

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2008**

**PRESENT:** G WILSON Town Mayor,

Councillors: D BROWN, H R BUTCHER, T CANT, M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor, M DOBBIE, Mrs A M LOOKER, Ms D MIDDLETON, C RICHARDSON, C VANE PERCY, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs: J DUTTON, Mrs H HULL, C R HYAMS, M RZYMEK,

5 members of the public were present

### **08/100 PRESENTATION ON HUNTINGDON RIVERSIDE PROPOSALS**

Richard Probyn (HDC) outlined the consultation taking place on proposals for Huntingdon Riverside Park. The park is an attractive green space used by local people and the car park is also an asset to all visiting the Town Centre. Three sections of the Riverside Park have been identified as the green space from the Town Bridge to the car park, the car park and adjacent playing field, and the wildlife area with links through to Hartford. Proposals had been put forward in respect of each area and the Town Council was invited to submit its comments by 12th December.

CLLR MS MIDDLETON arrived at 7.35pm

CLLR WELLS arrived at 7.36pm

CLLR MRS LOOKER arrived at 7.51pm

Mr Probyn was thanked for attending and it was AGREED that all Cllrs would pass their comments to CLLR WELLS to co-ordinate a collective response from the Town Council, which would be discussed at the next Planning Working Party.

### **08/101 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE MAYOR has represented the Town on 9 occasions since the last meeting, and the DEPUTY MAYOR on 6 occasions. THE MAYOR thanked the DEPUTY MAYOR and other Cllrs who had represented the town on a number of occasions whilst he was on holiday.

The DEPUTY MAYOR was delighted to report one of those occasions was to hand a cheque to Macmillan Cancer Research on behalf of The fund-raising team from The Exhibition pub in Godmanchester.

THE MAYOR thanked the DEPUTY MAYOR and Cllrs for attending the Remembrance Day Services. The Town Clerk had advised that residents had complained in person, by e-mail and to the Police about the traffic, which was allowed to flow during the service. The Town Clerk is already making enquiries about a formal road closure for next year's service. The DEPUTY MAYOR advised he would approach the War Memorial Trust for advice as to how to clean the War Memorial and to improve the clarity of names noted.

Mrs Linda Carter, who had been employed as Caretaker for the QES for one day a week had resigned. The Town Clerk had written to thank her for her service on behalf of the Town

Council. We now have a vacancy to fill and notices would be displayed on the notice boards in the first instance.

THE MAYOR reminded everyone that the Annual Christmas Carol Service and switching on of the Christmas lights would take place on Wednesday 3rd December at 6pm beside the Chinese Bridge. Friends of the QES have volunteered to provide refreshments and Mr Kynoch has kindly agreed to purchase sweets on our behalf. Meanwhile the Co-op have confirmed the Winter Skating evening which was so popular last year will take place again on Friday 12th December, however this year, there will be a contribution from members of the public towards the costs of providing the food and skating.

THE MAYOR advised that Mr Paul Burbridge, who had raised money earlier this year with a sponsored motor bike ride along with the Big Hated Bikers, would be presenting a cheque for the money raised for Cancer Research on Saturday 6th December at the White Hart at noon. Everyone invited to join him to celebrate his achievement and to make a further donation to the charity.

THE MAYOR advised all Cllrs are invited to attend the next Planning working party to be held on 4 December as an HDC Planning Officer will be attending to provide advice on how the Town Council should respond to planning consultations.

THE MAYOR confirmed we have received one letter of application for the vacancy as Town Councillor. As S137 grant applications would be considered at the December meeting it was AGREED that this candidate, and any others who came forward, would be invited to attend the January meeting.

#### **08/102 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2008 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

#### **08/103 MATTERS ARISING**

Archive filing: QES Mr Alan Welton addressed the meeting to confirm he had undertaken a review of the requirements to improve the archive material stored in the QES. He outlined the type of materials stored and also advised that the access to the storage room was particularly unsafe and did not meet Health and Safety criteria. The Town Clerk would investigate possibilities to improve access. After discussion, the following items were AGREED: that all paper material no longer required would be shredded – Town Clerk to obtain a cost for bulk confidential shredding; that the plan drawers would be removed by CLLR BROWN; the plastic stackable chairs would be donated to Wood Green if they would like them, or disposed of in another way; that the old Cllrs gowns would be donated to local drama groups as they have no value or wear left in them; that the Town Clerk would purchase 5 x second hand 4 draw filing cabinets to be used for proper storage of documents. It was further AGREED that Mr Welton would present his invoice for this project on completion and that he had agreed to take full responsibility for any tax due on this income. The Town Council AGREED that with the exception of important documents, generally items would be kept for 5 years, and all financial information for 7 years. Mr Welton was thanked for his agreement to undertake this project.

Fire Risk Assessment: The Town Clerk advised on progress relating to Fire Risk Assessment and confirmed quotes had been received in respect of requirements of fire doors and serving hatches to the QES, Judith's Field and the Town Hall kitchen. It was AGREED that the quotes from Jacowe Joinery would be accepted in the total sum of £3979.19. Fire alarm systems were due to be installed towards the end of November/early December to the 3 buildings. THE MAYOR asked to record thanks to the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant for the work done so far in respect of Fire Risk Assessments.

Flood Defences: Following the public exhibition held by the Environment Agency to outline concepts and proposals for the flood defences along The Causeway, Mr Doherty and Mr Kynoch were given the opportunity to express their views. They considered that the exhibition was poorly run with "new" options being put on display in the afternoon, which members of the public who had attended in the morning would not have seen. Mr Doherty expressed his view that as well as considering flood defences the Environment Agency were remiss in not considering how to actually get rid of the water and he believed The Causeway wall had never been breached due to river flooding and that the solution was not to simply build up the walls.

It was AGREED to invite Mr Hesp, on behalf of the Environment Agency, to present all the options again at a further open meeting. Town Clerk would liaise with Mr Hesp.

CLLR COHEN confirmed he was working on preparation of a Freedom of Information Publication Scheme but this was not straight forward.

Following discussions last month, CLLR BROWN presented his request to employ an Archaeological Technician to investigate the site at the end of East Chadley Lane. It was AGREED to employ a person in the sum of £295 but that the Town Council would not wish to become involved in further exploration or further costs should anything of note be found. It was further confirmed that the land is actually District Council land and their permission would be required before work could commence. CLLR BROWN would ensure all necessary arrangements were put in place.

The Town Clerk confirmed that a cost for robes of office for the Town Clerk had been obtained and discussed at the Finance Working Party. Those present at the working party had AGREED not to include the figure in the budget for the coming year as it was hoped to curtail expenditure where possible.

CLLR VANE PERCY confirmed that he had been able to uncover documents, which confirmed the wall in the churchyard which formed part of the non-conformist burial ground was in fact owned by the adjacent land owners and the Town Council would not be liable for its upkeep and repair. CLLR VANE PERCY would provide a copy of the relevant documents to the Town Clerk. It was AGREED that other issues relating to the churchyard needed to be clarified and a Property Working Party should meet to discuss all matters. CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON would advise all once a date had been set.

CLLR VANE PERCY advised that notices regarding footpaths had been fixed to the Church gates, without consent or notification. The Town Clerk would investigate.

Winter Town Council Newsletter: CLLR MS MIDDLETON and CLLR HYAMS were thanked for their work on the latest newsletter. Following minor changes it would be sent to

the printer on Monday and it was hoped it would be available for distribution the following weekend.

### **08/104 TOWN OFFICE WORKING HOURS**

The Town Clerk advised that she had been working above her contracted hours since April this year and it was proposed to increase the Town Clerk's working hours from 90 to 100 per month. It was also proposed that the Town Clerk's Assistant would increase his working hours from 74 per month to 88. These new hours were AGREED with immediate effect. It was also AGREED that the Town Office would be closed to callers on the first and third Friday each month, starting in December. This would provide an opportunity for the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant to catch up on a backload of work without interruption. It was AGREED this would be on a 3 month trial basis and the Town Clerk would report back at the end of March to determine whether or not this would be the permanent arrangement.

### **08/105 PROPOSALS FOR FACILITIES AT JUDITH'S FIELD**

CLLR MS MIDDLETON reported that 60 responses had been received in respect of the consultation on proposals for facilities at Judith's Field. The result was marginally in favour of a multi-sport court, although replacement skate ramps were also requested by many who responded. Feedback would be provided in the next Town Council newsletter and CLLR MS MIDDLETON would obtain more information on costs involved along with confirmation of match funding and S106 money available for this project.

### **08/106 CORRESPONDENCE - see Appendix A**

CLLR COHEN had made some enquiries about web site design and following discussion it was recommended we keep management of the website in-house and within the portfolio of communications. He would continue researching our options.

CLLR BUTCHER advised the Environment Agency had written to confirm that the railings at the Mill Steps could be removed and re-aligned along the sluice structure, providing the Town Council undertook to accept all liability. It was AGREED this would be discussed at the Property Working Party along with other matters. CLLR VANE PERCY declared an interest as his property looks across to the Mill Steps.

CLLR BUTCHER reported quotes had been received for possible work to the QES roof and QES floor but following inspection and investigation by David Stokes, it was AGREED to do nothing for the time being. Mr Stokes had suggested the rainwater pipe coming down through the QES was possibly blocked and that a joint was possibly leaking which could be causing the problem. He suggested viewing the flow of water when it next rained when further decisions on a course of action could be taken.

A separate quote in the sum of £896 for repairs to the Town Hall roof was AGREED.

### **08/107 ACCOUNTS**

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED. The Town Council noted the new layout of the list of payments, which made it easier to identify when signing cheques. A petty cash account for the period ending 20th November 2008 was presented to the Council.

The Town Clerk reported to those present on the outcome of the Finance Working Party. It was recommended the precept for 2009-10 remain unchanged at £115,000 and this was AGREED. The Town Clerk would submit our formal request.

In order to achieve this, some items originally included in the draft budget for 2009-10 would need to be removed such as cleaning of the Town Hall. Proposal 2 of the draft budget was broadly accepted, but As CLLR RZYMEK was not present, it was AGREED to hold a further Finance Working Party to re-work some of the budget figures. Town Clerk would advise of the date in due course.

NALC had advised that an agreement had been reached in respect of the pay award and rates of pay for Town Clerks. It was proposed and AGREED that the Town Clerk's rate of pay be amended to the recommended rate and further AGREED that the Town Clerk's Assistant's rate of pay also be amended to the new recommended rate. This would result in an increase of 34p per hour for the Town Clerk and 20p per hour for the Town Clerk's Assistant. NALC recommended the new rates be applied with effect from 1 April 2008 and it was AGREED this pay award would be backdated.

As the Town Clerk and her assistant had taken on additional responsibility in respect of the Fire Risk Assessments and associated duties, it was AGREED that with effect from 1 December they would move one point on their incremental salary scales to reflect this additional responsibility. CLLR MS MIDDLETON suggested the Finance Working Party should review the responsibilities and salary of the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant at the next Finance Working Party. This was AGREED.

CLLR VANE PERCY left at 10.35pm

### **08/108 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The applications and correspondence set out in [Appendix C](#) were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

A letter had been received from the Fairfield Partnership who had been invited to attend a Town Council meeting to talk in general terms about their proposals for development to the South of the A1198. They had declined this invitation but it was AGREED a further invitation to attend the January Planning working party meeting would be extended with confirmation that proceedings would then be reported to the full Town Council at the January Town Council meeting.

### **08/109 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS**

Nothing presented in the absence of our District and County Councillors.

### **08/110 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS:** not covered by correspondence

CLLR MRS LOOKER suggested holding a further 2012 Working Party meeting early in January to follow up some of the suggestions made to date. She will advise all Cllrs when a date is set.

The Town Clerk advised an updated list of Monthly Actions in respect of Financial Regulations had been prepared and Cllrs were asked to review it prior to the December Town Council meeting.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2008

The meeting ended at 11.15pm Mayor