

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2009

PRESENT: G WILSON Town Mayor,

Councillors: D BROWN, H R BUTCHER, M DOBBIE, J DUTTON, Mrs H HULL, C R HYAMS, Mrs A M LOOKER, Ms D MIDDLETON, D TAYLOR, C RICHARDSON, D O'DONNELL, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD

Mace Bearer: Mr M WILLIAMS

APOLOGIES: Cllrs: M COHEN Deputy Town Mayor, T CANT, C VANE PERCY

3 members of the public were in attendance

09/045 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

CLLR COHEN: holiday; CLLR CANT: holiday; CLLR VANE PERCY: business

09/046 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR Mrs LOOKER declared a prejudicial interest anything relating to proposed development of 800 houses. She also declared an interest in the Planning items relating to Wood Green as her property neighbours theirs.

CLLR WILSON (MAYOR) declared an interest in matters relating to the Environment Agency as he is employed by the Environment Agency.

CLLR DUTTON and CLLR HYAMS declared their interest in matters relating to District or County Council as they hold office in these organisations.

CLLR DUTTON confirmed he would abstain from discussions and voting on all Planning matters.

09/047 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2009 were APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

09/047.1 FORMAT OF MINUTES: The Town Clerk advised recommended practice was to keep minutes to a minimum and not include discussion points. However, it was AGREED that the present format of the minutes, which includes some detail of the items discussed should be continued.

09/048 TO ADOPT A PROTOCOL TO MANAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

THE MAYOR presented a document prepared by CLLR COHEN, outlining the suggested procedure for handling public participation sessions at Town Council meetings. The principal was supported, but it was AGREED further clarification was required relating to Cllrs declaring prejudicial interests and any requirement to leave the room when such a matter was

discussed. The Town Clerk would obtain clarification from CPALC. This item would be considered again at the May Town Council meeting.

09/049 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

A resident referred to various letters written to local papers on a variety of issues, over a period of time, which were apparently from Town Councillors. He expressed his view that the Town Council were failing in their efforts to remain non-political, despite the fact that such letters are not signed off by individuals using their title of Cllr. It was confirmed that Cllrs remained able to express their personal opinion, regardless of any political inference this might have, but were not permitted to use the title of Cllr in such correspondence. CLLR HYAMS responded by confirming that the Town Council was a non-political body and that although he was a District and County Cllr, while attending Godmanchester Town Council meetings, he represented the people of Godmanchester regardless of any politics. CLLR HYAMS further confirmed that if he were to write to the press on any matter, he made it clear he was using his title of District and/or County Councillor.

Further to the information received in March, a resident advised that the presentation in relation to passenger services from Godmanchester Station, which had ceased in 1959, should be available shortly. He had also been advised to contact Friends of the Queen Elizabeth School who manage the Museum, who may be interested in displaying the material.

A resident commented on the forthcoming item regarding prayers at Town Council meetings and confirmed that it had not always been possible in the past to arrange to have a Chaplain available. The resident also commented that he would like to see the opportunity for members of the public to raise items not on the agenda early on in the meeting. CLLR TAYLOR responded by confirming if prayers were adopted by the Town Council he was willing, as an ordained Baptist Minister, to take on this responsibility.

THE MAYOR thanked the members of public for their views and comments.

09/050 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

THE MAYOR had represented the Town on 7 occasions since the last meeting.

THE MAYOR thanked everyone for attending the Annual Town Meeting, which had taken place on 7th April, and for providing reports. The board on the Vicarage wall had been noticed and it was agreed it would be worth considering using this method to advertise the Annual Town Meeting in future years. Cllrs will have been given a copy of a letter from residents who had attended the Annual Town Meeting presenting some suggestions. The Town Clerk had responded in detail, but the next Mayor may wish to consider changing the date of the Annual Town Meeting for 2010 and arrange for shorter reports to be given to allow more time for questions from the public.

THE MAYOR reminded everyone that the Annual Litter Pick would take place on Saturday 25th April. Please meet at the Town Hall at 10am.

THE MAYOR reminded Cllrs that nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor need to be with the Town Clerk by 1pm on 13th May.

THE MAYOR had been advised by the Town Clerk that in order to get the accounts prepared in time for consideration at this meeting, she had worked a full day on Good Friday. This is in addition to extra hours worked to meet with Cllrs to discuss the Asset Register, Finances and to prepare for the Annual Town Meeting. THE MAYOR proposed and it was unanimously AGREED that the Town Clerk should be paid for these additional hours.

09/051 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING:

Cllrs had been presented with an updated list of outstanding matters.

09/051.1 WEBSITE FOR TOWN COUNCIL: CLLR HYAMS advised the Town Council could use .gov.uk as a domain but would be required to pay £100 for a 2 year registration. In addition a host for the site would charge £30 per year. It was AGREED that all Cllrs would review the information provided and provide feedback to CLLR HYAMS. This would be considered again at the May Town Council Meeting.

09/051.2 PROPERTY: CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON confirmed we were still awaiting a response from the Trustees for the Non-Conformist Burial Ground. She was also seeking clarification on the position regarding gravestone testing and repairs in the light of recent national newspaper articles. She would press for more details.

09/051.3 PLANTERS: CLLR BROWN asked that this matter be deferred to the May Town Council meeting, at which time he should have more definite information to assist in decision making.

09/052 PRAYERS AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Cllrs had been advised by a former Town Councillor (and Mayor of Godmanchester) that it is traditional for prayers to be said at the start of each gowned Town Council meeting. A proposal was made that Christian prayers be said at the start of each Town Council Meeting. The vote was 2 for, 10 against, 2 abstained. It was therefore AGREED that the Town Council would not adopt the practice to say prayers at all Town Council meetings.

It was further proposed that the Town Council invites a representative from one of the churches in Godmanchester to say prayers at the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Council Meeting each year. The vote was 10 for, 1 against, 1 abstained. It was therefore AGREED to adopt this practice with immediate effect.

09/053 THE POWER OF WELL BEING

The Power of Well Being has been introduced for use by (Town) Parish Councils with effect from 31 December 2008. In order to use the power, training must be undertaken by 80% of Council members and Huntingdon Town Council had invited Godmanchester Town Council to join with them for a training session. It was AGREED that Town Council do not wish to participate at this time. Town Clerk would advise accordingly.

09/054 CORRESPONDENCE - see appendix A

Town Clerk will summarise correspondence received in response to the articles in the last Town Council newsletter relating to flooding and 800 new houses for circulation to all.

CLLR BUTCHER advised he had attended a recent Local Access Forum meeting. The LAF will provide advice in relation to strategic access and recreational issues in Cambridgeshire and may be of assistance to us on future issues. Details will be kept on file.

09/055 FINANCIAL/ACCOUNTS.

09/055.1 The accounts for the year ending 31 March 2009 were presented to the Town Council. It was AGREED that these accounts were APPROVED

09/055.2 The Statements of Assurance in respect of the end of year audit for the year ending 31 March 2009 were read to the Town Council and all statements were APPROVED. CLLR HYAMS proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk for her excellent work on the annual accounts.

09/055.3 The end of year bank reconciliation was presented to the Town Council and these figures were APPROVED.

09/055.4 The end of year Petty Cash reconciliation was presented to the Town Council and these figures were APPROVED.

09/055.5 The list of payments detailed in Appendix B were presented to the Town Council and APPROVED. It was further AGREED that as the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant would only receive part of their due salary as a result of a computer error, that when the error had been corrected, a further cheque would be drawn for the Town Clerk and Town Clerk's Assistant for the balance of their April salary.

09/055.6 CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON confirmed that along with CLLR MS MIDDLETON and the Town Clerk, they had worked to improve and streamline the information contained on the Asset Register. The information presented to the Town Council was duly APPROVED subject to some minor amendments.

09/055.7 A quotation in the sum of £675 from Curtains from Diane, for the cleaning of all curtains in the QES was APPROVED. Town Clerk would arrange a suitable time for the work to be carried out.

09/055.8 A quotation in the sum of £855.13 from Jacowe Joinery, for the provision and installation of a purpose built ladder to access the Headmaster's Office in the QES was APPROVED. Town Clerk would arrange a suitable time for work to be carried out.

09/056 GRANT AWARDING POLICY

It was acknowledged that Godmanchester Town Council has used incorrect terminology by calling all grants made by the Town Council section 137 grants. The Town Clerk has advised that we do have powers to award grants and provide financial support for some projects using other powers under various sections in Local Government Acts. Accordingly the Town Council will consider adopting a formal Grant Awarding Policy, which will provide the applicants with information about how they can support their application, and the Town Council with clear details of the requests they are being asked to consider. A draft document has been presented to all Cllrs and will be considered further at the May Town Council meeting.

09/057 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix C were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations. CLLR DUTTON abstained from commenting on Planning matters, as he is a member of the DCP. CLLR HYAMS

advised he would not be voting on application 0900299FUL. CLLR MRS LOOKER advised she would not be voting on applications 0900283FUL & 0900264FUL.

It was AGREED that future Planning Working Party meetings would be held on Wednesdays. Town Clerk would circulate a list of meetings for 2009 to all Cllrs.

09/058 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS.

CLLR HYAMS confirmed work to repair the Town Bridge would take place in May. There would be some disruption but overnight working was planned where possible.

CLLR HYAMS advised that one of the signs advising cyclists to dismount located on the footbridge between Godmanchester and Huntingdon had been removed. Consideration was being given to painting the instruction on the footbridge surface.

CLLR HYAMS advised that CCC were looking into the possibility of providing 2 parking spaces for disabled drivers near the chemist in Godmanchester. The Town Council would be consulted once initial feasibility had been considered.

MISCELLEANOUS

Town Clerk advised a letter had been received from the Sector Inspector inviting volunteers to come forward to take part in a Speedwatch initiative. No action required from the Town Council.

The Town Clerk confirmed we have been successful in our application for a Small Scale Environmental Improvement Bid and we can go ahead with the project to replace the Town Hall front doors. Additional quotes will be required. We have also received confirmation that our bid for Jointly Funded Minor Improvement Scheme funds relating to traffic calming and signage for London Road has been successful. More details will follow in due course.

CLLR BUTCHER advised the columns for hanging baskets on the Recreation Ground had been painted and several benches had been given a coat of paint.

CLLR MS MIDDLETON advised she was beginning preparation of the next Town Council newsletter for distribution in June. Cllrs to provide ideas for articles as soon as possible please.

CLLR MRS LOOKER reported that a choir from our twinned town of Szentendre would be coming to perform in St Mary the Virgin church in May, CLLR MRS LOOKER also advised the Town Council may be approached again regarding a future twinning agreement with Gubbio, in Italy.

CLLR MRS HULL advised Police Neighbourhood Forums are going to be disbanded and taken on by the District Council who will provide a broader remit than the Police.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 21 MAY 2009 IN THE TOWN HALL

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm Mayor