

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs GODLEY, Town Mayor
Councillors D COMBEN, Mrs HULL, R NORRIS, A SURSHAM,
Mrs TYLER, G WILSON, Mrs LOOKER, E KYNOCH
Town Clerk: W D BUTTERWORTH

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs MOORE, K GABB, S SPENCER, C VANE PERCY,

PRESENT: One member of the local press.

The press representative was asked to withdraw.

The Council noted that Councillor GABB had not attended a Council Meeting for 6 months. However, his apology for absence at this meeting due to a family funeral was APPROVED and it was DECIDED to permit him to remain a Town Councillor. The Town Clerk was to advise him accordingly.

The press representative rejoined the meeting.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 3 occasions since the last meeting.

She reminded the Council that the Reverend Neil Follett was leaving the Parish and asked who would be attending the farewell buffet supper on 4 March and the church service on 5 March. Five people indicated that they would attend the buffet supper with their partners; the Deputy Mayor and 4 Councillors would attend the church service.

It was AGREED that the church wardens would be included on the guest list for the Civic Service on 18 June 2000.

It was DECIDED that the procedure for the election of the Deputy Mayor should not be changed, i.e. nominations should be sought and the winner decided by a ballot.

The Mayor reminded all councillors of the arrangements for the Charity Dinner on 25 March 2000.

The Mayor informed the Council that the Minutes of Council meetings and general information about the Council could now be found on Stuart Bond's Web Site.

00/009 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2000 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record.

00/010 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 had continued to progress the Town Guide and the first draft was awaited.

99/082(5): Red blocks & road signs – Another holding reply had been received. The CCC desk officer had been taken ill and his backlog of work had not been cleared.

99/099: Claim against BT – BT had paid the claim for £80 for the incorrect configuration of the JF telephone lines.

99/101: Rising damp at JF – Mr Stokes had accepted the task to survey the building and his report was awaited.

99/105(7): Millennium tree – The Mayor had planted the Oak tree donated by Mr Roger Pinner of The Plant Place on the Recreation Ground. Sadly, the tree had been vandalised a week later, as was a commemorative cherry tree in the churchyard.

99/108(Env): Parish Path Partnership – deferred to the Environment WP report.

00/005: Costs of fire alarm incident at JF - Councillor SPENCER had advised the Town Clerk that he was seeking recompense from the culprits.

00/005: Christmas lights on QES and Town Hall – after some discussion it was DECIDED to remove the bulbs from the Christmas lighting on the buildings.

00/007(R&A): Outstanding bill at JF – Councillor SPENCER had advised the Town Clerk that he was encouraging the debtor to pay.

00/007(Millennium): Structure competition – deferred to Correspondence 13.

00/011 CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. The skatepark matters were deferred to the Finance WP report.
2. Councillor COMBEN stated that he was now satisfied with the arrangements for the import of clay at the Godmanchester Quarry and recommended that the matter be closed. AGREED.
3. Deferred to the Environment WP report.
4. Deferred to Item 00/014 Planning.
5. Deferred to the Environment WP report.
6. The Council noted that the current Agency Agreement would cover grounds maintenance in Godmanchester during March 2000.

7. The Council considered the proposal by the GMC Cricket Club to use the pavilion roof for advertising and strongly opposed it on the grounds of it being detrimental to the environment and a distraction to motorists on the busy and dangerous A14.

8. The Council deferred the request for a grant to the Parish Church until after the elections in May so that the new Council could make the decision.

9. Deferred to the Environment WP report.

10. Deferred to Agenda Item 00/016.

11. The Council noted the improvement to the problem of rats at the allotments. The Town Clerk was to ask HDC if there was any routine monitoring of rodents in the landfill site at Cow Lane.

12. The relative merits of the options for lighting in the vicinity of the cemetery and the A1198 provoked a lively debate. The safety of pedestrians crossing the main road was paramount and the Town Clerk was to determine if lamp 5 would provide sufficient illumination. It was AGREED that the Town Council would provide £246 towards a second lamp at position 3 if lamp 5 was shown to be satisfactory.

13. The Council studied the pictures of the winning entry in the Millennium Structure Competition and considered the cost of building it (£20,000 plus foundation work and letter cutting). Whilst the design was much admired by the councillors, it was not considered suitable for construction and it was DECIDED not to take the project any further.

Councillor Mrs HULL arrived at 8.18 pm

00/013 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

The Council noted the receipt of the £20,000 from Prowting Homes, which would need to be invested.

The Council APPROVED an additional bill from Drain Doctor following an emergency callout to clear blocked toilet drains in the QES. The Town Clerk was to add it to the final version of Appendix B.

00/014 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.

Councillor Mrs LOOKER declared an interest in the Local Plan Inquiry.

Councillor WILSON advised the meeting that he had been briefed by HDC on the wider aspects of the Local Plan Inquiry. The hearing would take place on 10 May 2000 and additional documentation was expected before the next meeting of the Town Council.

Councillor KYNOCH expressed very strong feelings about the Council's approval of 00/00027, the construction a pedestrian / cycleway on Eastside Common. He believed that the proposal was one of 3 options and, because the Council had not been shown the alternatives, the decision was invalid. The Town Clerk was to write to HDC and withdraw the recommendation of approval until the matter was clarified.

Councillor WILSON advised the Council that the public hearing into the proposal to build circa 62 dwellings off Roman Way would take place on 16 March 2000. A volunteer was sought to represent the Council's position at the hearing.

Councillors KYNOCH & WILSON reported that they had attended the Planning Meeting on 14 February 2000 organised by Houghton & Wyton Parish Council. There had been general concerns about inaccurate drawings in planning applications and the perceived tendency of HDC to override parish recommendations. HDC had stressed the need for recommendations to be based on planning considerations only. HDC were also proposing training sessions for parish councillors on planning matters. It was observed that it was permissible for councillors to lobby HDC Planning Committee members on issues that raised strong feelings. The Town Clerk was to get the list of the current Committee members.

The press representative left the meeting at 21.15

A portfolio of documents from the Countryside Commission giving guidance to local communities about village design was introduced. The Town Clerk was to make it available in the Town Office.

00/015 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Finance. The WP had met on 9 February 2000 and a full written report was provided. A review of the hire charges for the QES and JF was in train and proposals would be made at the next meeting. The WP recommended that cemetery charges be increased by 3% from 1 April 2000, rounded to the nearest £. AGREED.

The estimate for the skatepark had risen to £27,000 (an increase of £10,000). HDC had offered to increase its contribution to £13,500 on the condition that GMC matched that sum. This was AGREED albeit with some reservations. In particular, Councillor WILSON opposed the decision until there was clarification of 3 points; the arrangements for weekly inspections, the responsibility for maintenance and the responsibility for insurance. Furthermore, there was general concern that there was no overt evidence of quotations from other suppliers. Councillor SPENCER had sought an alternative quotation but it had not arrived [note: this came on 21 February]. Councillor SPENCER was also seeking grants from other organisations to help pay for the project.

An estimate was awaited from Wicksteed for a new surface in the play area on the Recreation Ground; other sources were also being investigated.

The estimate from Fox Security for a CCTV system for School Hill in the sum of £2,318 was APPROVED.

Ad Hoc (Agency). The WP had not met.

Environment. The WP had met on 7 February 2000 and a comprehensive written report was handed out. In summary, the tree planting on The Avenue would be delayed until the autumn, as would the planting at the 6 other sites around the Town. The Environment Agency had confirmed that work on the Old Mill Sluice would be carried out within the next 2 years. The WP's response to the CCC questionnaire on the environment & transport had been submitted. An acknowledgement had been received for the Council's proposal to upgrade the condition of the footpath between the Recreation Ground and the GMC Lock under the Parish Path Partnership Scheme. It was proposed that the councillors joined the Town Clerk in a "Spring Clean" of the open water beside the Causeway. Councillor COMBEN would arrange a date in April.

Councillor Mrs HULL asked that the details be publicised and the schools be informed.

Four tenders for the framework planting of Buttermel Meadow had been received and evaluated. It was recommended that the lowest tender of £8,678.49 from Enviroserve be accepted. AGREED.

Recreation and Amenities. The WP had not met.

Councillor NORRIS left the meeting at 10.10 pm

Property. The WP had met on 12 February 2000. It had been noted that school children were increasingly using the churchyard as a play area. Councillor VANE PERCY was seeking designs and quotations for new gates that might discourage the practice. The provision of a rosa hedge between the school playing field and the churchyard would also be considered. The hedge around the cemetery had several gaps in it and Councillor COMBEN agreed to investigate the situation.

Millennium. Councillor Mrs TYLER reported that she would return the balance of the Millennium Structure Competition fund, circa £408, to the Town Clerk.

Other Representative Groups. Councillor Mrs TYLER handed out a detailed written report on her twinning visit to Salon.

00/016 CCTV

The Town Clerk demonstrated the CCTV equipment that the Council had approved for School Hill. He was to advise HDC of the plan and invite them to contribute to the costs on the grounds that the cameras would provide surveillance of the HDC public toilets in the area.

Councillor COMBEN left the meeting at 10.17 pm.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Mrs HULL reported that the OFSTED inspection of the Community Primary School had been completed. She also proposed that the Town Clerk write on behalf of the Council to welcome the new Headteacher.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 16 MARCH 2000.

The meeting ended at 10.25 pm Town Mayor