

# **GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 2002**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor  
Councillors D ASHWORTH, D BROWN, M COHEN, D COMBEN, Mrs H HULL, E  
KYNOCH, Mrs B MOORE, R NORRIS, A SURSHAM and G WILSON  
Town Clerk: A J WELTON  
Mace Bearer: M WILLIAMS

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors S SPENCER, C VANE PERCY

**ABSENT:** Councillor A GOFF

**PRESENT:** There were 4 members of the public present.

## **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 7 occasions since the last meeting. Among the notable events was the official opening of the church walls, railings and gates project at St Mary's Parish Church. Additionally, there had been a children's Christmas party for Rainbows, Brownies and Beavers followed by carol singing on School Hill.

The Mayor wished to convey the good wishes of the Town Council to Cllr SPENCER and to wish him a speedy recovery.

Cllr Mrs MOORE arrived at 7.37pm.

## **02/084 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2002 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

## **02/085 MATTERS ARISING**

**02/082 Finance.** The Senior Citizens expected their new carpet to be fitted on the day of the next Town Council meeting, 16 January 2003. It was proposed that the donation of £250.00 towards the cost of the new carpet be paid in January 2003. APPROVED.

**02/082 Judith's Field.** The Town Clerk was awaiting a reply on the name and address of the individual responsible for the damage to the main door at Judith's Field.

**02/082 Cemetery.** Only one tender had been submitted for consideration for the Garden of Remembrance. The matter was discussed more fully at this point rather than under Working Party Reports and it was DECIDED that the work would be awarded to Giles Landscapes at a cost of £6598.28.

Cllr ASHWORTH, a recent addition to the Town Council, expressed concern that at the last meeting the matter of the precept had not been fully discussed. The Chair of the Finance

Working Party, Cllr Mrs MOORE explained that the matter of the precept had been fully debated and recommended at a Working Party meeting. The matter had not been expanded on further at the Town Council meeting because of limitations on the time available.

## **02/086 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

The MAYOR advised the Town Council that there had been a letter from the Godmanchester Rovers Youth Football Club indicating their intention of leaving the Judith's Field facility with effect from 14 December 2002. A response had been sent indicating the level of fees that would be applied should they decide to stay and outlining a reasoned answer to the other points made in their letter but the Club had not yet replied.

The MAYOR had had a letter from the 1st Godmanchester Scout Group asking for assistance in relocating their storage shed, currently located at Wigmore Farm, as they had received notice to quit by 31 December 2002. At such short notice there was no immediate solution. Additionally the Group was enquiring about a permanent meeting place in the Town. Following discussion it was agreed that there was no suitable location currently available but that consideration of resurrecting the plan to extend the facility at Judith's Field in the longer term would be made.

The Town Clerk had passed correspondence concerning the Non-Conformist Burial Ground in the Parish Churchyard to Cllr SURSHAM as chair of the Property Working Party but it was considered that it might be more appropriate if the matter was discussed at a Cemetery Working Party instead.

The Town Council had received a letter from the vicar asking for a contribution towards the recording of the church music for Remembrance Day. To date the vicar had not presented the invoice for payment but it was AGREED that the Town Council would pay 50% of the bill.

Cllr Mrs HULL arrived at 8.14pm.

## **02/087 ACCOUNTS**

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED after consideration of the S137 grant requests at the next item.

## **02/088 S137 GRANTS**

There were only 5 grant applications:

2nd Godmanchester Rainbows - £198.00 for the provision of uniform fleece jackets.  
APPROVED.

Royal Oak Bowls Club - £2000.00 for assistance to purchase grass cutting equipment.  
APPROVED.

NSPCC – no specific request. (£50.00 granted in June 2002). On this occasion this application was not approved.

Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire (DISH) - £500.00 to support work on behalf of Godmanchester citizens. APPROVED.

Godmanchester Baptist Church - £626.01 to support the prospective football project. APPROVED.

## **02/089 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.

## **02/090 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS**

**Flood Defences.** There had been a first meeting of the WP at which it had been intended that there should be some sort of strategy worked out. Cllr Mrs HULL had contacted the Environment Agency and had been informed that there would be major flood defence improvements made in Godmanchester. There had been a survey as a result of the Easter 1998 floods, which were regarded as a one in 30-year event, as a consequence of which areas of risk had been identified. These areas appeared to be low-lying ground away from the classic risk areas immediately adjacent to the river. The areas were the Primary School, East Chadley Lane and in and around Cambridge Road, Earning Street and Tudor Road. However, it had been revealed that remedial work was unlikely to begin before 2005, notwithstanding that most of the danger spots appeared to be on private land and the relevant land-owners had not yet been approached. There would, however, be a presentation by the Environment Agency in June 2003 prior to public consultation and implementation in 2005.

A further WP meeting would be held, in conjunction with the Planning WP in QES on Thursday 9 January 2003 at 7.30pm.

**Alconbury Airport Consultation.** Cllr ASHWORTH notified the meeting that the Town Council position agreed at the previous meeting had been sent to the MP for Huntingdon, our County Councillor and the Chief Executives of both CCC and HDC expressing the Town Council's concerns about the development of Alconbury airfield. Similarly, the Secretary of State for Transport and the Parish Councils of Brampton, Buckden, Hilton and the Offords had been written to suggesting that the re-alignment of the A14 under the CHUMMS project should be to the north of Huntingdon should the development of Alconbury go ahead, rather than to the south of Godmanchester as is currently planned.

**Finance.** There had not been a meeting of the WP since the November Town Council meeting. However, because that meeting had been short of time for full discussion of every agenda item, Cllr Mrs MOORE expressed a willingness to expand on any of the brief recommendations she had made on that occasion. A breakdown of how the precept had been arrived at had been made available to Cllrs. Some items which had not been presented at the previous meeting were put forward. It was recommended that £3000.00 be earmarked in the present financial year for redecoration of the halls in QES. APPROVED. The roof over the Town Hall office needed attention and it was recommended that up to £3000.00 be earmarked in the next financial year to cover any necessary repairs. APPROVED. The computer and printer in the Town Office were in need of replacement and it was recommended that up to £1200.00 be earmarked in the current financial year to cover that

purchase. APPROVED. The Town Clerk was to seek estimates for the refurbishment of the Mayoral Roll of Honour which was showing signs of deterioration.

**Environment.** The WP had not met since 12 November 2002 but Cllr NORRIS outlined progress so far on some items of concern. The fencing and posts around the shrub beds in Buttermel Meadow had been damaged and were unsightly. In view of the fact that the shrubs were now well established it was recommended that the fencing and posts be removed. Fergusons had quoted £365.00 for the work and this was considered reasonable. The Town Council APPROVED this expenditure. Similarly, the fence panels at the entrance to Buttermel Meadow had been damaged in the recent storms and were an unsightly mess. It was recommended that they be removed and not replaced. Fergusons had quoted £85.00 for the work and this sum was APPROVED.

The MAYOR and Cllr NORRIS had met with representatives of the Environment Agency at the Old Mill Sluice to discuss proposed repairs. The Agency proposed to make a temporary repair by installing a wide bore pipe set in concrete to channel the water. This would be carried out in February 2003. In the longer term, major work would have to be carried out but this might have to be incorporated into any wider plan for flood defences in the area.

There had been prolonged correspondence concerning the installation of hand rails at the Chinese Bridge. CCC had acknowledged that they had agreed to carry out the work. Town Clerk's note: Hand rails were installed on 16 December 2002.

The waste bin in the Jubilee play area that had been vandalised had been replaced with a more robust version.

Wicksteeds had still to replace the seesaw in the Jubilee play area. The Town Clerk was to hasten yet again. Town Clerk's note: Wicksteeds have confirmed that a new seesaw will be installed in the first half of January 2003.

The Small Environmental Improvement scheme for the upgrading of lighting and surfaces in Church Place would take place in February/March 2003.

The two town signs, incorporating the insignia of the twinned towns, had been given the go ahead and the details had been passed to the contractors for action.

There was a requirement to complete a tarmac footpath connecting Stuart Close, White Hart Lane and Tudor Road. HDC had indicated that the request had been noted and was being dealt with.

HDC was in the process of producing Conservation Character Statements for all the conservation areas in Huntingdonshire. A draft had been produced covering Godmanchester and the Town Council was invited to make observations or amendments prior to formal adoption of the Character Statement as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Town Clerk was to seek further copies of the statement. Cllr SURSHAM would co-ordinate a response following a WP meeting to be held in QES on Monday 6 January 2003 at 7.30pm.

It was agreed that it was timely to review the Ground Maintenance Contract, which would be due for re-tendering early in 2003. The details should be examined by the Finance WP.

Cllr NORRIS told the meeting that he had understood that CCC had earmarked some £300000.00 for traffic management in Godmanchester. The Town Clerk was to write to CCC to ensure that there was a measure of consultation over proposals.

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

District Councillor C Looker, as a member of the public, wished to set the record straight about the traffic calming measures. There was, indeed, some £300000.00 earmarked for Godmanchester but it was related to CHUMMS proposals and was for the prevention of “rat-runs”. He went on to say that the Huntingdonshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee proposals on Market Town Strategies were centred around Huntingdon itself but would also address cycle routes in and around Godmanchester. Finally, he indicated that there was £12000.00 earmarked in the next financial year for minor road improvements in Godmanchester. They would include road markings on the approach to the bridge over the river into Huntingdon, better road markings in the area of the Black Bull public house and minor improvements in the area of the town cemetery near the A1198.

Mrs S Stammer conveyed her thanks to the Town council for agreeing to support the projected football project at the Community Primary School. She asked if there were any proposals to establish a youth club at Judith’s Field or alternatively a juice bar or café. Cllr Mrs HULL explained that the main problems were those of finding appropriately suitable and trained staff. Additionally, there was a need to identify the needs of the youth of the town. The Patch Group co-ordinators were to carry out a survey of youth needs in Godmanchester in the New Year.

Mr S Harris, Scout Leader of the 1st Godmanchester Scout Group asked if there had been any consideration of providing a purpose-built facility for the youth of the town over above that already provided at Judith’s Field. Cllr Mrs MOORE reminded the meeting that there had been a plan, long abandoned, to extend the building at Judith’s Field at a cost of some £600000.00. It was suggested that the Scouts and other youth entities should approach HDC to ascertain whether funds would become available from S106 as a result of the proposed housing developments in Godmanchester.

**The meeting reconvened at 9.31pm.**

**Property.** The WP had not met. However, Cllr SURSHAM informed the meeting that the plaque commemorating the walls, railings and gates in Church Place was to hand and would be installed on the central pillar facing Church Place once the lighting column had been replaced by something more suitable and in keeping with the ambience during the intended refurbishment of the area under the Minor Environmental Improvement scheme.

**Judith’s Field.** The WP had not met but, in the absence of Cllr GOFF, the MAYOR advised the meeting that a reply to the letter received from Godmanchester Rovers Youth FC had been sent addressing their observations and outlining the fees structure for the present season. To date no reply had been received.

**Cemetery.** The WP had not met but a decision on the Garden of Remembrance had already been taken earlier in the meeting.

**02/091 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.** The Town Clerk reminded all Cllrs that he had circulated to them a copy of the requirements of the Act previous to the last meeting and went on to explain that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 became law on 30 November 2000. The Act applied to Local Councils who were to produce and maintain a publication scheme listing the classes of information the Council was prepared to make available, as a matter of course, to the public. Additionally, Councils were required to state the manner in which they intended to publish information and whether a charge would be made. Publication schemes were intended to encourage organisations to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness. The scheme that it was intended to adopt had to be submitted to the Information Commissioner by 31 December 2002 for implementation in February 2003.

Because this matter had been deferred from the previous Town Council meeting, in November, this current meeting had to consider the model scheme and decide whether it wished to adopt a scheme that provided information in “Core Classes” only or whether it wished to include “Optional Classes” also. Although Councils were required to adopt a publication scheme, they were not obliged to adopt the “model”.

The Town Clerk indicated that he anticipated that the “model” scheme covered the core functions undertaken by a local council and recommended that Godmanchester Town Council should sign up to publication of “Core Classes” only. APPROVED.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** Cllr Mrs MOORE suggested that it would be appropriate to set up a WP to examine the contracts related to the caretakers of QES and Judith’s Field. It was AGREED that this should be done prior to the 2003 pay award becoming effective on 1 April 2003.

**THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2003.**

The meeting ended 10.20 pm Town Mayor