had always made a donation to the Royal British Legion, over and above the sum invoiced for the wreath for Remembrance Day. In the past this donation had been £15.00. However, last year the sum had been increased to £85.00. Cllr Mrs MOORE recommended that the donation should remain at £85.00 for the foreseeable future. APPROVED.

The accounts set out in Appendix B were then APPROVED.

02/081 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.

02/082 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Flood Defences. Discussion on this subject was deferred until the next Town Council meeting on 12 December 2002.

Cllr VANE PERCY left the meeting at 10.25pm.

Alconbury Airport Consultation. A Working Party meeting had been held on 24 October 2002 and a draft report had been produced for discussion at the Town Council meeting. Cllr KYNOCH asked for a "named" vote to discover who was for and against the proposed development of Alconbury. Those for the proposal were: Cllrs COHEN, GOFF and NORRIS; those against were: Cllrs ASHWORTH, COMBEN, Mrs HULL, KYNOCH, Mrs LOOKER, Mrs MOORE, SURSHAM and WILSON.

Each aspect of the draft report was discussed in detail. It covered the following topics:

1. Growth. It was considered that the prediction of passenger growth might be excessive. Similarly, if the Government were to enforce the policy of "the polluter pays" then demand might reduce. There should be constraint on supply at the more popular airports in the SE in order to encourage development at other regional airports, thus encouraging operators to provide a greater number of destinations from those minor airports. The Town Council would support the principle of "the polluter pays".

2. Hub Airports. Heathrow and Gatwick should be the only Hub airports in the SE.

3. Development of Airports in the SE. It was suggested that there should be no further development of Heathrow after completion of Terminal 5. The WP supported the proposal that there should be no further development of Gatwick. The WP supported the current planning application for Stansted airport but felt that no further runways should be added. The WP supported the realignment of the runway at Luton airport. The proposed new airport at Cliffe was not supported on the grounds that there would be significant loss of agricultural land and the concomitant impact that would have on the environment. The first tier airports at Southampton and Norwich should be encouraged to expand to provide a greater variety of destinations for people living in those areas.

4. Freight. The WP accepted that a greater freight capacity would have to be provided in the SE.

5. Alconbury. The WP recommended that before any development began it should be preceded by the construction of the necessary infrastructure. In particular the re-alignment of the existing A14 to the South of Brampton and Godmanchester would need to be reconsidered. Rail links with the East Coast main line would also be required. It was considered that there would need to be an influx of new people to fill the expected expansion in jobs and that this, in turn, could lead to a rise in house prices unless adequate land was

allocated for housing. That in itself would inevitably lead to further urbanisation in what was still a rural area.

6. Managing Noise and Local Air Quality Impact. The WP recommended that there should be no flying into or out of Alconbury between the hours of 11.00pm and 7.00am. There was no reason why Alconbury should be treated any differently from other airports. Apart from the immediate surrounding area, noise and air pollution should not be too detrimental. The WP averred that the developers should fully recompense those living near the airfield by all of the methods detailed in the consultation document and, in particular, by offering to buy those properties at full market value before the airport was formally proposed.

Finance. The Working Party had met on 13 November 2002. The majority of the WP recommendations had been presented under the heading of Accounts at item 02/080 above. However, Cllr Mrs MOORE presented an analysis of previous precept expenditure, budget figures for the next financial year and recommended that there should be no increase in the precept figure for financial year 2003/04, i.e. £99000.00. This figure was APPROVED.

Cllr Mrs MOORE referred to a request for help in funding the proposed new carpet being bought for the Town Hall by the Senior Citizens Club. Because the Town Council now used the Town Hall for its meetings, it was AGREED that the sum of £250.00 should be paid from the Town Hall budget rather than as a grant under S137.

Following the recent spate of vandalism and the assertion by the youth of the town that there was little or nothing to do, Cllr Mrs MOORE suggested to the Town Council that, in light of the offer from the Godmanchester Community Primary School to provide an area for playing football on a hard surface provided they pay for the floodlighting, the Town Council should provide the funding for floodlighting. The cost was £4.50 per hour twice per week. AGREED.

Other matters discussed at the WP meeting were deferred for further discussion until the next Town Council meeting on 12 December 2002.

Environment. The Working Party had met on 12 November 2002. Because of pressure to discuss other matters in greater depth, Cllr NORRIS agreed to defer matters for discussion under this heading until the Town Council meeting on 12 December 2002. However, he did report that, following the objections the Town Council had presented to HDC concerning the Sustrans National Cycle Path and the lack of consultation thereon, he had had a meeting with HDC and all the Town Council objections had been satisfactorily addressed. He therefore recommended that the Town Council should now approve the plan. APPROVED.

Property. There had been no requirement for a meeting.

Judith's Field. Cllr GOFF reported that there had been damage to the door at the main entrance to the Judith's Field building. The culprits were known and it was decided that the Town Clerk was to write to the parents of the individual requesting payment for the damage, which had been repaired. AGREED.

There was some discussion about fees for the use of the Judith's Field facility by the youth football teams. It was AGREED that the MAYOR together with Cllrs GOFF and Mrs

MOORE would review this matter and they were authorised to write on behalf of the Town Council to the youth teams.

Cemetery. Cllr COHEN discussed the proposed wording for the memorial slab to be sited in the Garden of Remembrance in London Road Cemetery. It was DECIDED that the words should be: "In memory of those we love". The Town Clerk was to advise the contractors that had been invited to tender for the work, giving the specifications and details supplied by Cllr COMBEN for the materials of the memorial stone.

02/083 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

Discussion on this subject was deferred until the next Town Council meeting on 12 December 2002.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS. There was no other business.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2002 (gowned).

The meeting ended 11.15 pm Town Mayor