

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON-LINE AT 19.00 ON THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2021**

PRESENT: R TAPLIN (Town Mayor)
Councillors: Mrs S WORTHINGTON (Deputy Mayor); G CAMPBELL, Mrs S CONBOY, J HLADKIWSKYJ; A HOOKER; C HYAMS; P IRVING; R MAHMOOD; P MORGAN; Mrs M RADFORD; P ROUND; C THOMAS; C VANE PERCY; G WILSON; J YOUNG

Town Clerk: Ms V PRYCE
Minute Taker: Mrs C WHITLOCK

One member of the public

MINUTES

Action

21/29 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr S WILSON – received

21/30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr HYAMS – Godmanchester Community Association Member
Cllr CAMPBELL - The Mill Steps Liaison Group Member
Cllr HOOKER – The Mill Steps Liaison Group Member
Cllr VANE PERCY – The Mill Steps Liaison Group Member, Skyworld Application and Judith’s Field Fencing

21/31 MINUTES:

The MAYOR proposed the Council approve, as a correct record, the extraordinary minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 26th November 2020, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21st January 2021 and the extraordinary minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5th February 2021. An amendment to Cllr HYAMS’ name was required (an omission of the ‘s’) for all three sets of minutes and Cllr RADFORD had declared an interest in the allotments at the meeting held on 21st January 2021. Subject to these changes, all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

21/32 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The MAYOR welcomed John Morris to the meeting.

The Club 800 Draw took place with the assistance of the Mayoress.

21/33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

Mr CAMPBELL advised that The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) had been undertaking a large amount of work to hopefully achieve their ambitious plans to have it declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Mr CAMPBELL added that the Government’s new initiative was to protect 30% of the UK’s land by 2030. Existing National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas already comprise approximately 26% of land in England. An additional 4%, over 400,000 hectares, the size of the Lake District and South Downs National Parks combined, would be protected to support the recovery of nature. The Trust had already written to the MP, Jonathon Djanogly. Unfortunately, wet weather had delayed renewing the footpath, however, new

or renewed noticeboards would be in place to include more local information. The one in Godmanchester would include details of the proposed Fish/Eel Pass. Mr CAMPBELL encouraged the Council to provide enough money to make the area an attractive spot. Although not in Godmanchester, there had been an initiative to plant black poplars opposite the Old Mill in Brampton as they were most threatened indigenous tree.

21/34 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

The MAYOR went through the outstanding actions and, in particular, noted that the Council were still waiting for a response from the Land Registry regarding the registration of Council land. All other actions would be addressed under the appropriate Agenda item.

21/35 CORRESPONDENCE:

The MAYOR advised that correspondence had been received from three of the Council's twinned towns; Wertheim, Gubbio and Salon. The new Chairman for Salon on the Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association (HGTA) was now the Mayoress. The MAYOR confirmed he would be virtually attending the HGTA meeting in early March. HGTA had advised they would not be participating in the international Youth Festival in Wertheim in October.

21/36 PLANNING REPORT:

The TOWN CLERK was to advise HDC of planning application recommendations.

Town Clerk

The Council discussed naming the new streets at Parcel 12, Bearscroft after the Stirling bomber crew which, during WWII, tragically crashed in Cow Lane. The MAYOR advised that he would contact Roger Leviers to inform him that the surnames of the Stirling Crew would be used for the new streets and explain why the name 'Reeve' had been excluded.

The Mayor

Cambridgeshire County Council advised that they would not give permission for bollards to be erected on their land to prevent cars being parked on the verges. It was agreed that the TOWN CLERK would write to Mrs Campbell to update her.

Town Clerk

Cllr G WILSON explained that initially the Portfolio Group had recommended that the Transport Study should be undertaken as soon as possible. However, Cllr G WILSON confirmed that, following discussions with the TOWN CLERK, it had been suggested that the study be postponed by six months to late Summer/early Autumn. This was due to the heavy workload the Town Office were already dealing with. It was also hoped that by carrying out the study in the Autumn that traffic would possibly be back to normal as the Covid situation would, hopefully, have improved by then.

Cllr G WILSON and Cllr CONBOY had met with various organisations following the flooding over the Christmas period and confirmed that those involved were aware of all the issues. The MAYOR expressed his personal thanks to the Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) engineer who have been clearing the underpass in Cambridge Street and the informative updates which had been posted on Facebook.

Unfortunately, Highways had recently closed a couple of local roads but had not,

disappointingly, given any prior notice and the signage had been confusing. Cllr CONBOY explained that the work was to repair a collapsed sewer which had meant that some people had been without toilets for approximately a week and a half. Unfortunately, the work had been undertaken at short notice but Cllr CONBOY agreed a post on Facebook would have helped the situation. The MAYOR suggested minuting the problem to consider how the Council would deal with it next time it happened.

21/37 GODMANCHESTER TOWN BRIDGE REPORT:

Just before the meeting, the TOWN CLERK had circulated a late response to the questions which the Council had raised with Richard Lumley, Director(?) at CCC. The Council agreed there had not been enough time to review and digest the contents of the email, it was agreed that the item would be postponed and discussed at a later time. The TOWN CLERK would arrange an additional meeting in order to facilitate this.

Town Clerk

21/38 ENVIRONMENT REPORT:

Cllr HOOKER advised that a number of objections had been received by HDC regarding the location of Skyworld and the detrimental effect on the views over Portholme. Cllr HOOKER confirmed that these objections were reasonable and the location of Skyworld had been reconsidered. Skyworld could be positioned closer to Logworld and, once Skyworld was installed, the Council would look into the cost of removing Logworld. The MAYOR proposed that Cllr HOOKER submitted an amendment to the Skyworld planning application for the structure to be situated on the other side of the recreation land. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr Hooker

Cllr HOOKER advised that although Judith's Field had plenty of equipment for older children, it did somewhat lack suitable equipment for toddlers. It had, therefore, been budgeted for additional equipment to be installed in the next financial year. Prior to the work taking place, Cllr HOOKER advised that the existing fenced area required extending and he had sought quotes for the work. However, it had come to light that the existing fencing at Judith's Field did not comply with current Health and Safety Regulations so the suppliers had been subsequently tasked with providing quotes to replace the existing and additional fencing. The MAYOR proposed that the Council agreed to the extension of the toddler play area at Judith's Field to approximately twice the current size. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**. The MAYOR proposed that the Council agree to a budget of up to £13,000 (plus VAT) for this work. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

21/39 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:

The list of payments were approved and would be authorised by Cllrs WORTHINGTON and CONBOY.

Cllrs
Worthington
& Conboy

21/40 BUSINESS AND FINANCE REPORT:

Cllr THOMAS reported that the Governors of the Town's three primary school had written to the Council asking whether the Mutual Aid Fund would be willing to assist in funding a £10 gift for their 110 teaching staff, by way of a thank you. Cllr THOMAS explained that as the Fund was for hardship only and as schools had not been nominated as one of the MAYOR's charities, unfortunately the Council

would not be able to assist. The MAYOR proposed that the TOWN CLERK would write to the schools informing them that the Council did not have any appropriate funding for that purpose but wished them well. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

Cllr THOMAS asked that the Council approve the formation of the Nursery Steering Group (NSG) as outlined in the Scoping Paper dated 12th February 2021. Cllr CONBOY and the TOWN CLERK would send out invitations for volunteers from local community groups. Cllr THOMAS confirmed that the agenda for the meetings would be circulated at least a week before the meeting. The MAYOR proposed that the Council approved the formation of a Nursery Steering Group, initially along the lines outlined in the Scoping Paper. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk &
Cllr Conboy

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Nursery's Deed of Transfer from Huntingdonshire District Council to the Town Council required two signatures; the MAYOR and DEPUTY MAYOR had agreed to do this. Cllr CONBOY confirmed that the Council would be able to install a permanent building at the Nursery but planning consent could be required, as long as it was in keeping with the Neighbourhood Plan, and fitted in with the wider planning of the Town. A temporary building had been considered due to the budget restrictions. The MAYOR proposed that the Council was recommended to accept and sign the Nursery Deed of Transfer. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The Mayor &
Deputy Mayor

Cllr THOMAS explained that the Council were required annually to review the personnel and structure of the Portfolio Groups and the Personnel Committee. The TOWN CLERK would require nominations seven days before the April Town Council Meeting to allow for review and preparation for May's meeting. The MAYOR proposed that Council approve that nominations for membership of the Portfolio Groups and Personnel Committee were requested and collated by the Town Clerk in readiness for review in May. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

Cllr THOMAS reminded the Council that the Covid-Safety Team had been delegated at Christmas to help with the ever changing Covid guidelines. The Group wished for that to continue until further notice. The MAYOR proposed that the Council formally extended the delegated authority to the Covid-Safety Team until further notice. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Mill Steps project, as a whole, could be delivered within the overall budget, but that the costs of the topside landscaping and finishing works were in excess of expectations. The Mill Steps Liaison Group, comprised of representatives from Godmanchester in Bloom (GMiB), the Community Association, adjacent landowners, the Godmanchester Museum and the Great Ouse Valley Trust who had recently met and subsequently informed HDC of its acceptance, by a majority, of a less expensive railing option, which would match those on the Causeway. The TOWN CLERK then circulated, by email, the proposed drawings of the design which had not appeared in the Agenda papers. Cllr THOMAS explained that by contributing to the project as a whole, all partners would be responsible for any overspend. The MAYOR proposed that the Council agreed to commit £40,000 from CIL for the Mill Steps

Project and to agree the Project Board recommendation that the full project comprising of construction of the Fish and Eel Pass, and top-side improvements to the area, should proceed. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

21/41 PROPERTY REPORT:

Cllr CAMPBELL updated the Council on the Multi Wheel Fun Track (MWFT) project explaining that having had a number of meetings with the Working Group, the four tenders had been reduced to two. The two unsuccessful tenderers had met the brief but as one was a general purpose supplier, and the other specialised in skate parks, it was felt that they were not suitable. The budget for the project had previously been agreed at £80,000 and both of the remaining suppliers, had met that figure. One (Clark & Kent) quoted for a longer track whereas the other (Bike-Track) was a shorter track, but also included a 'junior track'. Cllr CAMPBELL requested that an additional £10,000 be added to the budget to allow Clark & Kent to provide a quote for a junior track as well and, to ensure fair treatment, for allowing Bike-Track to increase their spending by the same amount to see what, in addition, they could provide. Cllr CAMPBELL felt that the MWFT would be something for the whole family and a great asset to the Town. The tracks could be linked, however, a detailed design was not yet available. The TOWN CLERK interjected that a decision on increasing the budget had not been an Agenda item and should have been discussed in a closed meeting; however, there were no public present at that time. The MAYOR then proceeded to read out the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the Press and Public paragraph. The TOWN CLERK wished to note her concern that the increase in budget had not been an Agenda item and required full detail to enable the Council to accept a tender at this stage. As an additional Council meeting would be required to consider additional Planning items, it was agreed that, provided the paperwork would be in hand, the item could be discussed then. Following a question, Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed that the current proposal did not include a footpath from Roman Way, however, once a contractor was selected that could be discussed. The MAYOR advised that that the Roman's Way entry was not an official entrance, and that the Council had to avoid creating any form of Right of Way. The MAYOR proposed that the Council increased the project budget from £80,000 to £90,000 and to give the Property Group/TOWN CLERK the authority to go back to the tenderers to see what detailed plans they could produce with an additional £10,000. The majority were in favour and it was so resolved.

Town Clerk

Cllr CAMPBELL advised that following the TOWN CLERK's letter to CCC regarding the condition of the Chinese Bridge, a response had been received. CCC confirmed that they would do some repairs but it did not have any budget available to do a complete job. The Council agreed the work was necessary to improve the condition of the bridge and that the top rail, in particular, was a disgrace. Cllr G WILSON confirmed he would raise the issue directly with CCC, in his capacity as a County Councillor, to effect a solution.

Cllr G Wilson

Cllr CAMPBELL advised that HDC had confirmed that the public toilets were a 'permitted development' under planning. The project is expected to commence on 29 March with a completion date of 17 May. The Council agreed that the toilet and store cupboard doors should be in the Council's distinctive blue.

As part of the closed meeting, Cllr HOOKER advised that the Group had wanted to agree the maximum of £13,000 for the replacement and new fencing at Judith's Field. The suppliers were asked to provide quotes to remove and recycle the old fencing, install new fencing, install two sprung loaded gates in yellow and to provide a rubber crumb at the gates/entrances to prevent the area from becoming muddy. Three quotes had been received; Wicksteed (£11,578), Play Maintain (£9,330) and Steelway (£7,052). While Steelway were fencing specialists, their quote did not include the rubber crumb at the two gates (as this was not something they were able to provide). Cllr HOOKER explained that if the cost of the most expensive rubber crumb (£1,600) was added to their quote it would total £8,680. The Portfolio Group proposed that the Council accept Steelway's quote and when, at a later date the new play equipment was installed, to use that supplier to lay the rubber crumb. Therefore the rubber crumb would come out of next year's budget or possibly CIL. The fencing would be galvanised steel and the gates had to be yellow to meet a new British Standard to assist those with impaired vision. The MAYOR proposed that the Council accepted Steelway's quote (with the exclusion of the rubber crumb) for £7,052 plus VAT to remove, replace and extend the fencing at Judith's Field. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

21/42 PERSONNEL REPORT:

Cllr WORTHINGTON reported that the Personnel Committee had not met since the last Town Council meeting, however, they were due to meet on 22 February 2021. Cllr WORTHINGTON advised that she had omitted to inform Council, at the last meeting, that the Personnel Committee had advertised internally for an administrative support position largely based at the Nursery. Cllr WORTHINGTON congratulated Mike Grice who had been successful in securing the role. On the advice of the TOWN CLERK, the Committee would not be looking to recruit a new replacement Town Warden (Mike's previous job) until such time as the halls reopened. Cllr WORTHINGTON finished by advising that a full Personnel Committee report would be available at the next Town Council meeting.

The MAYOR reopened the meeting to the public and press but, as there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

The meeting closed at 20.57