

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 17 APRIL 2003

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor
Councillors D ASHWORTH, D BROWN, W D BUTTERWORTH, M COHEN, D COMBEN, A GOFF, E KYNOCH, R NORRIS, S SPENCER, A SURSHAM, G WILSON
Town Clerk: A J WELTON

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs H HULL, C VANE PERCY

ABSENT: Councillor Mrs B MOORE

PRESENT: There were no members of the public present.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor announced that she had represented the Town on 5 occasions since the last meeting; 4 of those had been in support of the Twinning activities.

The Mayor reminded those present that there would be a Civic ball on 2 May 2003 at the Comrades Club and she would welcome their support at this charity event.

The Mayor conveyed her thanks to those members of the Town Council and members of the public who had assisted in the annual litter picking event on 5 April 2003.

The celebration of the Progress of King James I through Godmanchester in 1603 would take place at the Godmanchester Community Primary School on 29 April 2003 and the Mayor hoped that as many councillors as possible would attend.

03/022 MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING.

The Minutes of the annual Town Meeting, held on 6 March 2003, were APPROVED and signed as an accurate and complete record.

03/023 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 March 2003 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

03/024 MATTERS ARISING

The Outstanding Actions List dated 17 April 2003 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).

03/021 Judith's Field. Despite the urgency that the Partnership Support Officer had put upon the application for funding of the floodlighting in Judith's Field, the funds were not yet received.

30/021 Cemetery. The list of known relatives of those interred in the Cemetery was still in the process of being compiled. The original list had been compiled before all the records had been made available to the Town Council. Once the list was complete, it was intended to write to all confirming the intention to restore the Cemetery to its "lawned" status. Whilst the order for a new notice board had been acknowledged, it was not yet to hand. The supplier had indicated that delivery could be expected at the beginning of June 2003.

Cllr NORRIS, referring to the List, suggested that the action ascribed to Cllr COMBEN on the first two items on the List should be amended to read Cllr NORRIS as he was now the Chair of the Environment WP. APPROVED

Cllr GOFF recommended that the item 01/081 (JF) should now be removed from the list as the project was now complete. APPROVED

The item referring to the ATM was unlikely to progress further and was to be removed from the List. APPROVED

03/025 APPOINTMENT OF NEW GOVERNOR FOR ST ANNE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following the resignation of Cllr Mrs MOORE as a Governor of St Anne's Church of England Primary School, it was necessary to appoint a replacement Governor. Cllr BUTTERWORTH indicated that he was willing to be nominated and was APPROVED unanimously. The Town Clerk was to write to the School to advise them of the appointment.

03/026 SELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR AND DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR.

The Town Clerk reminded the assembled Councillors that he had sent them nomination papers for the election of a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2003/2004. There had been no nominations to date and, following some debate, the current Mayor reluctantly indicated that she would accept a nomination for just one more year. Following nomination by Cllr SURSHAM and seconding by Cllr COMBEN, her appointment as Mayor was APPROVED unanimously. Cllr BUTTERWORTH had indicated his willingness to be nominated as Deputy Town Mayor should the Town Council feel it appropriate, given the short time he had been a councillor. The Town Council APPROVED the appointment unanimously.

03/027 CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence listed at Appendix A, not covered by the WP reports, was addressed.

The Town Clerk was to write to Wood Green Animal Shelters concerning their letter appealing to the Town Mayor to try to reverse one of the planning decisions which had recommended refusal of their application. Cllr KYNOCH had asked for a copy of that correspondence.

Cllr COMBEN outlined the content of the letter received from the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the decision concerning the public footpath around Monks Pit. The Mayor explained that she had approached The Ramblers Association for advice. Cllr COMBEN

asked for a sum of money to be earmarked for legal expenses in the event that an appeal was viable. The proposal was that £2000.00 should be made available for this purpose, however there was an amendment proposing a sum of £3000.00. The amendment was defeated by 9:2. The proposal for £2000.00 was APPROVED by 9:2.

Whilst on the subject of the footpath at Monks Pit it was AGREED that the Town Clerk was to write to CCC to ascertain the legality of erecting barbed wire to bar footpaths.

03/028 ACCOUNTS

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that, with effect from 1 April 2003, new rates of pay for the Town Clerk, his assistant and the two caretakers became applicable. In October 2002, when the new rates had been announced, the Town Clerk had recommended that the increases applicable to the Town Clerk and his assistant be approved. The new rates of pay would be £378.84 for the Town Clerk's Assistant; the Town Clerk, having been in post for 1 year, progresses to Spinal Column Point 16, at which time the hourly rate increases from £6.96 per hour to £7.38 per hour. The supervisory element of the Town Clerk's pay would also increase, by £4.50 per month. The pay for the caretakers was recommended to rise from the current £265.00 per month to £275.00 per month. It was recommended that these increases be approved and paid with effect from 1 April 2003. The increases would be included in the May salary payments. APPROVED.

03/029 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.

03/030 DISCUSSION OF NEW TERM OF REFERENCE FOR CARETAKERS.

Cllrs had been circulated with details of new terms of reference for the two caretakers following the 5-yearly review carried out by a Working Party sub-group. A number of refinements had been included which would be reviewed from time to time and if circumstances changed. APPROVED.

03/031 DISCUSSION OF RE-ALIGNMENT OF NEW A14

Cllr ASHWORTH had asked for this matter to be included in the agenda. He told the meeting that there was still no definitive directional line for the proposed re-aligned A14; CHUMMS had been only an indication and the final say rested with the Highways Agency. Cllr ASHWORTH indicated that he was proposing 4 objectives; firstly that the realignment should be as far South of Godmanchester as possible, hugging the natural valleys to the South of Wood Green Animal Shelter. Secondly, he proposed that the new road should be set as far into the ground as possible. There should be tree planting to the North of the road to provide noise damping and finally it was proposed that the Highways Agency should ensure that no flooding ensued as a result of road building.

Cllr ASHCROFT proposed that a representative from the Department of Transport at CCC, together with representatives from the Highways Agency and possibly Brampton Parish Council be invited to address a working group highlighting previous objections to the CHUMMS proposals.

03/032 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS

Environment.

Although there had been no WP meeting, Cllr NORRIS reported that the Annual Spring-Clean had taken place on 5 April and there had been a reasonable turn out from the Town, including one pack of Brownies. He expressed his thanks to all who had taken part, especially Cllr BROWN for arranging for the use of a boat from Huntingdon Boat and Leisure Marina. Letters of thanks had been sent to both the Brownies and the Marina. Vandals had damaged the Devana Park play area; the seat and waste bin had been burnt, the sign obliterated and some of the posts removed from the fencing. Cllr NORRIS recommended that an estimate for the repair of the fencing should be sought. Town Clerk's Note: The fencing has been repaired by Mr Richard Butcher at no cost to the Town Council. Cllr NORRIS reported that he had attended a meeting with SITA on 11 April 2003. Matters discussed included that SITA had agreed to look at toning down the chimney stack feature of the new gas generating plant by tree planting. The generating plant was expected to come on line this summer. The height of the site would eventually settle at about 6 to 7 metres below the closure height. The site was expected to close early next year. The next meeting of the WP would be held on 30 April 2003 at 17 Porch Close, beginning at 7.30pm.

Cllr SURSHAM left the meeting at 10.25pm.

Property/Judith's Field.

Cllr GOFF advised that he was still pursuing the painting of the skatepark; the surfaces of the ramps needed repainting to ensure that water did not damage the woodwork. Turning to the security of the area, he advised that finance was now available from both SITA and HDC. Invitations to tender for the lighting and the project itself were being handled by the lighting department of HDC. Included in the security project was the requirement to cut back the hedge between the industrial estate and Judith's Field. The cost of this would be £830 and would come from the overall funding for the project.

Cllr COMBEN left the meeting at 10.30pm.

Cemetery.

Cllr COHEN advised that he had visited the St Mary's churchyard, together with the Churchwarden, to advise on the state of the headstones, a number of which were identified as being loose and dangerous. Cllr COHEN had advised that two churchwardens should carry out the "topple test" on all headstones and secure those which were dangerous. The wall in the churchyard appeared to be in fairly good condition, although a number of coping stones required replacement and the brickwork needed pointing. After some discussion it was DECIDED that the Town Clerk was to investigate what, if anything, could be passed to Town Council responsibility. Turning to the Town Cemetery, Cllr COHEN informed the meeting that the new Garden of Remembrance was looking good although, because of the current spell of dry weather, the plants and bushes were in need of watering regularly. He also suggested that the position of the benches might be wrongly facing the hedgerow. It was suggested that, in the fullness of time, they should be repositioned. One of the benches

already had a burn mark on it and it was AGREED that Fergusons should be invited to quote for cleaning the benches as part of their other duties in the Cemetery as they were clearly a favourite perch for birds. A notice board had been ordered at a cost of £347.00 and was due for delivery in June. A draft letter on Lawning had been passed to the Town Clerk for onward dispatch to known relatives. Turning to the question of the parking area, it was DECIDED that the Town Clerk would approach the Highways Department to ascertain whether there was a specification for car parks and to seek advice on the way ahead.

Other Representative Groups.

Cllr NORRIS reported that he had attended the latest meeting of the Police Consultation Group on 1 April 2003. There was nothing of significance to report. However, the concerns expressed by the Sawtry residents were very similar those that had been raised at the Godmanchester meeting. The Police response was that, whilst endeavouring to solve crime they were constrained by budget and manning constraints.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Cllr NORRIS advised that, now that the new town signs were in place, cleaning of the sign on Riverside Mill should take place as soon as possible. He also advised that the Ouse Valley Walk path needed to be refurbished from Godmanchester Lock to the Chinese Bridge. The Town Clerk was to approach HDC with a view to bringing the matter to their attention.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 15 MAY 2003 (Gowned).

The meeting ended 11.00pm Town Mayor