

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 2004**

**PRESENT:** Mrs A LOOKER Town Mayor, W D BUTTERWORTH Deputy Town Mayor  
Councillors: D ASHWORTH, D BROWN, H R BUTCHER, D COMBEN, A GOFF, Mrs H  
HULL, E KYNOCH, Mrs B MOORE, R NORRIS, C VANE PERCY

Town Clerk: A J WELTON

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors: M COHEN, A SURSHAM, G WILSON

There were 5 members of the public present.

### **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The MAYOR informed the meeting that she had represented the Town on 2 occasions since the last meeting. The DEPUTY MAYOR had also represented the Town on 2 occasions.

The MAYOR informed the Town Council that, because the Garden of Rest in Cambridge Street was in the Conservation Area, the Conservation Officer at HDC had asked for the detailed plans for the renovation. The Town Clerk had sent the plans and specification to the Conservation Officer and the MAYOR, once again, recorded her thanks to Cllr COMBEN for his hard work in preparing the plans and specifications.

Cllr VANE PERCY arrived at 7.38pm.

Because the matter of the Devana Close Play Area had generated such interest within the community, the MAYOR proposed to move the agenda item discussion from "Working Party Reports" to "Correspondence". APPROVED.

### **04/001 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2003 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

### **04/002 MATTERS ARISING**

The Outstanding Actions List dated 15 January 2004 was reviewed. The MAYOR referred to the request from Mr Coxhead to make a presentation to the Town Council on the needs and ambitions of Godmanchester Rovers Football Club. The matter was discussed and it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would write to Mr Coxhead to negotiate a suitable date for the presentation.

Cllr NORRIS asked if the Cambs' Police Authority Local Consultation Group, Huntingdon Sector had confirmed the date of their meeting in Godmanchester. Without the diary the Town Clerk was unable to confirm when the meeting had been booked. Town Clerk's Note: The Group has booked QES for Wednesday 14 April 2004 for the period 7.30 – 9.30pm.

### **04/003 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

The MAYOR explained the content of the document from NALC entitled “Legal Topic Note 46” which spelt out the legal position of a chairman of a local council when a candidate for the chair.

The MAYOR advised the Town Council that she had received a letter from the Godmanchester Kids Club that outlined the concerns of the Club about the finite planning permission for the continued use of the mobile classroom at the Primary School being only 2 years. The letter went on to explain that, in order to meet current Ofsted requirements, the Club estimated a need to raise in excess of £250000.

The MAYOR further explained that she had received a letter from Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership that explained that HCSP was expecting funding from the Government for the next financial year and spelling out the funding criteria.

Referring to the letter from Cambridgeshire County Council concerning Godmanchester Transport Schemes, the Town Council AGREED that the Town Clerk was to reply stating that traffic calming measures were preferred in Tudor Road rather than Earning Street. Additionally, he was to request that CCC reconsider the provision of a cycle path in Tudor Road.

Discussion then took place concerning the Devana Close Children’s Play Area. Cllr NORRIS, Chairman of the Environment Working Party, advised that the well-attended Working Party had met on Tuesday 6 January 2004. There had been substantial vandalism that had caused much irritation and concern, leading to a number of letters of complaint and culminating in a petition from the residents. Prior to the receipt of the petition, which had been received after the WP had met, the Town Council had received reports from the Police, Wicksteed Leisure (manufacturers of play equipment) and Mr Peter Heseltine, a consultant for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and a qualified Inspector of play equipment. These reports had produced 3 options:

- 1.To dismantle the play equipment.
- 2.To replace the equipment with some appropriate for a younger age group.
- 3.To refurbish the existing equipment.

The estimate for the replacement had been £18000. The WP had considered all the options and recommended that the area be refurbished, to include the complete removal of the containing fence, to remove the tops of the towers, to repaint and to carry out a number of minor repairs. The estimate for this was approximately £1345 plus VAT. Additionally, the WP recommended the introduction of a stricter and more closely monitored regime of maintenance and suggested that there be a reassessment of the situation in 6 months time. In the meantime, the contractors were to be tasked with carrying out a litter pick of the area. The recommendations of the WP were APPROVED.

Cllr GOFF suggested that CCC be approached to improve the lighting at the play area. Cllr BROWN asked whether it would be necessary to review the landscaping regime to improve visibility. As passed at the previous Town Council meeting, the contractor had been tasked with pruning the shrubs in the area adjacent to the play equipment.

Cllr COMBEN remarked that the provision of the proposed youth shelter at Judith's Field might have the benefit of removing the unwanted attention away from Devana Close play area.

The MAYOR reminded the Town Council that, when the play area had been installed, it was as a planning condition for the new houses built in Devana Park, for the benefit of the whole town. Its removal would, therefore, also require planning permission.

Cllr NORRIS proposed that as the work involved was urgent maintenance the repairs and refurbishments already approved should be carried out without further delay and that the estimate of £1345 should be accepted. APPROVED.

#### **041/004 ACCOUNTS**

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED. The Town Clerk asked for approval for the purchase of various audit documents as recommended by Moore Stephens, the external auditors, the total cost not to exceed £65.00. APPROVED.

The MAYOR confirmed that the lease with the Senior Citizens Club was still to be finalised before being sent to a solicitor.

#### **04/005 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

The Planning Working Party had met on 8 January 2004 and had been attended by most of the Town Council. 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 DECIDED that the Town Clerk would write to HDC for clarification of the dilemma between applications suffixed FUL and LBC for the same property. This had been exacerbated by the application to retain the external flue at The Exhibition Public House that had been the subject of both types of application.

The MAYOR summarised the S106 intentions for the Roman Way development. It was DECIDED that the Planning WP would discuss the aspirations of the Town Council on this matter.

Whilst referring to the correspondence related to planning application 03/02033/FUL, the MAYOR declared an interest and the DEPUTY MAYOR chaired the meeting during discussions on this subject. It was DECIDED that the Town Clerk was to write to HDC reiterating that the remaining concern of the Town Council was that of road safety at the junction of Bearscroft Lane and the busy A1198 and urging consideration of better lighting at the junction and the introduction of reduced speed limits either side of the junction on the A1198.

#### **04/006 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS**

**Cemetery.** There had been no WP meeting but following expressions of concern from relatives, the Town Clerk had arranged for the Probation Service to provide the manpower to move the "spoil" from one location in the Cemetery to another. This work was carried out on

Saturday 10 January 2004 and the Town Clerk had written to the Probation Service to thank them.

It was pointed out that the street lights outside the Cemetery are not working. It was AGREED that the Town Clerk would write to CCC to ascertain why.

**Environment.** The WP had met on 8 January 2004 and a number of recommendations were presented to the Town Council.

1. The contractors had provided an estimate for the cost of shrubbery pruning in Buttermel Meadow at £14 per man-hour. It was estimated that the work would take 2 man-days.

APPROVED.

2. CCC had intimated that they would like to make a presentation on traffic calming in Godmanchester. It was DECIDED that the Town Clerk would write to confirm a suitable date.

3. Once the concrete bases had been put in place it was intended to install 2 new benches in Buttermel Meadow and one near the Chinese Bridge. These installations had been approved previously.

4. The Town Council had written to HDC to ascertain whether a new car park could be provided in Bridge Place in the location of the old railway crossing. A reply was awaited.

5. At the previous Town Council meeting, Cllr NORRIS had discussed the matter of the removal of the church clock mechanism during restoration of the bell chamber floor. Discussion had taken place under Any Other Business and therefore the financial aspects of the matter had not been approved at that time. The cost of the removal and maintenance of the clock mechanism was £2297.00 and the meeting APPROVED this sum.

6. The contractor was to be tasked with carrying out a litter pick at Devana Close play area and in the shrubbery surrounding the open space.

7. The Town Clerk was to write to Messrs Brooke North to ascertain progress on the appeal related to Monks Pit.

The next meeting of the Environment WP would be on Tuesday 10 February 2004, starting at 8.00pm at 4 Crowhill.

**Finance.** There had been no meeting of the WP but the next was scheduled for Tuesday 10 February 2004, starting at 8.00pm at 4 Crowhill.

**Flood Defences.** There had been no meeting of the WP but an approach had been made to Cllr Mrs HULL personally informing her that it was the intention of the Environment Agency to carry out an informal flood defence survey in her garden so that they could determine the like cost of work needed to create flood defences. The Town Clerk was to write to the Environment Agency for details on timescales and consultation about their proposed flood alleviation scheme for Godmanchester.

The Town Clerk was also to write to request a reply to recent correspondence concerning the "Flood Forum".

**Property/Judith's Field.** The Town Clerk advised the meeting of a telephone conversation he had had with Cllr SURSHAM shortly before the meeting. Cllr SURSHAM had advised him that there had been 2 replies to tenders for the work on the two sets of churchyard gates; one of £37000 and a second of £30000 and his recommendation was acceptance of the lower.

However, it emerged during discussion of these matters that it was probable that the specifications in the two tenders had not been the same. The DEPUTY MAYOR reiterated that the specifications should be the same to anyone being invited to tender for the same job and that such specifications should be issued through the Town Clerk, with responses being returned by a specific date to the Town Office. Consequently no decisions were made on this matter. However, Cllr COMBEN volunteered to liaise with Cllrs SURSHAM and VANE PERCY to help formulate a standard specification for the refurbishment of the gates.

The Town Clerk advised that HDC had acknowledged receipt of Cllr SURSHAM's bid for a grant towards the cost of refurbishing the gates, as had SITA. Cllr SURSHAM had also advised that the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Civic Society had agreed to contribute £2000 towards the cost.

There had been no meeting of the Judith's Field WP and there was nothing to report.

Cllr VANE PERCY left the meeting at 10.05pm.

**Other Representative Groups/Twinning/Inter Town Forum/Detached Youth Initiative.**

The MAYOR advised the meeting about the annual Twinning Business Meeting that was being held this year in Szentendre. There was doubt about the continued participation of our French twin town of Salon. Because there were people better qualified to deal with the agenda, it was AGREED that, in addition to paying for ¼ of the cost of the fare for the Chairman of HGTA, the Town Council would also pay ¼ of the fare costs of a Hungarian-speaking interpreter from HGTA. The Mayor of Huntingdon would provide the "civic" representation.

Cllr ASHWORTH sought approval to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, the local MP, HDC and other Parish/Town Councils concerning a reassessment of the alignment of the A14 to the North of Huntingdon now that the Government had agreed to the development of the former airfield at Alconbury as a freight depot. AGREED.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS. The Town Clerk was tasked with writing to CASTIRON to invite them to come to speak at the Town Meeting on 4 March 2004.

The Town Clerk reported that a firm of restoration experts had been to examine the Roll of Honour and they would be making their recommendations and estimate of costs shortly.

**THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2004**

The meeting ended 10.15 pm Mayor