

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 8th DECEMBER 2011

PRESENT: A WELTON: Town Mayor
Councillors: Mrs S WORTHINGTON (Deputy Mayor); R BUTCHER; R COXHEAD; P GODLEY; Ms J MacLEOD; Ms D MIDDLETON; D TAYLOR; D UNDERWOOD; N WELLS; G WILSON; Mrs S WILSON

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD
Mace Bearer: Mr F CARTER

3 members of the public were in attendance

11/176 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

CLLR RICHARDSON: previous engagement; CLLR MARTIN: previous engagement; CLLR PAULEY: medical reasons; CLLR VANE PERCY: previous engagement.

11/177 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON: Friend of employee of Wood Green; CLLR WILSON: re budget proposals relating to the proposed FAS as he is an employee of Environment Agency; CLLR UNDERWOOD: re grant applications as he is a Minister at St Mary's Church

11/178 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2011 were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

11/179 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Nothing raised.

11/180 CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCY

The Town Council heard from three candidates who had applied to fill the casual vacancy. They were thanked for attending and advised that they would be informed of the Town Council's decision the following day.

Town Clerk

11/181 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR thanked those who had supported the Mayoress's tea party which had raised £300 for Godmanchester Guiding and Scouting groups.

THE MAYOR thanked those who had attended the Christmas Carols and switching on of lights the previous night.

THE MAYOR congratulated CLLR UNDERWOOD who had been formally licensed to assist Rev Busk at St Mary the Virgin, as Assistant Priest, at a service held earlier this week.

THE MAYOR confirmed the Town Office would be closed to the public and Cllrs from 28-30 December while work was undertaken to set up a database.

THE MAYOR thanked all Cllrs for attending the meeting early to present their details to a member of HSBC staff. This should speed up the process of setting up a new bank mandate. Thanks would also be relayed to Ms Campbell from HSBC for attending this evening.

Town Clerk

THE MAYOR advised he had represented the town on 7 occasions since the last meeting as shown on the correspondence schedule.

11/182 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING

A report was presented on outstanding matters. It was AGREED that the handover materials in respect of the MUGA which had been requested by CLLR Ms MIDDLETON were unlikely to be provided but as they were not essential CLLR Ms MIDDLETON would not need to further chase PPL for them.

11/183 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix 11/168 were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

Town Clerk

11/183.1 The Town Council considered its views on the planned changes to S106 payments and the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It was AGREED that CLLR Ms MIDDLETON would circulate points raised and CLLR WELLS would submit a response on behalf of the Town Council.

Clr Middleton/
Clr Wells

11/184 CORRESPONDENCE

THE MAYOR advised he would report on the meeting attended regarding the FAS during the Finance report.

11/185 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS

11/185.1 The list of payments to be made in Appendix 11/185.1 was APPROVED. CLLR Ms MIDDLETON considered the amount spent on repairing the cast iron finger post at the junction of Old Court Hall and West Street quite high and she considered the repair was unsightly and suggested if any future repairs were needed that the Town Council should consider replacing the sign, using a different material, if necessary, to preserve the sign's attractive original outward appearance.

Town Clerk

11/185.2 Councillors received a copy of the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 8th December 2011, a copy of salary payments, a copy of the budget report on the year to date, a copy of the monthly bank reconciliation would be forwarded to all Cllrs once it had been verified by THE MAYOR.

Town Clerk

11/185.3 It was AGREED that bank accounts would be set up with HSBC and accounts at Barclays would be subsequently closed. The details in the attached report 11/185.3 were APPROVED.

Town Clerk

11/185.4 CLLR WILSON presented the report from the Finance Working Party held on 6th December 2011. He presented a spreadsheet based on those discussions which analysed the Council's expenditure and income to date and forecast the end of year balance. He then presented a draft budget for 2012/13 and suggestions for charges and the precept for 2012/13. Following discussion, the Council AGREED to fix its budget, charges and precept for 2012/13 at its January meeting. The Council further AGREED that in view of the need to fund its essential operations, it was unlikely to be able to fund certain lower priority activities, such as new hanging baskets. The Council agreed that in order not to reduce its general reserve too much, it was minded to:

- Not budget to offer grants in 2012/13 but to review the financial position mid year with the hope of being able to award some grants later in the year;
- Offer the Community Association £4k towards its request of £7.5k for Picnic in the Park; The Town Clerk would advise the Community Association of this proposal;
- Continue to pay for the services taken on from other authorities: the toilets and youth club (and to consider different options for the youth club);
- Budget for the repairs and renovation of QES and only repairs and minor re-decoration of Judith's Field;
- Not budget for further recreation provision in 2012/13 but to reserve the money in the reserve balances;
- Increase its precept by potentially 5%;
- Maintain the current charges for hire of QES and Judith's Field and for the London Road Cemetery at 2011/12 levels but remove the subsidy in hire rates to all commercial groups using the QES and Judith's Field. It was AGREED that CLLR UNDERWOOD would discuss the charges proposal with the Jack and Jill Pre-school.

Town Clerk

Clr Underwood

Clr S Wilson

CLLR Mrs WILSON would present options for youth work at the January Town Council meeting.

Funding the Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Mayor reported on a meeting he had attended with representatives of the Environment Agency, CCC and HDC regarding funding of the proposed flood alleviation scheme. He reported

the EA said it had a shortfall of £500k and that CCC and HDC had offered £175k each leaving £150k which the Town Council was being expected to fund. Following discussion, it was AGREED Godmanchester Town Council would offer the EA £15k which could be taken from the reserve set aside for recreation, and explain it could not afford to offer more money and suggest the EA should approach CCC and HDC for more if it needed additional contributions. CLLR WILSON abstained from the vote. The Town Clerk would write to EA to confirm this offer.

Town Clerk

11/185.4 The Town Council considered the applications received in respect of grants and approved payments as per the attached schedule. Payments would be made at the January Town Council meeting.

Town Clerk

11/186 LONDON ROAD CEMETERY

It was AGREED to adopt the draft policy on management of unstable headstones in the London Road Cemetery. The Town Council noted the planned timetable for assessing the safety of all memorials in the London Road Cemetery and CLLR BUTCHER was thanked for his hard work to date. CLLR BUTCHER advised he would be out of action for a period early in 2012 as he would be undergoing medical procedures and would need assistance from fellow Cllrs to keep a check on Environment matters. CLLR Ms MACLEOD volunteered.

Cllr Macleod

11/187 NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS/POLICE REPORT

CLLR COXHEAD had circulated a report on police activity to all Cllrs for their information. He provided a brief outline of the issues addressed by the Neighbourhood Forums.

11/188 WORKING PARTY REPORTS

11/188.1 CLLR TAYLOR provided an interim report on Health & Safety which was noted.

Following discussion, it was AGREED to co-opt Mr Peter Morgan to fill the casual vacancy on Godmanchester Town Council. The Town Clerk would contact all candidates to advise of the outcome and invite the un-successful candidates to consider applying again when the full Council was up for election in May 2012.

Town Clerk

THE MAYOR wished everyone a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year.

THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19th JANUARY 2012 IN THE TOWN HALL

The meeting ended at 10.37pm

Mayor

Full copies of reports mentioned in the text above may be viewed in the Town Office