

# **GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2003**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor  
Councillors D ASHWORTH, D BROWN, W D BUTTERWORTH, M COHEN, A GOFF,  
Mrs H HULL, E KYNOCH, R NORRIS, S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, G WILSON  
Town Clerk: A J WELTON  
Mace Bearer: M WILLIAMS

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors D COMBEN, Mrs B MOORE, C VANE PERCY

**PRESENT:** There was 1 member of the public present.

## **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced that she had represented the Town on 4 occasions since the last meeting; the Deputy Mayor had not had to represent the Town during that period. The Mayor advised that she had taken part in the annual Pancake Race on Shrove Tuesday and had come second. She reminded all Councillors that Saturday 5 April 2003 would be National Spring Clean day and encouraged all to lend their support to the event, which would start from the Town Hall at 10.00am. The Mayor formally welcomed Councillor BUTTERWORTH to his first Town Council meeting since being co-opted to replace Mrs P Tyler who had resigned in November 2002.

Cllr Mrs HULL arrived at 7.35pm.

## **03/016 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 February 2003 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

## **03/017 MATTERS ARISING**

03/012 Progress of James I through Godmanchester – 400th Anniversary. The Mayor presented a copy of the latest draft of the programme of this event, which was due to be held on 29 April 2003 at Godmanchester Community Primary School. There was some discussion concerning the presentation of personnel to the VVIP and it was DECIDED that those listed, with due regard to protocol, were sufficient and appropriate. The Mayor was keen that as many Cllrs as possible attended the event and asked that they informed the Town Clerk of their attendance or otherwise.

## **03/018 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

The copy of a map of the Indicative Floodplain, provided by the Environment Agency, was considered to be an important document and the Town Clerk was to try to obtain more copies for all Cllrs as they could not be photocopied, being Crown Copyright documents.

The letter from Huntingdon Youth Town Council caused some concern as there had been no direct approach to Godmanchester about the perceived problems of anti-social behaviour in the Town. It was DECIDED that the Town Clerk was to write to Inspector Joyce, outlining past problems and indicating that the door was still open to the idea of creating a Youth Town Council for Godmanchester. The idea had been aired some two years previously and the overriding problem appeared to be finding a responsible adult to oversee the project. The Deputy Mayor, a member of Godmanchester Community Association, indicated that the Association intended to carry out a number of street interviews to ascertain exactly what the youth of Godmanchester wanted. The results would be published in "The Bridge" magazine. It was DECIDED by a 7 to 3 majority that the Town Council should endorse the Community Association survey. In the meantime it was AGREED that there should be a short meeting or discussion on the subject to determine whether a full Working Party needed to be formed to oversee these matters.

### **03/019 ACCOUNTS**

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

### **03/020 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.

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

District Councillor Dr C Looker had offered to answer any questions from the members of the Town Council, on any subject. He was asked why it often appeared that well considered planning applications, returned to the District Council with the Town Councils recommendation to refuse permission, were overturned by the District Council planning committee. The reply was that the District Council officers dealing with planning applications and making recommendations to the District planning committee were professional planners and researched all applications thoroughly, giving very detailed considerations, visiting sites and delving into the plans. District Councillor Looker suggested that it might be worth while if the chair of the Town Council planning working party tried to develop a dialogue with his opposite number at HDC in order to create a good working relationship between the two councils.

The meeting reconvened at 9.15pm.

### **03/021 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS**

**Alconbury Airport Consultation.** Cllr ASHWORTH informed the meeting that he had received a new questionnaire concerning airport development in the SE. This had been brought about by the High Court decision that consideration of a second runway at Gatwick should not have been ruled out. Having considered the new questionnaire, Cllr ASHWORTH recommended that the stance to be taken was that there should be no new runway at Gatwick but that consideration should be given to the use of larger aircraft and more use of off-peak travel. All the recommendations postulated in the original questionnaire should remain extant. AGREED.

**Flood Defences.** Cllr Mrs HULL reported that there had been a WP meeting on 6 February 2003 to discuss the Town Council's response to an Environment Agency questionnaire concerning the January 2003 floods. The main conclusion had been that it was intended to discover Godmanchester residents' experience of the floods by means of councillors approaching residents or issuing questionnaires. After the meeting Cllr Mrs HULL collated the information and responded to the questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council. There had been no report of houses being flooded in January 2003. A further WP meeting had been held on 13 February 2003, which had been attended by representatives of HDC Environment and Transport division and the Environment Agency Flood Warning section. The warning system triggered by high water levels upstream, weather bureau rain forecasts and recordings and estimates of ground water levels was explained. It had been explained that during flooding, efforts were concentrated on controlling and monitoring the flows through sluices and locks on the main river besides providing information and forecasts to other agencies. The Environment Agency indicated that more work would be done on their warning system. The HDC response to flood warnings was also explained. The specific commitment to provide sandbags to the public was on a request and assessment of need basis. It was not planned to hold a further WP meeting for the time being. A copy of the flood map would be obtained and displayed on the notice board. The Town Clerk was to try to obtain further copies and explanatory notes from the Environment Agency. In the meantime, details of the Flood Warden role and the legal liability of the Town Council in the event of flooding were still to be obtained.

**Finance.** In the absence of Cllr Mrs MOORE, Cllr NORRIS presented the report of the Finance WP, which had held a meeting on 11 March 2003. The WP had met primarily to discuss the results of various invitations to tender for work. The first contract considered had been the new Grounds Maintenance 3-year contract. There had been 3 invitations but only one tender. The tender quotation had represented value for money and the Finance WP recommended that the contract be awarded to K Fergusons Ltd in the sum of £13,969.19. APPROVED. Tenders had been invited from 4 contractors for the redecoration of QES. There had been 2 tenders returned and it was recommended that ReDeC be awarded the contract in the sum of £2,500.00. APPROVED. Estimates for the repair of the chimney at the Town Office had been received. Including redecoration of the Town Office the estimate from PrinceBuild for £1,004.80 was recommended. APPROVED.

**Environment.** Cllr NORRIS informed the meeting that the Environment WP had met on 11 March 2003. The 5-bar gate into Buttermel Meadow was being left open, particularly at night. Because of the possibility of attracting travellers, the WP had recommended that a suitable heavy-duty chain and padlock be obtained to secure the gate, with the Town Clerk and the Grounds Maintenance contractor holding keys. AGREED. Self-set Elder trees in Buttermel Meadow were growing adjacent to the fence of private property, hindering access when there was a need for repairs to the fencing. It was recommended that Fergusons be tasked with removing the trees and treating the remaining bases. APPROVED. Cllr NORRIS advised the meeting that the 2 new Town Signs had been delivered and installed; one at the entry to the Town on Cambridge Road by the allotments and the second on London Road just past the Cemetery. Cllr BUTTERWORTH advised that, as these were newly acquired assets, the Town Clerk should arrange for them to be insured. Cllr NORRIS reminded the meeting that the Town Council had agreed to take part in this years HDC sponsored "Spring Clean". This would take place on Saturday 5 April 2003 beginning from the Town Hall at 10.00am. Bags, gloves and "litter picker" would be provided. Cambridgeshire County Council was setting up a Local Access Forum and was recruiting people to join the body. Cllr NORRIS

informed the Town Council that he had applied for a place. The forum would meet two or three times a year and would represent a wide range of interests such as river users, birdwatchers, farmers, heritage and archaeology interests.

**Property/Judith's Field.** Cllr SURSHAM had prepared the specifications for the redecoration to be carried out in QES and the tenders had been as discussed under the Finance WP report. Cllr GOFF reported that, following attempts to obtain financial support for floodlighting at Judith's Field, a safety audit had been carried out at that location by the HDC Partnership Support Officer (PSO). The efforts of this Town Council to improve safety had been well received by both HDC and the Police. The suggestion of providing a "drop In" centre at Judith's Field had not been well received because of the lack of facilities and the location. The Godmanchester Community Primary School was the preferred location for this activity because it was centrally located and the PSO would make the initial representations. The PSO would also approach Premier Travel, the owners of the land between the housing at Martin's Close and the Cemetery, reminding them of their responsibilities, particularly related to the building of dens on their land. A copy of the report would be forwarded to the Town Council. In order to improve the safety of the facilities at Judith's Field, Cllr GOFF recommended that the Town Clerk should ask the Grounds Maintenance contractor to provide an estimate of the cost of reducing the hedge to fence height. AGREED.

Town Clerk's Note. The Partnership Support Officer informed the Town Clerk on Friday 21 March 2003 that funding of £13,000.00 had been approved for the floodlighting at Judith's Field.

**Cemetery.** Cllr COHEN recommended to the meeting that the Town Clerk should write to all traceable relatives reinforcing the intention to impose "lawn cemetery" status now that the Garden of Remembrance was complete. AGREED. As discussed at the previous meeting, it was recommended that a notice board be purchased for the Cemetery. A number of options was discussed, particularly about location. It was recommended that it should be affixed to the shelter. Cllr COHEN asked the meeting to approve the expenditure of up to £450.00. APPROVED.

**Other Representative Groups.** Cllr NORRIS reported in his capacity as the representative on the Community Swimming Pool Committee, that the swimming pool was still making a loss. However, CCC had indicated that it was prepared to bridge the financial gap.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** The Mayor announced that invitations for the Civic Ball, to be held on 2 May 2003, had been sent out. She also advised that the HGTA was this year's host for the Twinning Cultural Festival. Godmanchester would host the event at the Comrades Club on 10 April 2003 and the Grand Finale of the dancing would be held at St Peter's School on 12 April 2003 and councillors' support would be welcome at all events.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 17 APRIL 2003.

The meeting ended 10.10 pm Town Mayor