

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014

PRESENT: D UNDERWOOD: Town Mayor;
Councillors: Mrs WORTHINGTON (Deputy Mayor) M COHEN; Ms L COPPER; R COXHEAD; P GODLEY;
Ms J MACLEOD; P MALLEY; P MORGAN; N PAULEY; D TAYLOR; C VANE PERCY; N WELLS;
A WELTON; Mrs S WILSON.

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD
Mace Bearer: Not in attendance

3 members of the public were in attendance

14/034 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

CLLR WILSON: work commitment; CLLR CONBOY: illness of family member

14/035 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CLLR WELLS: parking in Old Court Hall; CLLR COHEN: GMCiB personal interest.

14/036 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2014 were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

14/037 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

The monthly 800 club draw took place.

THE MAYOR advised all present that the issue of the circular bench previously located at the junction of Park Lane with The Avenue/Post Street, which had generated a great deal of local social media interest, would be discussed at the April Town Council meeting as it was not a formal agenda item for the March Town Council meeting.

Mr Hooker reported that work to install the Town Sign had not been completed and the Town Council were asked to consider and approve materials for the base. Mr Hooker would put forward suggestions to the Town Council for consideration. He reported there were ongoing concerns that the grass area to either side of the buried flood wall was already sinking as the soil had not been compacted when the area was fully reinstated. The Town Clerk had already taken this matter up with the EA.

A resident addressed the Town Council on the matter of the removal of the circular bench from the green adjacent to the War Memorial. He expressed his opinion that the 360° view and use of all sides of the bench would not be suitable for the proposed new location adjacent to the electricity sub-station as sitters would face a brick wall on one side. He suggested there was no rush to put furniture in this area and that it would be better not to change the feel around the War Memorial at this time. He also commented that the Agenda for the meeting held in October 2013 when the matter had been discussed, had not given a specific reference to the re-siting of the bench adjacent to the War Memorial so residents had not had the opportunity to relay their feelings on the matter to the Town Council at the time the decision was made. He was thanked for taking the time to express his views and assured the Town Council would debate the matter in full at the next Town Council meeting.

14/038 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR confirmed he had represented the Town on 7 occasions since the last Town Council meeting, the most recent occasion had been attending a litter pick with the Brownies at Judith's Field. A letter of thanks would be sent to the Brown Owl and the Brownies.

Mayor

THE MAYOR advised the official launch of the Flood Alleviation Scheme had taken place and the event had been well attended.

THE MAYOR advised Chairs of working parties that they would need to produce a report by 9 April to be delivered to the Annual Town Meeting which would take place on 6 May. The Town Clerk needed the reports by 9 April to include key points in the Annual Report. The Annual Report would be prepared, ready for approval at the next Town Council meeting and should be distributed to residents over the last weekend in April in advance of the Annual Town Meeting.

Chairs of WPs

All Cllrs

THE MAYOR reported that he hoped the Town's first Honorary Freemen would be appointed at the Annual Town meeting and further nominations were encouraged. Cllrs were thanked for delivering leaflets to all residents about this initiative.

THE MAYOR thanked those who had responded to the invitation to the Mayor's Charity Ball and those who had donated prizes. He was pleased to report that every shop in the town had made a donation and businesses had sponsored tables. In addition Barclays Bank would match fund the amount raised through the raffle.

THE MAYOR advised that as our Mace Bearer was not able to attend every meeting and civic occasion at this time, a Deputy Mace Bearer would be needed. Suggestions about possible candidates for this role should be passed to the Town Clerk and Mayor.

All Cllrs

THE MAYOR was sad to report that Jeff Dutton, had suffered a severe stroke and was undergoing treatment to aid his recovery. The Council's best wishes would be relayed to Jeff and Claire.

THE MAYOR confirmed the Town Clerk had issued each Cllr with a nomination form for Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor for 2014-15. Please return forms to the Town Clerk by 10 April 2014.

All Cllrs

14/039 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING

A report on matters arising was received and noted.

CLLR COXHEAD advised that the matter of upgrading CCTV for the Town Hall would be put on hold until resolution on Town Council office accommodation had been reached, but the matter would remain on the list.

CLLR Mrs WILSON advised that CLLR G WILSON was still discussing the proposal for double yellow lines from Pinfold Lane to the bus stop in Old Court Hall. The consultation process was still underway following receipt of objections to the scheme.

CLLR COHEN asked the Town Clerk to seek advice from CAPALC regarding the repair issue for memorial stones in the Lawn Cemetery to clarify what authority the Town Council had to repair or move headstones when owners of the headstones could not be contacted.

Town Clerk

CLLR WELTON reported that work was ongoing to obtain quotes for the internal redecoration of the Queen Elizabeth School. Work to the floors would be undertaken on a separate occasion, with both projects being carried out during school holiday periods to minimise disruption to hirers. The Town Clerk advised the contractor selected to carry out installation of the French drain around the perimeter of the QES was unable to carry out the work due to ill health. It was AGREED to postpone the start of this project in the hope

that the contractor would regain his health.

THE MAYOR reported that discussions with the Senior Citizens Club Committee regarding the possibility of using additional space on the ground floor for office purposes had not been successful. THE MAYOR suggested there was a need to look at alternative possible office accommodation, which all agreed was not ideal. Any costs and proposals would be brought before the Town Council for consideration.

Mayor

THE MAYOR advised that he, CLLR WELTON and CLLR COXHEAD had attended a meeting with members of the Twinning Association to put forward Godmanchester Town Council's requirements to ensure Twinning was effective for Godmanchester residents. It was proposed that any financial contributions from Godmanchester Town Council would have a direct benefit to support people from Godmanchester taking part in twinning activities and an executive committee should be appointed with 2 representatives from each Town Council to plan in advance activities so that these proposals could then be put to the Town Council for approval. The Town Council could then agree whether or not it wished to participate in a future event.

CLLR CONBOY had circulated details of the S106 agreement in respect of the development at Bearscroft Farm which had now been signed. She had reported that some changes had been made since the last version and CLLR CONBOY had raised questions about these changes and a reply was awaited from HDC.

CLLR COHEN advised that work was progressing to install the floodlighting at the MUGA at Judith's Field. As the contractor had managed to find the previously laid cables it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would negotiate with the contractor to reduce the amount to be paid for additional on site investigations and labour charges.

Town Clerk

CLLR COHEN reported that it was possible to register a service or location as a Community Asset, and this might be possible for the Godmanchester plant nursery in Park Lane. He would provide further information to the April Town Council meeting.

Cllr Cohen

14/040 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix 14/040 were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

Town Clerk

CLLR Mrs WILSON explained that discussions had taken place with HDC Planning Department regarding the crossover of deadlines for responding to planning applications.

CLLR MRS WILSON proposed that in line with the Town Council's Standing Orders, if in the opinion of the Town Clerk and the chair of the planning working party the said application is potentially contentious and requires input of Cllrs, an extra ordinary Town council meeting would be called under standing orders 1.22.1 and 1.22.2. If the application was regarded as being non-contentious, the Town Council would follow standing orders and would submit a late response after consideration at the routine town council meeting.

14/041 CORRESPONDENCE

A resident had raised further concerns about the land used for parking at Betts Close. The Town Clerk would be meeting the Highways Manager to discuss the problem the following day.

Town Clerk/
Cllr G Wilson

The Fisheries Division of the EA had asked the Town Council if they would like the fish spawning platform returned to the Causeway. Following a vote, it was AGREED the Town Council did not want the platform returned this year. Town Clerk would advise.

Town Clerk

A request to hold a continental market on School Hill had been received. As the Town Clerk

would be unable to offer administrative support to the organiser and no Cllrs had stepped forward to undertake the liaison, it was AGREED to regrettably decline the opportunity.

Town Clerk

14/042 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS

14/042.1 The list of payments to be made in Appendix 14/042.1 was APPROVED.

14/042.2 Councillors received a copy of the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 20 March 2014, a copy of salary payments, a copy of the budget report on the year to date, a copy of the monthly bank reconciliation, approved by the Deputy Mayor. CLLR COXHEAD asked for clarification on the figure for the Grounds Maintenance budget which was provided by the Town Clerk.

14/042.3 CLLR G WILSON had submitted a report following the February Finance Working Party which was received and noted. The recommendations were read and AGREED.

14/043 Anglia In Bloom Award

CLLR COHEN reported that Godmanchester had won the Best Small Town award in the 2013 Anglia in Bloom competition. GMCiB would investigate the cost of two small signs and refer the matter to the Town Council again when costs were known.

Cllr Cohen

14/044 PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

THE MAYOR presented a report and outline plan reflecting the current and immediate priorities together with projects and initiatives for the future. The document would identify the costs involved in achieving the goal together with details of the personnel involved and accountable for moving the matter forward. THE MAYOR recommended each area identified in the plan should be looked at in more detail. CLLR COXHEAD suggested it would also provide the opportunity to review the portfolio structure in line with the Priority Action Plan. An additional area to cover work at the Cemetery and Churchyard would be added, but it was AGREED all were in favour of developing this forward planning document.

All Cllrs

It was noted that the matter of the Neighbourhood Plan would be discussed at the April Town Council meeting.

Cllr Worthington

14/045 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS/GRANT AWARDING POLICY

CLLR GODLEY and CLLR COXHEAD presented the amended Financial Regulations and it was AGREED they would be adopted with immediate effect. Minor changes would be made to the Grant Awarding Policy and this would be discussed at the April Town Council meeting.

Cllr Godley/
Cllr Coxhead

14/046 JUDITH'S FIELD SCRUBLAND AREA

CLLR WELTON advised that the Annual Litter Pick would take place on 26 April starting at 10am at the Town Hall.

All Cllrs

CLLR TAYLOR put forward a proposal for further repairs and improvement at the Judith's Field scrubland area. It was AGREED that before a decision could be taken, costs would be needed. This matter would be brought to the April Town Council meeting.

Cllr Taylor

14/047 SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

CLLRs Mrs CONBOY, COHEN AND VANE PERCY had attended a training session of Social Media and their report was received and noted. Following discussion it was AGREED to consider further development of the Town Council's website and the Town Council's overall communication strategy.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND

PUBLIC: It was resolved that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and Public were excluded from the meeting.

14/048 PERSONNEL/SAFEGUARDING POLICY

THE MAYOR presented a report on behalf of CLLR CONBOY to create a Safeguarding Policy. The Brampton Parish Council document had been used as a guide. CLLR PAULEY commented that this appeared to be a lengthy document and over complicated for the needs of the Town Council. It was AGREED the Town Council needed to comply with legislation, but it was AGREED to review the document and it would be put to the Town Council at the April Town Council meeting.

Clr Conboy/
Mayor

THE MAYOR presented a report on behalf of CLLR CONBOY regarding retaining Human Resources Advice together with recommendations on the staffing structure for Town Council Staff.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk would end his contract at the end of June and it was AGREED that a second member of staff would be required. It was recommended that the Town Council should recruit a Deputy Town Clerk on salary scale LC2, point 26. This was AGREED. CLLR PAULEY OPPOSED this recommendation and said that the wage bill continued to increase and he considered the Town Council were not paying for essential items for the town.

THE MAYOR reported that CLLR CONBOY had presented a paper which set out a recommendation to appoint an HR consultant on a retainer basis to provide advice on HR matters as and when required. CLLR PAULEY stated that not all Cllrs had been invited to attend the recent Personnel working party when this issue was discussed.

It was AGREED that the paper would be re-presented to the April Town Council meeting and further information would be provided on the existing services and subscriptions the Town Council has in respect of personnel advice and information.

Clr Conboy/
Mayor

THE MAYOR confirmed the Town Clerk's appraisal had taken place and it was noted that her service was satisfactory. As the Town Clerk had reached the top point of salary scale LC2 there would be no increment awarded. THE MAYOR was grateful to the input and feedback from Cllrs prior to the appraisal taking place.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC. It was resolved that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public were re-admitted to the meeting

THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, WILL BE HELD ON 17 APRIL 2014 IN THE Queen Elizabeth School

The meeting ended at 9.56pm

Mayor

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