

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE GODMANCHESTER TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 2005

PRESENT: H R BUTCHER, Town Mayor, M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor
Councillors: D BROWN, J COXHEAD, A GOFF, L HOLGATE, C R HYAMS, Mrs E
TREHARNE-JONES

Town Clerk: A J WELTON

In Attendance: Mrs M LIDDIARD (Town Clerk designate)

APOLOGIES: Cllrs: W D BUTTERWORTH, Mrs C A GODLEY, Mrs H HULL, Mrs A M
LOOKER, Mrs B MOORE, C VANE PERCY

ABSENT: Cllr E KYNOCH

There were no members of the public present.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The MAYOR advised that he had represented the Town on 10 occasions since the last meeting. The DEPUTY MAYOR had represented the Town on 4 occasions since the previous meeting.

The MAYOR thanked those who had attended the Civic Service, which had been well attended by members of the community. The MAYOR formally welcomed Mrs M Liddiard, new Town Clerk. The appointment was APPROVED and the MAYOR countersigned contracts of employment for both the Town Clerk and the Town Clerk's Assistant.

The MAYOR reminded those present that 13 November was Remembrance Day and Councillors should meet at the Town Hall at 10.30am, gowned. There was also a service at 6.30pm at St Mary's this too would be gowned.

The MAYOR advised the Town Hall office would be closed on Monday 14th November as both the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant would be attending an all day Health & Safety course.

The MAYOR announced that he would be on holiday during the period 29 October to 12 November inclusive. He asked that Councillors support the new Town Clerk during his absence, if required.

Cllr Mrs TREHARNE-JONES arrived at 7.40pm.

The MAYOR advised that the dispute over wrongful burial had been finally resolved.

05/068 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2005 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

05/069 MATTERS ARISING.

The Outstanding Actions List, dated 20 October 2005 was reviewed.

Having received the quotation from Moore Electrical for the installation of the replacement Christmas lighting on both the Town Hall and QES, the Town Council APPROVED the expenditure of £1060 for fitting and £588 for the supply of the lighting harnesses and lamps from Gala Lights.

Following the response from Zurich insurance concerning the re-valuation of buildings for insurance purposes, it was suggested that the Town Clerk should approach CCC and/or HDC to find out who provided them with that service.

The training/refresher course for new and existing Cllrs had not generated timely responses and the course was now fully subscribed. The MAYOR encouraged Cllrs to attend and it was pointed out that the next course would be held on 28 January 2006.

05/070 CORRESPONDENCE.

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

The CCC letter, copied to all Cllrs, concerning Priorities and Budget Strategy, was discussed. There was no need for the Council to fill in the proforma but an overall input should be submitted by the end of October. Inputs should be forwarded to the Town Clerk before 31 October.

The discussion document concerning rubbish collection of "large" items, forwarded to all Cllrs at the previous meeting by Cllr Mrs GODLEY was held over until the next meeting, as Cllr Mrs GODLEY was not present to discuss the paper.

There had been a letter from the Cambridgeshire Constabulary concerning licences for QES. As the Town Council did not sell alcohol and did not hold dances, it was considered unnecessary for the Town Council to apply for a licence. Hirers should be instructed to apply for their own licences as required.

The Town Clerk advised that the VAT inspection had taken place on 18 October and there had been no observations.

The National Savings & Investment organisation had advised that the Treasurers Account had been opened and that a passbook would be issued in due course. In the meantime, £2780.07 interest had been credited to the new account.

The GMC Community Association had applied for a grant for Picnic in the Park 2006. The matter was deferred until the next Finance WP meeting.

Further to the new submission from Bernasconi, the Town Council AGREED that the sum withheld under the terms of the contract (£760.40), together with the difference between what was paid to T D Smith for brickwork and his estimate of £1500 should be paid in final settlement of the account. This amounted to £2110.40.

HDC had advised that they had been holding a sum of £1874 accumulated under a S106 agreement for Bascraft Way that should have been paid to GMC Town Council. This would be forwarded soon.

The HDC had submitted their request for details of the submission for the precept figure for 2006/2007. This would need to be discussed at the next Finance WP meeting. The Town Clerk reminded the various Chairs of WPs that they would need to prepare their budget bids in time for that meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that he had written to both Copleys and Hunnybuns to ascertain whether they were holding deeds to Town Council property and seeking advice concerning Voluntary First Registration of Title, following the letter from Land Registry.

05/071 ACCOUNTS.

The accounts set out in Appendix B were APPROVED.

The Town Clerk advised that Smiths Gore, acting for the Church Commissioners, had informed the Town Council that they would be reviewing the rental for the allotments. This was likely to be in October 2006.

05/072 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.

Referring to the letter from CCC concerning the stopping up of land between 11 Littlefield Close and 14 Sears Close, it was confirmed that approval had been given several meetings ago.

The Planning WP recommended that the planning application for the building of the ramp to the entrance to the Town Hall should be put in abeyance pending further advice from HDC. Cllr HOLGATE was retaining the plans and relevant application forms for both Full and Listed Building Consent until such time as it was decided to go ahead.

05/073 DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS.

Cllr HYAMS drew attention to the correspondence received from HDC covering the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework – Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement & Wind Power Supplementary Planning Document. He advised that by 2010 14% of the county was to be powered by wind.

He said that he had had some success in persuading the estate agency at the corner of The Causeway to remove a large canvas advertisement. Similarly, he had asked the Fish and Chip shop to provide better facilities for the disposal of waste.

Cllr HYAMS had attended a meeting with the Fire and Police in QES on 13 October. He confirmed that crime appeared to be on the increase and advised that there were a number of pre-ASBOs being issued in the town.

Despite local dissent in the town of Papworth he confirmed that it seemed likely that the hospital facilities at Papworth would be amalgamated with those at Addenbrookes in Cambridge.

As a governor of the Community Primary School, Cllr HYAMS expressed his concern that the swimming pool was continuing to operate at a considerable loss. There appeared to be a number of solutions, one of which would be to close the facility to the general public. Following lively discussion on what financial support the Town Council could or should offer, it was DECIDED that the Town Clerk would resurrect previous correspondence on the matter. This matter would be discussed at the January meeting.

There was a short discussion on the A14 "Offord Action Group" newsletter that Cllr HYAMS had circulated to all Cllrs. Matters would be carefully observed.

05/074 WORKING PARTY (WP) REPORTS.

Cemetery. Cllr COHEN advised that he had visited the Cemetery recently and that all appeared to be neat and tidy.

It would not be very long before interment would have to be in the newer part of the Cemetery and he suggested that ditching and construction of the gravelling rows should start in 2006. The Town Clerk was asked to contact Mr Dennis Smith, the Parks Manager for Huntingdon Town Council to obtain a "ball park" figure for the initial construction of 3 rows.

Environment. In his role as Chair of the Environment WP, the MAYOR discussed correspondence received during the month. The letter from CCC concerning East Chadley Lane to Park Lane cycle route was discussed. It appeared that during an on-site inspection, two Cllrs had asked if it was possible to widen the existing footpath outside 18-25 East Chadley Lane. It was decided that the Town Council did support this initiative, but were not prepared to contribute financially. The Town Clerk was to write to CCC to advise them of the decision.

The Countryside Agency had sent a copy of a map of registered Common Land and open country. The map was available for viewing in the Town Office.

The MAYOR advised that under the HDC Small scale funding opportunities, he had applied once again for a parking area at the entrance to Betts Close. It was suggested that barriers for the building at Judith's Field might also be considered under this heading.

The reply from Zurich Insurance about the tree related subsidence at Judith's Field/Chord Business Park generated more questions than it had answered. The Town Clerk, together with the MAYOR, was to research previous correspondence and reply to the questions posed, where possible.

Wicksteed had replied giving details of the appropriate age ranges for the play equipment provided in the various play areas around the town. The MAYOR undertook to contact them concerning modification of certain pieces of equipment. In the meantime, the Town Clerk was to arrange for the various signs to be manufactured and erected. The Town Council APPROVED the erection of appropriate signage.

The estimate for the replacement "Welcome to Godmanchester" sign had been received from Malcolm Lane & Sons. The cost would be £875 + £50 delivery plus VAT. These sums were APPROVED. The Town Clerk was to confirm the order with Malcolm Lane & Sons.

The notice board opposite St Anne's School had been vandalised and the wooden frame was rotten. Although there was no obligation to provide more than one focal point for the dissemination of information, it was a useful facility for residents living in the south of the town. The MAYOR had advised that there were various materials that could be used and that, given the high costs involved, he would investigate other potential sources. In the meantime, the Council APPROVED the expenditure of up to £1000 for a replacement.

Cllr Mrs LOOKER arrived at 9.35pm.

Finance. The Town Clerk advised that the VAT Inspector had inspected the accounts on 18 October 2005. There were no observations that required to be addressed.

As Cllr Mrs MOORE was not present the Town Clerk advised that the request for bids for the precept for the following year were required to be completed in December 2005 and urged all chairs of the various working parties to submit their budget requirements for discussion at the next Finance WP meeting, which would be held at 4 Crowhill on Tuesday 8 November 2005 starting at 8.00pm. If this date was not appropriate, the Town Clerk was to advise all Cllrs of any change.

Flood Defences. There had been no meeting of the WP.

Health & Safety. Cllr Mrs TREHARNE-JONES reported that there had been a meeting of the WP on 13 October 2005 at which a number of recommendations had been formulated. She advised Cllrs that copies of the risk assessments for "Lone Working" and Financial risks had been included in their envelopes containing the agenda. She presented a draft Health & Safety Policy document and this was APPROVED by the Town Council.

It was DECIDED that the Town Council should purchase a personal safety alarm for use by the caretaker at Judith's Field.

Cllr Mrs TREHARNE-JONES also advised that she had arranged for both the new Town Clerk and the Town Clerk's Assistant to attend a Health & Safety in the Workplace course on Monday 14 November 2005 at a cost of £225.00 + VAT each. This sum was APPROVED. It would be necessary to close the Town Office for that day as previously AGREED and it was recommended that overtime payments should be made to each to cover the hours of attendance in the afternoon. AGREED.

Judith's Field. Cllr GOFF advised that the damages to the skate ramps had been repaired with the exception of the holes in the sides.

Fergusons were to be requested to remove the two rubbish bins that were being used as incinerators, thus removing the incentive to create fire braziers. APPROVED.

The suggestion that the skate ramps be resurfaced with "Skatelite Pro", as recommended by HDC, was APPROVED. This would entail making a 50% contribution to the overall cost of approximately £15000 from Godmanchester Town Council funds.

There was lively discussion of Cllr GOFF's suggestions for protecting the building from damage made by footballs. The Town Clerk was to hasten a reply to the HDC letter referenced Ack DI/SR dated 29 September 2005 and Cllr COXHEAD was asked to

investigate alternative solutions and report back to the Town Council.

Other Representative Groups/Twinning/Youth Focus Group.

Twinning. Subsequent to the HGTA meeting on 26 September 2006, the MAYOR had attended a meeting with the Huntingdon Town Clerk and the Chairman of HGTA to discuss the forthcoming Twinning Business meeting to be hosted by Godmanchester during the period 17-20 February 2006. Tentative arrangements were being made for Godmanchester to host a reception on Friday 17 February and to host the Business meeting itself in QES on 18 February. Huntingdon would host a reception in the evening on 18 February and HGTA would host a lunch on Sunday 19 February. There were no costing figures estimated at this time but it had been agreed that the 3:1 ratio would apply.

The MAYOR further advised that it would be the 10th Anniversary of the twinning of Szentendre with Huntingdon and Godmanchester during the period 12-14 May 2006. It should be noted that there were two separate twinning charters with the 2 UK towns.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

The Town Clerk advised that he would be taking 4 days leave from 25–28 October 2005 inclusive so his last working day would be Monday 24 October 2005. He told the Town Council that he had enjoyed his 3½ years as Town Clerk and wished his successor every success in her new post.

The MAYOR thanked Mr Welton, on behalf of the entire Town Council, for the support he had given the Council over the 3½ years he had been in post and presented him with gifts from the Council.

Cllr Mrs LOOKER made a request on behalf of the Godmanchester Community Association to restrict access to Judith's Field, by users of the skate park, on the night of the annual firework display (5 November). This was as much for the safety of the people concerned as it was for fund raising. It was AGREED that the Town Clerk would devise a notice to be displayed at the entrances to Judith's Field during the week preceding the event.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2005.

The meeting ended at 10.35 pm Mayor