

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 17 JULY 2014

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

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

3 members of the public were in attendance

14/104 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

CLLR COPPER: unwell; CLLR TAYLOR: holiday

14/105 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CLLR GODLEY, CLLR VANE PERCY: Members of Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association. CLLR CONBOY: as member of HDC DMP declared an interest in all planning applications and confirmed she would abstain from voting.

14/106 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2014 were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record. The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014 were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

14/107 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr McInnes addressed the Town Council in respect of a planning application for 14 Earning Street which had not yet been received by the Town Council. The Town Council assured him that his comments would be taken into consideration when the Town Council considered the application at a future meeting.

The monthly 800 club draw took place.

14/108 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MAYOR thanked the DEPUTY MAYOR for representing the Town on 3 occasions since the last Town Council meeting. THE MAYOR advised he had represented the Town on 14 occasions since the last meeting.

THE MAYOR reported he had attended a short service at St Anne's School where the children had undertaken a project on the First World War. Their work would be on display in St Mary the Virgin for the following two days and he recommended all Cllrs visit as it was an outstanding project and all children and their families were to be commended.

All Cllrs

THE MAYOR advised that the Town Office would be closed on Wednesday 30 July.

THE MAYOR reported he had planned three events to take place during his Mayoral year in support of his chosen charities. Firstly a garage sale would take place on 16th August and THE MAYOR hoped Cllrs would be kind enough to deliver leaflets on his behalf. The second event would be a Christmas Market to take place on Friday 5 December. THE MAYOR would need a team of people to assist with organisation and asked for Cllrs to step forward if they could help. THE MAYOR advised that the third event would be an "expedition" undertaken by the MAYOR and MAYORESS who would be travelling on foot to seek the source of the River Ouse. It was anticipated that the journey would take 3 days and THE

All Cllrs

MAYOR would be raising funds through the sale of charity bonds instead of seeking sponsorship. Bronze, Silver and Gold Bonds would be available and every penny raised would go to the Mayor's Charities. More details would follow in due course.

14/109 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING

The Town Clerk presented a report which was received and noted.

14.109.1 CLLR COXHEAD reported that the Deputy Town Clerk had obtained quotes for internal decoration at Judith's Field and it was AGREED to accept the quote from J Haddock in the sum of £977.50. Work would be carried out during August.

The fascia boards at Judith's Field had been damaged and the Town Clerk would seek quotes for repair. The matter would also be reported to the Police and a claim against our insurance would be made.

Town Clerk

14.109.2 CLLR COHEN presented a report on Health & Safety which was received and noted. CLLR COHEN advised that the H&S working party would be considering a procedure for handling outstanding debts as this was not covered in the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

CLLR COXHEAD had recommended investigating costs for appointing a contractor on a retainer basis for maintenance matters. The Town Clerk would investigate.

Town Clerk

14.109.3 The Town Clerk advised no further progress had been made in respect of footpath repairs for Queen's Walk as the EA had not confirmed whether or not they would contribute to the costs. The Town Clerk had also been advised that the Town Council/CCC would need to seek permission from the EA before work could be carried out within 9m of the waterway. Ongoing and future vehicular access to the Recreation Ground would need to be discussed in detail at a future meeting.

CLLR COHEN would seek clarification on ownership and responsibility for the information signs placed in various locations around the Town.

Cllr Cohen

14.109.4 CLLR COHEN reported part of the fencing around the Queen's Walk Children's Play Area was rotting and should be replaced. Options and costs would be explored for the Town Council's consideration at the next Town Council meeting.

Cllr Cohe

CLLR MORGAN advised the refurbished circular bench was being well used. The new bench to be located adjacent to the War Memorial green at Park Lane would be provided by the Freemen who hoped to install the bench at the end of July/early August.

CLLR COXHEAD asked for updates on registration of Town Council property; repairs to headstones; investment of funds. The Town Clerk advised progress had been made on registering the War Memorial greens and that each registration would be dealt with separately. The Town Clerk advised investments had not yet been made into other bank accounts but this would happen as soon as possible. CLLR COHEN reported that costs for repairs to headstones would be obtained and presented to the Town Council meeting. In addition CLLR COHEN reported that part of one of the walls for the Garden of Remembrance in Cambridge Street had collapsed and would need attention. It was not clear who owned the wall. The Town Clerk would investigate.

Town Clerk

CLLR WILSON reported that he and the Town Clerk would continue to work towards getting the DSLAM cabinet sited outside the Town Hall moved to a more suitable location. So far there had been no co-operation from BT Openreach. The Town Council AGREED that a Wayleave across any part of the Town Hall car park would not be given to BT Openreach to facilitate connection of the service.

Cllr Wilson/
Town Clerk

14/110 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix 14/090 were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

Town Clerk

CLLR PAULEY asked whether the Town Council had been advised on the possible changes to the level crossing between the Offords and Buckden. As no information had been received the Town Clerk would make enquiries.

Town Clerk

14/111 CORRESPONDENCE

No comments.

14/112 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS

14/112.1 The list of payments to be made in Appendix 14/092.1 was APPROVED

14/112.2 Councillors received a copy of the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 17 July 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.

14/113 TO CONSIDER DISTRIBUTION OF CLLRS PORTFOLIOS

THE MAYOR presented a report outlining a revised concept for sharing the workload by creating portfolio groups. It was AGREED to adopt this system and review again in 3 months. It was AGREED that a permanent chair for the groups was not required and some items of business would require cross portfolio group involvement/attendance at meetings.

All Cllrs

CLLR MACLEOD advised her colleagues that she would be undergoing medical treatment and would not be available for Town Council involvement or work for the next 3 months. Town Clerk and Cllrs would amend internal circulation lists for this period and THE MAYOR wished CLLR MACLEOD a speedy recovery.

14/114 POLICY AND PROCEDURES

CLLR COXHEAD presented a report which was noted. The following recommendations were APPROVED.

- Council to agree to the Policy and Procedures document
- Council to agree to timescales for the completion of the task plan by December 2015
- Council to agree to resolve outstanding Staff Handbook by December 2014.
- Council to agree to allow Cllrs Coxhead and Godley to continue with focusing on other policies.
- This project to be added to the Godmanchester Town Council Action Areas Plan.

14/115 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

THE MAYOR presented a report which was noted. THE MAYOR reported that the Town Council were not acting as good employers and he considered the current working space for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk was unsuitable. In addition the access to the office via the stairs was difficult for many and impossible for some residents to use.

Several Cllrs expressed the view that in the first instance the Town Council should explore whether changes could be made to bring the existing space and working environment up to a satisfactory standard. Some Cllrs expressed the view that it was not ideal but it was workable as it was being used at the moment and views were also expressed that there was no necessity for additional working space for occasional visits from THE MAYOR or other Cllrs to the office. CLLR PAULEY was concerned that finding alternative accommodation would look like window dressing and would increase already high administration costs

which would not be acceptable to the people in town.

The Town Clerk reported that with the door open, window open and pedestal fan turned on the temperature in the office on the previous day had not dropped from 80° for the whole time staff were in the office. The Town Clerk also advised that when residents or Cllrs wished to discuss anything remotely sensitive or private there was no option but to discuss all business in an open office where other visitors could drop in at any time which she felt was not acceptable nor did it offer professional courtesy to the visitor. It was AGREED to explore whether an air conditioning unit could be purchased to resolve the issues of extreme heat in the office and it was further AGREED that this matter would be brought back to the Town Council for further consideration at the August meeting.

14/116 GRANT APPLICATIONS

CLLR WILSON presented details of 6 organisations who had applied for grants. One application had been withdrawn. Remaining applications were considered. Payments would be made to those who had been successful, at the August Town Council meeting. The Town Clerk would write to confirm arrangements.

Town Clerk

14/117 GRANT APPLICATIONS: TWINNING COSTS

A request from the Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association for a grant towards its core costs was considered. It was AGREED that Godmanchester Town Council would not make a contribution towards the core costs as the association had not demonstrated the benefits for Godmanchester residents. The Town Clerk would write to confirm the decision.

Town Clerk

Cllr G Wilson and Cllr S Wilson left the meeting as they had a pecuniary interest in the following item.

14/118 RESPONSE FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

CLLR WORTHINGTON presented a report which was noted. CLLR VANE PERCY advised that he supported the action being taken by Jackson's to divert rainwater from downpipes from the Town Hall roof under the walkway around the Town Hall directly into the river via non return valves, however he expressed his view that the addition of the walkway around the Town Hall had resulted in the building sitting permanently in an inch of water trapped beneath the concrete which could present problems in years ahead. It was AGREED that CLLR WORTHINGTON and the Town Clerk would respond to the Environment Agency and also to Bidwell.

Cllr Worthington/
Town Clerk

THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2014 AT TOWN HALL

The meeting ended at 10.05pm

Mayor

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