

**GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL
ON THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2009**

PRESENT: G WILSON Town Mayor, M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor
Councillors: D BROWN, H R BUTCHER, T CANT, M DOBBIE, Mrs H HULL, Ms D MIDDLETON, D O'DONNELL, C RICHARDSON, D TAYLOR, C VANE PERCY, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD

2 members of the public were in attendance

09/011 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from: CLLR DUTTON – on holiday; CLLR HYAMS – attending a meeting at Huntingdonshire District Council; CLLR MRS LOOKER – previously arranged social engagement.

09/012 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE:

Mr David O'Donnell and Mr David Taylor, having been duly co-opted to fill casual vacancies on Godmanchester Town Council, read and signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office, which were witnessed and signed by The Town Clerk.

09/013 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR VANE PERCY declared a personal interest in the letter regarding the planning matter relating to Godmanchester Community Primary School.

09/0014 MINUTES:

CLLR BROWN proposed and CLLR DOBBIE seconded that the minutes for the Town Council meeting held on 15th January 2009 be accepted and signed as a complete and accurate record. THE MAYOR duly signed the minutes.

09/015 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Pauley expressed concern that a lighting column on the footpath to the rear of the Community Primary School was still not in operation. Town Clerk would follow this up with CCC Lighting Division. Mr Pauley also commented on the poor quality of the surface of this path, which has several potholes, which could cause injury to pedestrians or cyclists. Town Clerk would pass these comments to CCC Highways Division. Mr Pauley further expressed his view that he hoped the Town Council would object to further proposed development in Godmanchester, stating his belief that the Town needed to retain its open spaces.

Mr Doherty stated again that in times of high water or flood, the water has not come over the wall in The Causeway. Mr Doherty also commented that the Environment Agency had identified areas they believed at risk of flooding and he confirmed the whole of the development to the rear of Cambridge Villas was on a downhill slope and therefore at risk.

He stressed that due note must be taken of surface water drainage and further advised the pipe in place to take away surface water was only a certain size and unable to cope with additional flow. CLLR VANE PERCY thanked Mr Doherty, on behalf of the Town Council for sharing his knowledge and information.

09/016 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR confirmed he had represented the Town on 7 occasions and the DEPUTY MAYOR on one occasion since the last meeting.

THE MAYOR thanked those who had attended or contributed to the recent Charity Dinner. Despite the snow, most people had managed to get to Godmanchester and it had been an enjoyable evening. THE MAYOR reminded everyone that the next Charity Event would be a musical evening to be held in St Mary the Virgin on 14th March, all invited to attend.

THE MAYOR reported the 2 grit bins had been purchased, filled and used during the recent snow. They would be mentioned in the next Town Council newsletter.

THE MAYOR advised the Fire Officer would be visiting to inspect our buildings on 2nd March. As the Town Clerk's Assistant would be on holiday that day, the Town Office may be closed while inspections take place.

THE MAYOR confirmed the Annual Town Meeting would be held in the Queen Elizabeth School on Tuesday 7th April. It is the opportunity for members of the public to hear about the work undertaken by the Town Council in the previous year. Chairs of working parties should present a short report. The Town Clerk would provide a copy of last year's reports. Councillors were asked to provide suggestions for a guest speaker.

THE MAYOR advised the Town Clerk had suggested producing an Annual Report to be printed and delivered to all households. This would be discussed in more detail at the next Town Council meeting.

THE MAYOR thanked CLLR BROWN and CLLR BUTCHER for removing a large quantity of debris from the river. THE MAYOR confirmed the Annual Litter Pick would be held on 25th April and all help would be welcome on the day.

09/017 TOWN COUNCILLOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Following discussion the list of Councillor's responsibilities (for internal admin purposes) it was AGREED to make minor amendments to incorporate CLLR O'DONNELL and CLLR TAYLOR. Town Clerk would provide a copy for all Cllrs.

09/018 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING

The Town Clerk provided a written report on progress made on outstanding matters: CLLR VANE PERCY had provided additional contacts with regard restoration of the Mayoral Board and the Town Clerk would make initial enquiries. The Town Clerk confirmed she had written to Smiths Gore to confirm we do not accept liability for their charges in respect of a site visit to the Allotment Gardens to view the formal Right of Way and proposed change.

09/18.1 NEWSLETTER: The content of the draft newsletter was discussed and subject to minor changes, it was AGREED that it should be printed and ready for distribution by the first week in March.

09/18.2 FLOOD DEFENCES: The Environment Agency held a Public Exhibition in October 2008 and also attended a recent meeting between the Environment Agency and Huntingdonshire District Council, which was also attended by representatives from Godmanchester Town Council. As the Town Council and residents who raised issues have not received any response to their enquiries, it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would seek feedback on the results of the consultation exercise, answers to the written questions the Councillors provided and invite representatives from the Environment Agency to attend a public meeting, to confirm the current position regarding their proposals for Flood Defences, and to answer questions from members of the public.

09/18.3 PROPERTY: CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON provided a written report on the current situation regarding property enquiries relating to the walls surrounding the St Mary the Virgin churchyard, the Non-Conformist Burial Ground, and the position regarding maintenance of the Tombstones and Memorials in the churchyard. Further enquiries are underway but she expressed her gratitude to CLLR VANE PERCY and Mr Pithey for providing extensive background information.

09/18.4 2012: CLLR MRS LOOKER had advised the Town Clerk that 20 people had attended the last meeting. Two of the suggestions that had arisen, had been to apply for a Coat of Arms for Godmanchester, or to consider a Town (Village) Sign. Cllrs were asked to consider these suggestions and pass comments to CLLR MRS LOOKER.

09/019 GOWNED MEETINGS

As the Town Council have adopted the New Model Code of Conduct, (from 1 October 2007) public participation sessions should now be part of every Town Council Meeting. Following discussion and a vote, it was AGREED that all Town Council meetings would be gowned with immediate effect. The Town Clerk would write to the Mace Bearer and Deputy Mace Bearer to advise them of this change in procedure and request their attendance at future meetings.

09/020 RAILINGS AT MILL YARD

CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON outlined the position, by confirming the railings across the steps had been installed by the Environment Agency. Following improvements to the steps achieved by the GMC in Bloom volunteers, an approach had been made to the Environment Agency to remove the railings across the steps and to re-align them along the side of the sluice mechanism thereby protecting the machinery from damage, but allowing access to the water down the steps. The Environment Agency had written to advise they would agree to this proposal subject to the Town Council signing a wide reaching indemnity. CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON recommended we did not sign the indemnity in its present form and that liaison between CCC, HDC, English Heritage and the Environment Agency Flood Defence team was essential to ensure proper timing of any actions. Town Clerk would respond to advise we were not in a position to progress the matter at this time.

09/021 GODMANCHESTER CHARITIES

The Clerk to Godmanchester Charities had requested that the Town Council nominate a Town Councillor to fill the role as Trustee for Godmanchester Charities. CLLR COHEN proposed and CLLR BUTCHER seconded that CLLR BROWN be nominated. This was unanimously supported. Town Clerk would advise the Clerk to Godmanchester Charities.

09/022 PROVISION OF PATH

CLLR BROWN confirmed the request to create a proper path providing access for disabled people, to the bench sited adjacent to Weir No 2 on the Recreation Ground. He advised he was seeking views from the HDC Countryside Rangers and would provide more details in due course. The Town Council AGREED to support this initiative in principle, but CLLR BROWN was reminded that the area in question was prone to flooding which may prevent a tarmac path being laid.

09/023 DIVERSION OF FOOTPATH NO 13

Following our letter to Smiths Gore to advise on our position regarding liability for fees (see minute 09/018) a further letter has been received from Smiths Gore re-iterating their opinion that the fees are due. It was further AGREED that as formal instruction was not given to Smiths Gore, and that fees were not discussed in any way prior to the site visit, that the Town Council were not liable for any costs. Town Clerk would write to confirm.

09/024 CORRESPONDENCE (see Appendix A)

The list of correspondence received was considered. Cllrs were advised the letter regarding Tackling Congestion had been copied to all, and if they wished to respond, they should follow the instructions given on the letter. There were no other items requiring further discussion.

09/025 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in appendix B were APPROVED for payment.

09/026 PLANNING

09/026.1 The recommendations of the planning working party in respect of the list of planning applications received as listed in Appendix C were considered and APPROVED. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Town Council's recommendations.

09/026.2 CLLR MS MIDDLETON, AGREED to circulate a draft response to the consultation regarding Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan. Cllrs were asked to confirm their agreement to this document before it was sent.

09/026.3 CLLR MS MIDDLETON and CLLR WELLS AGREED to circulate a draft response to the CCC consultation on additional proposals for changes to the Mineral and Waste Development Strategy. As the response would be based on previously agreed Council policies, Cllrs AGREED the response could be agreed by e-mail.

It was AGREED that the next Planning Working Party meeting would take place at Judith's Field on Wednesday rather than the scheduled Thursday.

09/027 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS

None received.

09/028 MISCELLANEOUS

The Town Clerk advised repair work to the Chinese Bridge would be carried out during week commencing 23rd February 2009.

The Town Clerk advised that costs to change light sources in the columns in Chadley Lane had been received. As no further comments had been received from the residents, this matter would be closed without further action at this time.

The Town Clerk advised that the NS&I Guaranteed Bond was only suitable for individual investment and therefore not suitable for the Town Council. She would liaise with CLLR O'DONNELL to find an alternative account for Town Council reserve funds.

CLLR BROWN reported that the Archaeological dig had taken place to the area by the pond at the end of East Chadley Lane, and he was grateful to all who had volunteered and taken part. As nothing of great historical importance had been discovered, creation of the wild flower meadow could proceed. He would be interviewed on Radio Cambridge to talk about this project.

CLLR COHEN reported he had enjoyed the recent Twinning trip to Wertheim. This year's Youth Project would take place in Wertheim and the youth teams from the twinned towns would be competing.

CLLR COHEN confirmed he had added information, to supplement the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, which was available in the Town Office

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19 MARCH 2009

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm Mayor