

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 2009

PRESENT: G WILSON Town Mayor, M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor
Councillors: H R BUTCHER, M DOBBIE, J DUTTON, C R HYAMS, Mrs A M LOOKER,
Ms D MIDDLETON, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD

APOLOGIES: D BROWN, T CANT, C RICHARDSON
ABSENT: Cllrs Mrs H HULL, C VANE PERCY

4 members of the public were in attendance

09/001 PRESENTATION BY CANDIDATES FOR TWO CASUAL VACANCIES AS TOWN COUNCILLOR

Four candidates presented themselves to the Town Council for consideration to fill the two casual vacancies. After due discussion it was AGREED to co-opt Mr David O'Donnell and Mr David Taylor. Town Clerk would advise all candidates of the outcome.

09/002 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR advised he had represented the Town on 11 occasions since the last meeting.

THE MAYOR confirmed a few tickets were still available for the Mayor's Civic Dinner to be held on 5 February and that invitations would be sent out shortly for a musical evening to be held in March at St Mary the Virgin, on 14th March 2009.

THE MAYOR reported that the skating evening organised by the Co-op had been well attended and voluntary donations of £100 were given on the night towards the Mayor's Charity.

THE MAYOR thanked Cllrs for attending recent working party meetings in respect of Planning, Property and Finance. Further reports to be presented during the meeting.

THE MAYOR suggested it would be helpful to agree a timescale for the production and delivery of the next newsletter to give everyone involved sufficient time to meet deadlines. CLLR MS MIDDLETON asked that all articles be provided to her by 4th February 2009 and she and CLLR HYAMS would present the draft for approval at the next Town Council meeting on 19th February. Distribution would be expected around the end of February.

THE MAYOR reported that the Town Hall roof had been repaired but the contractor had discovered loose brickwork which needed attention. It was AGREED this should go ahead while the scaffolding was in place and recognised that the previously agreed sum would need to be amended.

09/003 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2008 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

09/004 MATTERS ARISING

Additional ground work to lay further cobbles and ease the runner at the gates to St Mary the Virgin in Chadley Lane has been carried out. CLLR VANE PERCY has been asked to confirm the project is now complete before payment is forwarded to the contractor.

09/005 ADOPTION OF MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

CLLR COHEN had presented all Cllrs with a copy of the Model Publication Scheme in respect of Freedom of Information. It was AGREED that this publication scheme would be adopted with immediate effect. Town Clerk would advertise this on the Town Notice board.

09/006 CORRESPONDENCE - see Appendix A

CLLR BUTCHER reported that HDC have confirmed that as we are not progressing the project to clean the Town Hall at this time, that the sum awarded through the Small Scale Minor Improvement Scheme, will not be carried forward to a future financial period and the Town Council would need to re-submit a request at the appropriate time.

CLLR BUTCHER advised a letter from a resident in Stukeley Meadows had been received commenting on the poor state of the footpath approaching Weir No 1. Town Clerk would refer this to Highways Division of CCC for their attention.

CLLR COHEN advised that the War Memorial required cleaning and the lettering re-incised and painted. In order to progress this matter he requested the purchase of the War Memorial Trust's Handbook at a cost of £5.49. This cost was APPROVED.

CLLR DOBBIE reported that HDC are looking at the number of licensed taxis in the district and have provided a questionnaire for completion. CLLR DOBBIE was co-ordinating responses from residents and Cllrs. He would pass details to the Town Clerk so a formal response could be sent. CLLR HYAMS advised this matter may be discussed at HDC Cabinet, so he did not offer any comments.

CLLR HYAMS requested all Cllrs to advise him of any locations where rain water does not disperse as he is co-ordinating a reply to a request from HDC on this issue.

09/007 ACCOUNTS.

7.1 The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

7.2 Town Clerk reported that a formal request from the Youth Club had not been received and this matter would be deferred. Town Clerk's Note: We are now advised that the Youth Club have been successful in obtaining funds through another source and will not be approaching the Town Council at this time.

7.3 To approve recommendations from Finance Working Party:

The Draft Budget was accepted and APPROVED.

Recommended changes to the charges for the Queen Elizabeth School, Judith's Field and the

Cemetery were APPROVED.

It was AGREED that our current insurance cover was adequate, and CLLR MS MIDDLETON and CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON would review all assets in April with the Town Clerk and remove any items where insurance was not necessary or cost effective.

A 4% increase in wages for the Caretakers was APPROVED.

It was AGREED Cllrs would be asked to review the salaries payment sheet as one of the 5 invoices to be randomly checked when signing cheques, and that other systems of internal control were adequate.

It was AGREED that the current list of Direct Debits was satisfactory.

It was AGREED that the sum held in the now obsolete NSI Treasury Account would be transferred to a NSI Guaranteed Growth Bond. Two thirds would be invested for 3 years and one third for one year.

It was AGREED that CLLR MS MIDDLETON and CLLR COHEN would seek further information in respect of salary scales and job descriptions for the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant and that CLLR MS MIDDLETON would re-draft the Job Description for the Town Clerk's Assistant.

THE MAYOR and Cllrs wished to record their thanks to the Town Clerk and her Assistant for the work they had done preparing the financial statements and running a sound system of financial control.

09/008 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix C were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations. CLLR DUTTON did not take part in planning discussions. CLLR MRS LOOKER AND CLLR HYAMS abstained from voting on application 0803336FUL. It was AGREED that a discussion and formal response regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites would take place at the next Planning Working Party meeting. CLLR MS MIDDLETON would forward a report to all Cllrs, following her attendance at a recent meeting on the subject.

8.2 To provide a report on discussions with Fairfield Partnership. Having a personal and prejudicial interest, CLLR MRS LOOKER left the meeting before this matter was discussed. CLLR WELLS confirmed 5 representatives from the Fairfield Partnership had attended the recent Planning working party meeting to outline their proposals for development on the south side of the A1198, and land to the side of Judith's Field. The Fairfield Partnership envisaged providing a primary school, supermarket, other shops, offices, some light industrial units, a rugby ground and approximately 800 houses, 40% of which would be proposed as social housing. The Town Council had listened to these proposals and were seeking clarification from other agencies regarding issues on roads and schools. CLLR HYAMS reported that it was unlikely that any development could be approved before the works to improve the A14 had been undertaken. CLLRS COHEN, HYAMS and WILSON would meet with Mr Ingram, Head of Planning Services at HDC to discuss procedure and timing in relation to this site.

09/009 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS.

CLLR HYAMS advised that the future management of Hinchbrooke Hospital was being discussed at District County level. He had sought further information.

CLLR HYAMS AND CLLR DUTTON advised that further cracks had appeared on the Town Bridge and they were working with other agencies to try and reduce the current weight restriction.

CLLR HYAMS confirmed checks and adjustments on the phasing of the traffic lights on the Huntingdon Ring Road was still underway.

09/010 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS :

10.1 CLLR BUTCHER reported he had received complaints about the lack of gritting on footpaths during icy weather, particularly in the area close to the Community Primary School. We are advised that CCC Highways Division do not grit footpaths unless there have been 5 consecutive days of icy weather. Neither the Town Council, or the school have the personnel available to apply the grit on a regular basis. It was therefore suggested that the Town Council purchase a grit bin to be sited near the school, that Highways provide the grit for the bin, and that members of the public are advised to scatter the grit as and when the need arises. It was also suggested that the grit bin to the side of Ethnic Origins be replaced as this is unrecognisable as a grit bin and therefore unused. Costs of £131.67 per grit bin were APPROVED. Town Clerk to liaise with supplier, Highways and Headmaster at the Community Primary School.

10.2 CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON confirmed the Property working party had met and the main discussion centred on the closed churchyard. Further information is needed before the Town Council can take any positive action and CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON will liaise with Town Clerk to progress this matter. On a separate matter, the remaining Trustee for the Non-Conformist burial ground has indicated he would like to hand responsibility to the Town Council. This will be investigated when all documentation is available and a formal request has been made.

CLLR MRS LOOKER left at 10.30pm (and planning matter 8.2 was then discussed)

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2009

The meeting ended at 10.40 pm Mayor