

TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2000

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs GODLEY, Town Mayor
Councillors D COMBEN, J HOLLOWOOD, Mrs HULL, Mrs MOORE,
R NORRIS, S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, Mrs TYLER, C VANE PERCY,
G WILSON
Town Clerk: W D BUTTERWORTH

APOLOGIES: Councillors K GABB, Mrs LOOKER, A HOOKER

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 8 occasions since the last meeting.

She asked that the date of April 2000 meeting be brought forward by one week to 13 April as the original date conflicted with Easter and was too close to the Town Meeting (27 April 2000). AGREED. She went on to remind the Chairs of all the WPs to prepare annual reports for delivery at the Town Meeting.

The Mayor announced that the Vicar, the Reverend Neil Follett, was leaving the Parish on promotion. His successor had not yet been announced but the date for the Civic Service had been set for 18 June 2000.

The Civic Dinner, in aid of the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital MRI Scanner Appeal, would be held in the Black Bull on 25 March and tickets would cost £17 per head.

The Mayor thanked the Community Association for the splendid Fireworks Display on Millennium Eve. Many, many favourable comments had been received together with a donation of £15 to her charity fund.

Finally she welcomed Trish James from the Twinning Association who had agreed to give a short presentation.

Councillor SPENCER arrived at 7.37 pm

00/001 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 1999 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record.

00/002 MATTERS ARISING

The following matters arising from the last meeting were incomplete or required further action:

99/048(2): Town Mini-Guide – Councillor VANE PERCY reported that he had revised the existing mini-guide and would put forward a first draft and proposed layout before the next meeting

99/065(7): Site for recycling bins – the site and plan for the hardstanding had been agreed. The work would be completed in 4 to 6 weeks after which bins for glass, paper and tins would be installed.

99/082(5): Red blocks & road signs – CCC had not yet replied formally but in a telephone message the staff had suggested that some sort of partnership funding might be possible. The Town Clerk was to ask for a written reply with more precise costings.

99/098(4) CCC questionnaire on Environment & Transport – Councillor COMBEN had reviewed the paper and would discuss it at the next meeting of the Environment WP.

99/099: Claim against BT – BT had accepted some liability and a cheque was expected.

99/101: New flooring at QES & JF – the work was complete. The QES caretaker had also stripped the old polish off the floor in the large hall and a coat of industrial varnish had been applied. It was intended to do the small hall later and perhaps put a second coat of varnish on the large hall's floor.

Councillor WILSON arrived at 7.45 pm

99/101: Rising damp at JF - Mr D Stokes had offered to carry out a survey and prepare a repair and maintenance plan for a fee of about £250.00. A sum not exceeding £250 was APPROVED for the work.

99/105(7): Millennium tree – It was AGREED that the Oak tree should be planted on the Recreation Ground opposite the Chinese Bridge subject to approval by the Environment Agency [note: EA approval given provided the tree is planted more than 9 meters from the river bank]. The Town Clerk was to agree a date with the Mayor and the nursery. It was recommended that a protective fence be put round the new tree.

99/108(Env): Litterbin on Windsor Road – the new site had been approved by HDC. Ashley & Foster had been contracted to do the work at a cost of £115.

99/108(Env): Parish Path Partnership – Councillor NORRIS confirmed that he was now the POC for this issue. There was some doubt that the deadline of 31 January 2000 for submissions could be met. However, a modest plan to provide a covering for the path from the edge of the Recreation Ground to the Lock might be possible. It was hoped that a more substantial case could be prepared for the next financial year. In discussion, the Town Clerk was asked to seek an update from the EA regarding the plan for the refurbishment of the Old Mill Sluice.

99/108(Youth): Outreach report – Councillor Mrs HULL agreed to report at the next meeting.

00/003 PRESENTATION ON TWINNING

Ms James gave a most informative presentation covering the history, aims and achievements of the Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association. In the discussion afterwards the Mayor stressed the benefits of twinning, a sentiment supported by several of the councillors. When asked how GMC Town Council might help in the future, Ms James suggested that more events at home needed to be identified so that overseas visitors could be invited. The "Picnic in the Park" was suggested as a strong candidate and the Town Clerk was to ask the Community Association to prepare a fact sheet for that and other events. It was also suggested that the information could be posted on the Internet and thus made available to all the Twin Towns.

It was agreed that the current arrangement, whereby twinning was a joint Huntingdon & Godmanchester activity, was the correct one. Both Huntingdon and Godmanchester Town Councils contributed to the twinning budget, while the Association organised fund-raising activities. Some charities were also prepared to support events for the benefit of young people. As examples, it was explained that to send 30 young people to a sports festival cost about £5000, while to host a similar festival cost circa £13,000. Councillors expressed some concern about rising costs if more towns were to become "twinned" indirectly. Ms James assured the meeting that there was no intention to expand the current group.

00/004 CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence listed at [Appendix A](#) was addressed. The following was agreed (the numbers refer to the Appendix serial number):

1. The Council noted the letter of thanks from Noah's Ark.
2. It was agreed that there was no short-term solution to the request from Jack & Jill for additional storage space at JF. The building was to undergo a full survey and storage would have to be found for the footballers, the skatepark and the caretaker as well as the play school. The matter would be discussed at the Recreation & Amenities WP.
3. The Council noted that SITA had supplied the Minutes of the Liaison Meetings as requested [closed]
4. The Mayor reported that the interactive road sign issue was awaiting an input from the Transport Research Laboratory. CCC were unable to proceed until the DETR approved the use of the signs nationally.
5. The Wicksteed offer to inspect playgrounds was deferred to the Agency WP report.
6. The Council considered the application to rent the old mortuary for a pet bereavement and funeral service but decided that such use was inappropriate.
7. The quotations from Fergusons were deferred to the Agency WP report.
8. The Agency WP had noted the advice from CALC regarding the employment of a handyman.
9. The Council noted the concerns about traffic speed on West Street and awaited the response from CCC.

10. The advice about playground inspection had been noted by the Agency WP
11. The Council noted Mr Marks' kind letter regarding the fireworks display.
12. The Council noted the design and overall plan for the Cow Lane recycling facility.
13. The Council considered the request for additional visits by the pest control officer to the allotments but felt that there were several factors that needed to be resolved before making a decision. The Town Clerk was to write to the Association to clarify the situation.
14. The annual review of the cemetery fees was referred to the Finance WP.
15. The Council noted the dates for the CCC budget consultation meetings.
16. The HDC advice on tree planting on the Avenue was deferred to the Environment WP report.
17. The Wicksteed inspection report on the JF playground was passed to the Recreation & Amenities WP. No action was required.
18. The Council noted the ROSPA charges for H&S training. The decision was deferred until other sources of training had been explored and the handyman engaged.

00/005 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

Councillor Mrs TYLER asked for approval for her fare to the Twinning meeting in Salon in February. APPROVED.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that the fire alarm at JF had been set off maliciously on 16 January. The culprits were known and Councillor SPENCER volunteered to recover costs from the organisation concerned.

Concern was expressed about the cost of the Christmas Lights, which were invariably vandalised. In discussion it was noted that listed building permission had never been sought for the lights on the Town Hall and QES. The Town Clerk was to make a retrospective application.

00/006 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in [Appendix C](#) were considered. The Town Clerk was to advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

It was AGREED that the Town Clerk should seek to defer a recommendation on application 00/00038, Janus House, because it had arrived too late for the WP to assess it.

Councillor HOLLOWOOD left the meeting at 9.27 pm

00/007 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Finance.

The Finance WP had not met. The next meeting would be on Wednesday, 9 February 2000 at 8.00 pm at Councillor Mrs Moore's house.

Ad Hoc (Agency).

The Agency WP had met on 6 January 2000. It was AGREED that, following the evaluation of the quotations, 3 items should be added to the grounds maintenance contract with Fergusons, namely: hedge cutting at the cemetery, hanging baskets on the Recreation Ground and grass edging around the War Memorial. Turfing and overseeding of the football pitches would not be included.

Councillor SPENCER agreed to consider self-help for pitch marking and would investigate the storage facilities at Bearcroft.

Council noted that a vacancy notice for the post of handyman was being displayed around the Town. An updated job description would be given to all applicants.

It was AGREED that Wicksteed should be invited to carry out a formal inspection of all 4 playgrounds four times per year starting in April 2000. Until then the Town Clerk would inspect the Devana Park playground each week and record any defects /remedial action. The Town Clerk and the handyman would receive H&S training before 1 April 2000 and the Town Clerk's hours would be increased by 2 hours per month to allow him to carry out an inspection of all 4 sites once per month. It was noted that the bark in the Recreation Ground play-area should be replaced with safety tiles. Councillor SPENCER offered to obtain a quotation for the work. CALC was to be asked if it provided H&S training and the developers on Devana Park were to be asked to make good the pathway the playground.

Councillor NORRIS left the meeting at 9.55 pm

Councillor VANE PERCY left the meeting at 10.00 pm

Environment.

The WP had not met but the next meeting would be at 8 pm on 3 February 2000 at The Gables. In discussion it was decided that the Town Clerk was to advise HDC that it wished to proceed with the replanting on The Avenue immediately rather than wait until the next planting season. This was because the factors, which caused the failure of many of the Chestnut trees planted at a similar time of year, could be avoided with the Limes. The Town Clerk was also to pursue the matter of approval for planting on 6 other sites in the Town.

Invitations to Tender for the planting and maintenance of Buttermel Meadow had been sent to 4 contractors. Replies were required by 11 February 2000.

Recreation and Amenities.

The WP had not met but the Skateboard Committee had held a meeting on 10 January. The project was going ahead and HDC funding had been granted. The next meeting would decide on what equipment was required. The Town Clerk was to write to the Freeman of Huntingdon to ask if they would make a donation towards the cost of the equipment.

Councillor Mrs HULL asked that Ms M Ward be invited to the next meeting. A meeting of the Recreation & Amenities WP would take place after the Skateboard Committee meeting.

The Council noted that that a bill for cleaning JF had not been paid by the user. Councillor SPENCER volunteered to contact the individual concerned.

Property.

The Property WP had not met.

Millennium.

The Mayor announced that the winner of the Millennium Structure Competition had been selected and the prize awarded. Councillors asked to see photographs / drawing of the entries. Councillor Mrs TYLER agreed to obtain them and also advised the Council that some £400 remained in the Competition fund; this would be returned to the Town Clerk.

Youth Clubs.

There was no report from the Youth Clubs.

00/008 CCTV

Councillors noted the disappointing reply from HDC regarding the provision of CCTV on School Hill. The Mayor was to seek extra support from the police in an attempt to strengthen the Town's bid. In the meantime, the Town Clerk was to seek alternative solutions from the private sector.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Mrs TYLER advised Council that she would be visiting Salon from 2 to 6 February to discuss twinning. She would welcome ideas for future events and new ways to raise funds.

Councillor Mrs HULL asked if she might resurrect the Inter-town Forum, which had not met for some time. This was AGREED, as was her idea that Godmanchester should host the next meeting later in the year.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2000.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm Town Mayor