

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2008

PRESENT: G WILSON Town Mayor,

Councillors: D BROWN, H R BUTCHER, T CANT, M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor, M DOBBIE, Mrs C DUTTON, J DUTTON, Mrs H HULL, C R HYAMS, C RICHARDSON, M RZYMEK,
C VANE PERCY, N WELLS

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD

APOLOGIES: Cllrs: A GOFF, Mrs A M LOOKER, Ms D MIDDLETON

6 members of the public were present

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR reported he had represented the Town on 5 occasions and the DEPUTY MAYOR had represented the Town on 1 occasion.

THE MAYOR confirmed details of his chosen charity: The Richmond Fellowship, which has a regional office in Godmanchester. They assist people returning to work after a mental illness and many know the organisation for their sale of plants from premises adjacent to Huntingdonshire Regional College. THE MAYOR confirmed he has already spoken to the Manager of the Co-Op to discuss the possibility of another skating evening, which was so successful last year and other ideas being considered are a musical evening and wine tasting event to raise funds.

THE MAYOR confirmed the date for the Civic Service had been set for 21st September. He hoped as many Cllrs as possible would attend.

THE MAYOR invited all Cllrs to attend the Church Fete in the Vicarage grounds at St Mary the Virgin's Parish Church on Saturday 21st June from 2pm. He also invited any interested Cllrs to join him on Tuesday 24th June at 7.30pm to assist in judging the best kept allotments.

Cllrs were invited to play in a friendly Bowls Match to take place on 29th June as part of the Godmanchester Festival week. Gala Day would take place on 5th July, and Picnic in the Park would take place on 6th July.

THE MAYOR confirmed judging for Godmanchester's entry to the Anglia in Bloom competition would take place on 28th July. There would be a litter-pick on Saturday 26th July meeting at 10am at the Town Hall, organised by the Godmanchester in Bloom committee. All invited to take part.

Following discussion and allocation of areas of responsibility, two minor changes had been made to the list in respect of Cllr Cant and Cllr Cohen. This list was APPROVED and the Town Clerk would provide an up to date copy for all Cllrs.

THE MAYOR suggested the PCSO's be invited to the next Town Council meeting to give all Cllrs an overview of their role in the Community. Town Clerk would invite them to attend.

08/52 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

CLLR DUTTON had questioned the wording of item 08/042 but other CLLRS confirmed they were happy with the reporting. Therefore the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2008 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

08/53 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' AND TOWN CLERK'S CONDUCT ARISING FROM MEETING ON 15TH MAY 2008 AND DECISION ON ANY FURTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN

THE MAYOR asked CLLR DUTTON if he had further comments to make regarding the previous meeting, and CLLR DUTTON confirmed he was happy with the outcome and the decision made at the Town Council meeting held on 15th May 2008. He confirmed he does not have any problems with the Town Clerk and that as far as he could see the Town Clerk had done nothing wrong. CLLR VANE PERCY stated he was surprised the matter had been brought up by CLLR DUTTON at the previous meeting in the first place.

THE MAYOR confirmed that following receipt of a formal grievance from the Town Clerk, dated 8th June 2008 (about the way in which she had been treated by CLLR HYAMS both the evening before the last Town Council meeting and at the meeting itself) he had e-mailed a copy of her grievance to all Cllrs detailing e-mail correspondence between CLLR HYAMS and himself and a covering letter dated 11th June 2008 including part of an e-mail from Roy Reeves, Head of Administration for Huntingdonshire District Council. Roy Reeves' e-mail had confirmed that the Town Clerk had done nothing wrong in signing a nomination form in respect of the District Council elections. THE MAYOR said that there were four possible points of action to be considered.

At that point CLLR HYAMS asked if he might make a statement. CLLR HYAMS said that at the last meeting he had been incorrect and that he had been misinterpreted, and for these he apologised. He had meant to question procedural transparency and he confirmed that he had not intended to question the integrity or honesty of the Town Clerk. CLLR HYAMS stated he wanted to draw a line under the matter tonight and move on. He went on to say that the MAYOR had not in fact given the Council the entire e-mail response from Roy Reeves which he read out and he questioned THE MAYOR as to why. THE MAYOR responded by saying that the two paragraphs not included had no relevance whatever to the Town Clerk or to the matter in hand and there was no further discussion on this point.

CLLR RICHARDSON commented that CLLR HYAMS should have checked his facts prior to making the assertions he did towards the Town Clerk. He expressed surprise that as a District Councillor and County Councillor that CLLR HYAMS had not done this first.

Part of the remedy in the Town Clerk's letter of grievance was for the Town Clerk to know that the views expressed by CLLR HYAMS at the previous meeting were not those of the Town Council. A vote of confidence in the Town Clerk was proposed and carried unanimously.

It was AGREED the procedure for Mayoral elections would be a matter for inclusion in local Standing Orders.

Town Clerk's Note: Further to the Town Council meeting, The Mayor has responded formally to the grievance raised, by issuing an unreserved written apology to the Town Clerk on behalf of the whole Town Council. The Town Clerk has confirmed she is satisfied with this outcome and she is content to bring this matter to a close.

08/54 MATTERS ARISING

CLLR BUTCHER reported that the footpath around Monks Pit had caused concern due to its location and also due to the presence of barbed wire. CLLR BUTCHER had met with CCC representatives and would walk the route of the path with the Rights of Way Officer from CCC on 23rd June.

All Cllrs had received a copy of the draft Town Council newsletter and CLLR HYAMS and CLLR MS MIDDLETON were thanked for their efforts on this information filled edition. Costs of £241.78 were APPROVED. All Cllrs were given a list of the streets and a map indicating their area for delivery of the newsletter. Once the newsletters are received in the Town Office, Cllrs would be advised and asked to collect their bundle for distribution.

CLLR BUTCHER reported that a quotation had been received from Donald Insall Architects in respect of project management of the cleaning and minor repairs to the Town Hall Building. It was AGREED that further quotes should be obtained. CLLR HYAMS advised he had found a source of up to £20,000 for funding which could possibly be used in relation to this project. Alternatively, it might be appropriate to consider this source for development of facilities at Judith's Field.

CLLR BUTCHER advised quotes had been received from our Grounds Maintenance contractor for additional works, as requested through the Godmanchester in Bloom Committee. CLLR VANE PERCY advised the Town Council that the area from the Chinese Bridge to the Mill Yard Sluice was in fact called "The Queen's Walk" and was created to commemorate the Coronation and was mistakenly referred to as Coronation Walk. The costs to clear The Queen's Walk in the sum of £660 was APPROVED.

The self seeded Sycamore tree adjacent to the swan's nest was discussed, and it was AGREED it could be removed subject to the approval of the Conservation Officer at HDC. GMC in Bloom will take on the task of removing the tree and clearing the surrounding area following discussions with the tree officer at HDC and will also seek advice on the appropriate species to plant in its place.

CLLR BROWN requested a sum of £600 in respect of materials required to paint the railings on both sides of The Avenue. This sum was AGREED.

THE MAYOR advised that our application for a Biffaward for funds to replace the skatepark had missed the application deadline by one day and had not therefore been considered. Following recent reports on excessive vandalism to the skate ramps, it was AGREED to advise HDC that the Town Council would support their suggestion to remove the skate ramps completely, as continued repairs were not economically viable.

CLLR CANT had talked to some of the young people at Judith's Field and believed that skate ramps were no longer wanted by the youth in Godmanchester. CLLR CANT would liaise with CLLR GOFF to organise meetings with the young people using Judith's Field to get

their ideas for the future. An article would also be included in the Town Council newsletter seeking involvement from young people to form a Youth Council.

CLLR RICHARDSON commented that the issue regarding access from Judith's Field to Roman Way had been on the outstanding action list for some time. Town Clerk would write to HDC to request this matter be expedited.

CLLR BUTCHER advised Cllrs on a proposal to lay a veneer over the existing names painted on the Mayoral Board and to re-sign-write all names. Costs up to £200 were APPROVED in order that an example of the finished effect could be seen and a decision made as to whether this was the preferred treatment. CLLR VANE PERCY AGREED to research and provide details of specialist workshops who would be able to take down the Mayoral Board and renovate it, off site. He would liaise with the Town Clerk.

08/55 S137 GRANTS

CLLR RZYMEK outlined the 10 applications received for S137 Grants. Following discussion, the following amounts were APPROVED:

Godmanchester Baptist Church: Holiday project - £600

Open Spaces Society – NIL

Godmanchester Baptist Church: Football project - £250

WRVS - £50

Jigsaw Nursery - £220

St Mary the Virgin PCC - £1500

Godmanchester in Bloom - £3500

Jack and Jill Pre-School - £625

Royal Oak Bowls Club - £350

Girlguiding in Godmanchester - £3000

The Town Clerk would advise all applicants and cheques would be sent in July.

CLLR VANE PERCY left at 9.50pm

08/56 CORRESPONDENCE - see Appendix A

CLLR BUTCHER reminded all Cllrs that when writing to a newspaper, they should not do so as a Cllr unless they had the approval of the Town Council to do so.

HDC have written regarding suggested names of street names at the Wigmore Farm development. Town Clerk would write to HDC expressing our preference that new street names reflect members of the Community and Town Council who have worked to benefit Godmanchester.

Applications are requested for Jointly Funded Minor Improvements. Any suggestions to CLLR DUTTON. Town Clerk would provide a copy of our last application for CLLR DUTTON for reference. CLLR DUTTON would prepare a draft submission for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

CLLR BUTCHER confirmed a structural survey would be undertaken of the Chinese Bridge in July and recommendations would follow regarding a timetable for refurbishment of the Chinese Bridge, which was long overdue.

A quote from Ashley and Foster in the sum of £95 to clear all accessible gutters on the Town Hall and QES was APPROVED.

CLLR DOBBIE reported changes were due to take place at the Cambridge bus station but this would not unduly affect Godmanchester residents. CLLR DOBBIE also confirmed there would be a briefing session at HDC on 17th July following an announcement earlier in July on proposed Post Office Closures. This briefing would be on the same night as the Town Council meeting.

CLLR DOBBIE advised of a petition at the Roman Gate Surgery to keep the surgery open. CLLR DUTTON confirmed he was not aware of any proposals at District or County level to close the surgery,

CLLR HYAMS reported the Environment Agency would be desilting Cooks' Stream. CLLR HYAMS was asked to make enquiries as to whether the Mill Stream could also be desilted as this would further reduce any flood risk.

A request for information and records of non river related flooding in Godmanchester had been made through HDC. CLLR MRS HULL had discussed the situation with CLLR HYAMS and suggested a request be made of as many people as possible in the town for their memories of incidents of non river flooding in past years.

CLLR WELLS advised on a consultation on a proposal to build a new Community and Sports Hall in Little Paxton. Town Clerk would respond and say Godmanchester is too remote to be affected by this development, but we wished them success.

08/57 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED. A petty cash account for the period ending 19th June 2008 was presented to the Council.

08/58 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix C were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations. CLLR DUTTON declared an interest and did not take part in discussions on Planning matters.

08/59 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS

CLLR DUTTON advised that a further 600 dwellings were scheduled to be built in the District in the next 12 months.

CLLR DUTTON reported on a new scheme being launched to award stars to premises serving food, in relation to the cleanliness of the kitchens. This would therefore affect some businesses in Godmanchester.

CLLR MRS HULL left at 10.28pm

CLLR DUTTON reported that CCC is undertaking a study to look at ways to recycle “hard to recycle” materials.

CLLR HYAMS confirmed he had attended the CCC Development Control Panel to speak about the planning application for Brickyard Farm. He was disappointed with the outcome and considered the decision had already been reached prior to the DCP meeting.

08/60 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS: not covered by correspondence

CLLR MRS DUTTON advised that maintenance work to some play equipment was required following a recent inspection report from Wicksteed Leisure. Costs of £600 were APPROVED. Town Clerk would liaise with Wicksteed Leisure regarding a reduction in the labour costs as not all items on the schedule were necessary.

MISCELLANEOUS

CLLR COHEN advised he would be handing over a cheque to East Anglia’s Children’s Hospice (his chosen charity during his year as Town Mayor) in the sum of £3600 on 24th June. He thanked everyone who had helped or been involved in his fund raising during the year.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 17 JULY 2008

The meeting ended at 10.40pm Mayor