

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2003

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors: W D BUTTERWORTH Deputy Town Mayor, H R BUTCHER, R NORRIS, A SURSHAM

There were no members of the public present.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The MAYOR advised that she had represented the Town on 3 occasions since the last meeting. The DEPUTY MAYOR had represented the Town on 2 occasions since the last meeting. The MAYOR welcomed Cllr BROWN back from sick leave and hoped he was feeling better. She reminded all Cllrs that the Remembrance Day Service would be held on Sunday 9 November 2003 and hoped all would attend. Cllr BROWN offered his apologies as he would be out of the country on that day. The MAYOR advised the meeting that the Town Clerk's new Assistant was settling in well and was proving very able.

Cllr WILSON arrived at 7.40pm.

03/068 PRESENTATION ON RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM

Messrs Hames and Curtis of the Cambridgeshire County Council made a presentation on the Rapid Transit System. The presentation covered the background, project definition, process and the next steps and was followed by a question and answer session. The background covered the CHUMMS studies, the central element of the Structure Plan, long-term aspirations for high quality public transport and the new Local Transport Plan. Presenting the Project Definition, Mr Hames outlined the key features, which included off board ticketing, high quality stops including CCTV, cycle parking and shelters.

Cllr VANE PERCY arrived at 7.45pm.

He advised that, during the Process period, there would be a Transport & Works Act (TWA) application followed by Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to deliver the on-street sections of the system. Cabinet key decision date was expected to be 9 December 2003 followed by full Council ratification on 17 December 2003. It was expected that TWA application submission would be made in January 2004, followed by a statutory 42-day representation period. The Public Inquiry would probably be in the summer of 2004 with decisions being made in 2005. It was expected that construction would begin in 2006 and the route opened in 2007. In the questions session, it became clear that consideration of a light railway system had been abandoned as unviable. It also became clear that the first phase was for a system from Hinchingsbrooke Hospital to Cambridge without any stops in Godmanchester. A second phase, post completion of the A14 Southern construction, was planned to include a route through Godmanchester with a possible transport interchange. Several Cllrs indicated that they thought that there was not enough incentive for them, or the general public, to abandon their private cars in favour of a system that was going to take, at best, 42 minutes from

Huntingdon to Cambridge and expressed the opinion that they did not consider the scheme financially viable.

Cllrs COHEN and Mrs HULL arrived at 8.42pm.

03/069 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2003 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

03/070 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Actions List dated 16 October 2003 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).

03/067 – Environment. The Town Clerk had yet to write to ascertain ownership of the finger sign at West Street. The missing lifebuoys would be replaced shortly.

03/067 – Property/Judith’s Field. The Town Clerk had not yet received a reply on floodlighting regulations.

03/071 CORRESPONDENCE

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

03/072 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED. The final account for the financial year 2002/2003 was now balanced and was signed by the MAYOR and the Town Clerk ready for submission to the Auditors.

03/073 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.

03/074 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Flood Defences. The WP had not had occasion to meet. However, Cllr Mrs HULL advised that there was to be a Flood Forum in November and asked Cllrs to advise her, in advance, of any pertinent questions that should be raised at that meeting. The Town Clerk was asked to write to the Environment Agency to ascertain when the “temporary” railings erected at the Old Mill Sluice would be removed, although it was expected that this would not happen until after the major repairs were carried out. It was DECIDED that a Flood Defences WP meeting would be held in the Town Hall on Thursday 6 November 2003, starting at 8.00pm.

Finance. The WP had met on 7 October at which the budget for the next financial year was discussed in detail. Cllr Mrs MOORE, chair of the WP explained the proposed budget in detail to the meeting. The WP had recommended no change to the precept figure for the

coming financial year and the Town Council APPROVED a precept figure of £99000 for the year 2004/5.

Cllr Mrs MOORE advised the meeting that, although a review of hire charges had been carried out and approved by the Town Council, the increase in fees for the Jack & Jill Playgroup would be implemented from the start of the Spring 2004 Term. The Town Clerk was to write to the Playgroup to advise that the charge would rise from £2.50 to £3.00 per hour from that time. The WP would review all other hire charges at its next meeting. No date was set for a meeting.

Cemetery. Cllr COHEN asked the Town Clerk to contact the contractor concerning lawning of the cemetery. It was intended to write to relatives to advise them when the lawning was scheduled to begin in order to enable them to remove personal items from the grave spaces.

Referring to the matter of ownership of the Non-Conformist burial ground in the parish churchyard, it was DECIDED that the Town Clerk would write to the PCC declining to accept responsibility.

Cllrs COMBEN, COHEN and WILSON left the meeting at 10.00pm.

Environment. In the absence of Cllr NORRIS, the chair of the Environment WP, the Town Clerk read a report from the last WP meeting held on 2 October 2003. The WP recommended to the Town Council that 2 benches purchased; one to fill the vacant concrete base on the Recreation Ground and one to fill a new position on the Recreation Ground near the main sluice facing the Chinese Bridge and Church. The cost, including fixing bolts and delivery was £624.53 each plus VAT. APPROVED.

The Town Clerk was to seek an estimate from Ashley & Foster for replacing the wooden slats of the benches on School Hill and to provide a further estimate for work to renovate the damaged/worn benches that line the footpath by the Log Area. APPROVED.

The WP recommended that the Town Clerk write to the HDC Conservation Officer about the poor signage on display at the Royal Oak public house. The front hoarding was incomplete and unsightly. The business occupies one of the best sites within the conservation area of the Town but appears to be one of the most untidy.

A resident of Devana Close had written to the Town Clerk concerning the youth problem at the Devana Park play area. Additionally, the resident had approached Wicksteeds to provide an assessment of the area and to provide a plan for a suitable replacement. The plan had been passed to the WP for consideration. Whilst the WP had some sympathy they did not consider that the proposals were wholly satisfactory nor justified the estimated cost of some £18000. The WP proposed that Ashley & Foster should be asked to quote for replacing the wooden fencing surrounding the area with a metal one. APPROVED. It was also DECIDED that the bushes at the edge of the play area should be pruned but not reduced in height. The Town Clerk was to ascertain the optimum lighting for the area from HDC.

The ownership of the waste ground that used to form part of the level crossing adjacent to Bridge Place was raised. It was considered that the space could be converted into a parking area to relieve the parking that takes place on the grass area by the bridge. The Town Clerk was to write to HDC to establish ownership.

Property/Judith's Field. There was nothing to report on Judith's Field but there was discussion on the proposal to apply for planning permission for replacement gates at the Parish Church, Chadley Lane and East Chadley Lane entrances. Cllr SURSHAM had produced detailed plans and had completed both the planning application and the listed building consent forms for submission to HDC but, after some discussion, it was DECIDED that Cllr VANE PERCY would investigate the reworking of the remains of the original cast iron gates, which were in his possession.

It was AGREED that as no voting would be required on subsequent items on the agenda, there would be no discussion of the remaining WP reports.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS. Cllr BROWN asked whether there were any tree wardens on the Town Council. It was established that both Cllr KYNOCH and Cllr VANE PERCY were tree wardens.

Cllr VANE PERCY left the meeting at 10.35pm.

The MAYOR advised the meeting that the Town Clerk would be on holiday from 1st to 8th November inclusive. His Assistant, Mrs Moorhouse would run the Town Office in his absence.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 20 November 2003

The meeting ended 10.40 pm Mayor