

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2000

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs LOOKER, Town Mayor
Councillors D COMBEN, P COVINGTON, A GOFF, A HOOKER, Mrs HULL, E
KYNOCH, Mrs MOORE, R NORRIS, S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, Mrs TYLER, G
WILSON

Town Clerk: W D BUTTERWORTH

IN ATTENDANCE: Mace Bearer H FOREN

APOLOGIES: Councillors C VANE PERCY, Mrs FOSTER

PRESENT: 3 members of the public.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that she had represented the Town on 4 occasions since the last meeting. The Deputy Mayor had represented the Town at 4 events.

The Deputy Mayor declared that she had been presented with a small medallion to commemorate her visit to the USAF units at RAF Alconbury/Molesworth.

00/068 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 August 2000 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record.

00/069 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Action List dated 20 September 2000 was reviewed. The following matters arising from the last meeting were incomplete or required further action: (actions assigned to WPs are dealt with in the appropriate report).

99/048(2) New Town Guide – in work

00/043 (Environment) Tree planting – further advice had been requested and a reply from HDC was awaited.

00/047 (6) Location for Civic Service 2001 – the Mayor would be making a recommendation.

00/051 (Property) External doors for JF – an order had been placed and the work was expected to be completed in October 2000.

00/056(4) Damaged verges at Grove Terrace – a decision was awaited from HDC.

00/067 Christmas Lights – the Mayor would approach the Baptist Church to discuss the nativity scene.

00/070 PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR ALDERSON

Inspector Alderson introduced himself as the new Huntingdon Sector Commander. He announced that Godmanchester had suffered 170 reported crimes in the period April to August 2000, the majority of which were criminal damage and burglary. Antisocial behaviour was also prevalent. However, burglary was decreasing and the local detection rate was meeting the national target. The Sector had received a very high number of emergency calls but the response-time target had been achieved in the majority of cases.

The Huntingdon Life Sciences demonstrations had resulted in a noticeable reduction in normal police presence on the streets. Moreover, the policing involved had accounted for a considerable proportion of the annual budget. On the positive side, 4 new officers were joining the force in October and PC Simon Herod, an experienced policeman, had been nominated as the Godmanchester beat officer. Police surgeries had been introduced in certain communities to provide advice and there had been active operations to counter rural crime. There had been a slight increase in instances of racialism. Parking was a recognised problem, as was speeding, but because police resources are limited these matter do not attract the highest priority.

Councillors recognised the constraints on police resources but stressed that speeding was a major concern locally. Inspector Alderson explained that all his officers were trained in the use of the radar gun and were deployed on a regular basis. However, Godmanchester was not a speeding hotspot. In response to a suggestion that the old cameras on the A14 might be redeployed in the Town, he explained that they were not within his jurisdiction. Moreover, they were being replaced because the new ones gave better quality pictures and provided a photograph of the driver. He also believed that the hand-held radar guns with their unpredictable locations tended to be more effective. He accepted that officers using them had to wear high visibility clothing for safety reason but they could conceal themselves while using the guns. He confirmed that radar checks were carried out in the quiet hours as well as during rush hours.

A multi-agency task group was examining the vexed question of antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour orders (civil orders) were being introduced; a breach of an order would be a police issue. However, these are new initiatives and are still bedding in. Officers do talk to juveniles who are misbehaving and letters are sent to parents in serious cases. Occasionally, juveniles are arrested. The recently announced major financial investment in Oxmoor might have a positive impact on juvenile behaviour over a wider area.

In answer to a question about car parking, Inspector Alderson explained that the police have no jurisdiction on unadopted roads where the Highways Regulations do not apply.

00/071 CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence listed at [Appendix A](#) not covered by the WP reports was addressed. The following was agreed:

The Council noted the correspondence from CALC but expressed some concern about the accuracy of the Minutes and the Distribution Lists, which cast doubts on the organisation's administration. The Council was also confused by the request for the nomination of local council representatives and the apparent lack of Chairpersons at meetings. As Councillors Mrs HULL, KNOCH & NORRIS already attended the CALC meeting it was DECIDED to take no further action at this stage.

The Council noted the letter of thanks from the Twinning Association for the financial support.

The brochure about the proposals for the NHS Primary Care Trust would be made available in the Town Office

The Council noted the outline proposals from the Huntingdonshire Society for a Huntingdonshire Day but felt that the Town's Gala Week and Picnic in the Park were already major summer events and doubted the viability of another.

The request for the balance of £200 to complete the funding of the swimming pool subsidy for children during the summer holidays was APPROVED. However, the request for a similar scheme at half-term was not felt appropriate. Nevertheless, there was general agreement that an annual contribution to the Community Pool based on running costs, take-up rates and management initiatives should be considered once the figures were available. Councillor NORRIS agreed to obtain the data. Councillor COVINGTON reported that some parents had been disappointed when swimming sessions had been cut short during periods of high demand. It was explained that this was part of the published regulations but it was accepted that the rule might have been displayed more prominently.

Councillor SPENCER arrived at 8.20 pm

00/072 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

The draft audit submission for FY 99/00 was APPROVED. The Town Clerk was to prepare the final documents for signature by himself and the Mayor.

00/073 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 WILSON had attended the HDC Development Control Panel (DCP) meeting on 18 September 2000. The main issue of concern to Godmanchester was the plan to erect floodlights at the football ground at Bearscroft Farm. Councillor SPENCER and Councillor LOOKER declared an interest. The DCP had approved the application in principle, which in effect placed the authority for the final determination back with the desk officer. The Town Council was uncomfortable with the way in which HDC had dealt with the whole matter and Councillor WILSON had prepared a draft letter expressing the concerns in detail. He asked the Council to authorise the draft. APPROVED. Councillor COMBEN expressed a very

strong belief that the DCP should have deferred the matter to its next meeting when the revised plans would have been available.

Councillor WILSON also volunteered to prepare a draft letter to provide supplementary evidence for the inquiry into the proposal to build houses on the land adjacent to the cemetery on London Road.

00/074 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Finance. The Finance WP had not held a meeting; the next meeting would be on Monday, 2 October 2000 at 8 pm at 4 Crowhill.

Councillor Kynoch informed the Council that a paddock at the end of East Chadley Lane was being offered for sale by the process of sealed bids. There was general agreement that the Town Council should try to buy the land both as an investment and as a way of preserving it as a green space. There was some debate about how much money should be offered but it was AGREED that a bid of £12,111.00 should be made. The Town Clerk was to place the bid.

Ad Hoc (Gnd Maint). The WP had not met but Councillor COMBEN agreed to carry out a review of the Grounds Maintenance contract within the Finance WP.

Environment. The WP had met on 30 August 2000; a full written report was provided. The issue of responsibility for the maintenance of the Lime Trees on The Avenue was still to be resolved. A response from HDC was awaited. Similarly, HDC had still to provide a comprehensive reply to the Town Council's inquiries regarding tree planting on highway verges.

The problems caused by cyclists using the pavement on Post Street had not eased and HDC had been asked to restore the "End of Cycle Path" markings opposite the War Memorial. A cycle path along the west side of Post Street was still the preferred option.

The WP had noted the problems of speeding traffic and the resultant damage to a boundary wall in St Ann's Lane. However, it was felt that HDC's proposal to fit reflective marker posts adjacent to the wall was an adequate solution.

The WP had considered a proposal from District Councillor Mrs Godley for the installation of a roundabout at the junction of The Causeway and Post Street. However, the junction is not an accident black spot and on balance there did not appear to be a case for the installation.

The WP had examined the CCC guidelines for the Jointly Funded Minor Improvement Schemes 2001/2002 bidding round and recommended that the proposal for a Post Street cycle path should be put forward. AGREED. Councillor NORRIS volunteered to complete the application form. The Council noted that a successful bid would require a contribution from the Town Council based on 60 pence per member of the electorate.

Councillor COMBEN had reviewed the Local Waste Plan and the Town Clerk had notified the authors of the error that showed the closed Godmanchester Household Waste Recycling Centre as an extant facility.

Councillor COMBEN confirmed that the appeal to the Secretary of State regarding the footpath at Monks Pit had been submitted and acknowledged. The date for the determination was not known.

A proposal to replace the old-style lifebelts on the Recreation Ground attracted a lively discussion. It was AGREED that the upgrade should be staged and that the first stage would be to purchase 3 new units and 2 spare lifebelts.

The next meeting of the WP would be at 8 pm on Tuesday 3 October at 26 Earning Street.

The meeting adjourned at 9.02 pm for public questions; the record is at [Appendix D](#). The meeting resumed at 9.15 pm.

Recreation and Amenities. The WP had met on 29 August 2000; Councillor SPENCER provided a written report.

The Youth Football Club had marked out 3 pitches on the Recreation Ground and was awaiting delivery of the Mini Soccer League new-style goals. These were heavy, cumbersome and, because they had to be carried across the main road for each match, also placed parents in danger. It was suggested that they be kept on the Recreation Ground in a temporary storage container until December when the Club would move to Judith's Field. An alternative proposal that the container be placed at the rear of the Old Mill Sluice car park found more favour but, as the car park belonged to HDC, the Town Council could not give permission. Nevertheless, it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would write to HDC supporting an application from the Youth Football Club for the temporary location of the container. A suggestion to convert the shower room at Judith's Field into a storage area was referred to the Property WP.

Councillor SPENCER informed the meeting that 2 contractors had carried out site visits to the Recreation Ground play-area and would be submitting estimates for new equipment, new safety surfaces and other restoration work. A third company had been invited to quote for the work. Once the responses had been received, the information would be used as the basis of an application to WREN for a grant under the landfill tax scheme. It was envisaged that the total cost would be in the region of £30,000 to £35,000 with half coming from WREN and half from the Town Council. Councillor KYNOCH suggested that a bandstand might be incorporated into the design. The WP agreed to consider the idea. Councillor Mrs MOORE stated that whatever design was chosen she, as Chair of the Finance WP, would prefer to see the expenditure in the current FY.

Work on the Skatepark was scheduled to start on 22 September 2000. The Mayor and Councillor Mrs HULL had been to see the new skatepark at the Medway Centre and reported that the units were very limited and that some local children were disappointed. Moreover, the facility had been opened at the beginning of the summer holidays and there had been significant problems involving nearby residents. Councillor SPENCER assured the Council that the Godmanchester site would have a much better range of equipment and that the park was well away from residential areas. He agreed that the WP would arrange the formal opening ceremony together with the publicity.

Property. The WP had met on 5 September 2000; Cllr SURSHAM presented a written report. A recent electrical fault at JF had revealed that the fuse box / electrical distribution panels

needed replacement (spares were no longer available for the old panels). The work would cost £898.70. APPROVED subject to the new installation being capable of supporting additional sockets and lighting. [Town Clerk's note: the new panel would support 24 circuits; the existing one supports 18]

The WP recommended a major renovation and upgrades to the JF Hall once the senior football teams moved to Bearscroft Lane. The work would be phased over a number of years. An outline plan would be drawn up to enable broad budgetary plans to be made. The Mayor decided that there should be a dedicated WP to look after the JF renovation project. All councillors were invited to join her at the site at 10 am on Sunday, 15 October 2000. A volunteer would be sought to Chair the WP. In the meantime, any ideas on how the building might be improved should be passed to Councillor SPENCER.

It was announced that the quotation of £38,641 for the walls, gate piers and gates to Church Place had been broken down as requested by the HDC Conservation Officer. He would now recommend grants and grant sources. Councillor SURSHAM agreed to investigate what contribution might be required from the Town Council so that provision could be made in the precept for 2001/2002.

The WP recommended that, in the light of the increasing number of reported failures, the mechanism of the Church Clock should be modernised. It was AGREED that the mechanism should be replaced but not in the current FY. The work was not urgent and the bid should be placed in the 2001/2002 precept. Cllr KYNOCH objected to the decision to the upgrade of the clock until a satisfactory resolution of the Monks Pit footpath issue. Both Councillor NORRIS & Councillor SURSHAM declared an interest in the matters of the clock, walls and gates because of their close association with the Parish Church.

Cemetery. The WP had met on 5 September 2000. It was recommended that the general aim should be to restore the cemetery to lawn status but that the transition must be made in a sensitive and sympathetic manner. AGREED. The Town Clerk would write to all concerned after the Council had approved the formal letter. It was further recommended that up to £500 be spent on heightening one flank wall of the entrance drive to make the pathway safer. AGREED. Councillor SURSHAM was to prepare a plan for the work.

Other Representative Groups.

It was AGREED that up to £300 be granted for additional bulbs to complete the Millennium bulb-planting project.

It was AGREED that up to £4000 be granted in FY 2001/02 for "Picnic in the Park 2001".

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor COMBEN reported that the caravan was still parked on Monks Pit. The Town Clerk was to write to HDC and ask what action was being taken to remove it.

The Town Clerk had distributed copies of the Police Priorities Questionnaire. Councillors were encouraged to complete individual responses and return the forms to the Clerk of the Police Authority.

The Mayor reminded everyone that the Huntingdon District Council Charity Ball would be taking place on 6 October 2000.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2000.

The meeting ended at 10.45 pm Town Mayor