

## **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2009**

**PRESENT:** M COHEN Town Mayor,  
Councillors: R BUTCHER, M DOBBIE, Mrs H HULL, Mrs A M LOOKER, Ms D MIDDLETON, C RICHARDSON, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON, G WILSON,

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD  
Deputy Mace Bearer: Mr F CARTER

2 members of the public were in attendance

### **09/101 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

CLLR BROWN Deputy Town Mayor: representing Godmanchester Town Council at a Twinning event in Szentendre; CLLR CANT: work pattern; CLLR DUTTON: holiday; CLLR HYAMS: family commitment; CLLR O'DONNELL: family illness; CLLR TAYLOR: holiday; CLLR VANE PERCY: family commitment.

### **09/102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON confirmed the Play Pathfinder Grant application would be discussed, which related to Judith's Field; CLLR WILSON – JFMIB proposed traffic calming Crowhill/Sweetings Road, Code of Conduct items relating to Case No 13 and Case No 15, property matters relating to the Environment Agency (his employer), planning matter relating to Cow Lane as Environment Agency would also be consulted; CLLR BUTCHER – JFMIB proposed traffic calming Crowhill/Sweetings Road (home address would be affected); CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON - JFMIB proposed traffic calming Crowhill/Sweetings Road (home address would be affected); CLLR COHEN – Code of Conduct items relating to Case No 15 and Case No 16; CLLR Mrs LOOKER – Play Pathfinder Grant application (due to family interest and land ownership)

### **09/103 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON pointed out that in Minute 09/091 in relation to the Definitive Map was not clear and it was amended to read “ Mrs Pickersgill commented on the report regarding the application to modify the Definitive Map regarding Almond Close and Cambridge Road and confirmed that over 20 people had used the route without challenge for over 20 years. In the report it referred to the path as an “existing roadway” and she hoped further representation could be made on this issue.” The Town Clerk and Mayor signed the changes made to this minute. The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July were then duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

### **09/104 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:**

Mr Doherty advised he had attempted to make representations to Cambridgeshire County Council and the Environment Agency relating to the planning matter to extend the duration of sand and gravel extraction and restoration with imported fill materials from June 2009 to June 2018 at Cow Lane. He continues to fiercely oppose any further extraction and infill on this site due to poor drainage and potential problems mentioned on previous occasions.

Mr Kynoch reported during recent heavy rainfall, Cambridge Road, beside the allotments had been impassable. (This information had been forwarded to the Highways Supervisor at the time.)

Mr Kynoch pointed out that Wyton & Houghton Parish Council held Committee Meetings rather than working party meetings and asked whether the Town Council had considered a more formal approach to their discussions on Planning matters. The MAYOR advised Mr Kynoch that the Town Council had considered this option but favoured an informal approach which did not prevent any member of the Town Council being involved in the decision making process for Planning responses.

Mr Kynoch advised that the residents on Post Street had still not heard from the Environment Agency with confirmation of their proposals in relation to Flood Risk Management. Mr Kynoch also suggested the Town Council may wish to consider membership of the Associated Membership of Parliamentary Waterways Group. CLLR WILSON declared his interest in this item as the Environment Agency are his employer and CLLR Mrs HULL declared an interest in this item as her home is on Post Street.

#### **09/105 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

THE MAYOR had represented the Town on 10 occasions since the last meeting and the DEPUTY MAYOR on 3 occasions. The DEPUTY MAYOR was currently in Szentendre to mark the 20th Anniversary of their Twinning with Wertheim.

THE MAYOR reminded all that the Annual Civic Service would be held on Sunday 20th September. All Cllrs and their partners were invited to attend.

THE MAYOR confirmed he had made a start on the bid to have Godmanchester awarded status as a Fairtrade town. He needs more members for a steering group and invited Cllrs or residents who were interested, to contact him through the Town Office.

THE MAYOR advised a Finance Working Party would be held in the QES on 25th August, starting at 7.30pm.

THE MAYOR advised a Macmillan Coffee Morning was scheduled for 25th September to be held in the Senior Citizens Club.

#### **09/106 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING:**

The Town Clerk had provided an updated schedule of outstanding matters. Items updated: Parish Plans- Cllr Middleton had suggested a public meeting be held to seek residents views later in the year; information was awaited from Cllr Hyams on possible contacts to design a Town Council website; Cllr Vane Percy had agreed to liaise with Hirst Conservation regarding treatment of the Mayoral Board; additional information had been received from Jacowe Joinery in respect of the materials which could be used for the replacement of the Town Hall front doors, the Town Clerk would liaise with HDC Conservation Department; draft proposals in respect of additional traffic calming measures on London Road had been passed to Cllr Dutton in the first instance; Cllr Brown and Cllr Hyams were still liaising with the Environment Agency with regard to handrails for the disabled access fishing platforms.

### **09/107 HDC ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT: CASE NO 13**

CLLR WILSON read a letter which had been agreed with Colin Meadowcroft – Monitoring Officer for Huntingdonshire District Council, in which he apologised to all members of the Town Council for failing to declare he was an employee of the Environment Agency when items relating to Flood Defence Options for the Causeway, Godmanchester were considered at meetings of the Town Council. The Standards Committee were of the view that whilst there was evidence to demonstrate he had failed to declare a personal interest on several occasions when business relating to his employer had arisen on the Town Council's agenda, the Committee had sufficient doubt about his deliberate intention to mislead and concluded it would not be expedient to pursue the complaint through to an investigation. CLLR WILSON gave his assurance that he had not intended to mislead or deceive the Council, and unreservedly apologised for his failure to declare a personal interest when this issue was discussed. The Standards Committee required CLLR WILSON to receive further training on the Code of Conduct and it was recommended that all Cllrs should attend training on the Code of Conduct. The Town Clerk would liaise with HDC to arrange a suitable time and date.

### **09/108 HDC ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT: CASE NO 15**

CLLR WILSON confirmed Case No 15 related to a complaint made to the Standards Board by CLLR DUTTON and CLLR HYAMS that he had breached 7 sections of the Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee found no case to answer but had confirmed that they will circulate the Code of Publicity to all Parish and Town Councils for clarification.

### **09/109 HDC ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT: CASE NO 16**

CLLR COHEN confirmed he had been reported to the Standards Board by CLLR DUTTON and CLLR HYAMS. The complaint concerned CLLR COHEN'S alleged involvement in publicity around the election campaign conducted by CLLR WILSON for the County Council seat on 4th June and in particular his appearance in an article featured in the Hunts Post and News and Crier newspapers dated 27th and 28th May 2009 respectively. It was also alleged that as Mayor of Godmanchester he had permitted his chain of office to be loaned to CLLR WILSON for the purpose of this publicity even though CLLR WILSON'S period of office had ended. The Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee decided that no further action be taken as no breach of the Code of Conduct was disclosed.

CLLR MIDDLETON requested that Cllrs should support each other constructively in future by demonstrating respect for each other and if it was believed another Cllr had acted improperly or unwisely, it should be brought to that person's attention to provide them with an opportunity to correct the matter or behave differently in future before taking it to a higher authority, which would ensure Cllr's time was used constructively and for the benefit of the town.

### **09/110 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS**

CLLR WILSON had met with CCC Traffic Engineer Emma Murden in relation to the initial safety audit relating to traffic calming proposals on London Road. They had also discussed the possibility of a cycle path along The Causeway and the limitation of provision of a cycle path along Post Street. CLLR WILSON confirmed CCC was still repairing potholes in the

area and if any Cllr was aware of problems, they could pass details to him. CLLR WILSON advised the Winter maintenance programme had also been discussed in the light of last year's experiences and he confirmed the distribution of grit had been delayed through a shortage of drivers.

#### **09/111 PLAY PATHFINDER GRANT APPLICATION**

CLLR MS MIDDLETON confirmed the first part of the application had been submitted and Godmanchester Town Council had been provisionally successful in securing £35,000, subject to successfully completing the second part of the application, which was due by 23rd September. The feedback from the initial application had been very useful and was tailored to our particular application. A recent working party meeting had identified 7 companies to approach to provide initial designs. A specific brief had been provided and the companies had been asked to respond by 1st September. A further working party meeting was scheduled for 2nd September to discuss responses received. The schools would be approached to discuss the proposed designs in the following week and it was envisaged a further working party meeting would be held on 14th September and proposals submitted to the Town Council meeting on 17th September for approval and submission on 23rd September. Cllrs were asked to consider a number of issues relating to insurance, maintenance, actual location of proposed equipment, and S106 funds, before proposals were submitted for approval on 17th September.

#### **09/112 AUTUMN TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

Frequency of the Town Council newsletter was discussed and it was AGREED that for the coming year we would continue to produce a newsletter each quarter and that Cllrs would continue to deliver these. CLLR MIDDLETON confirmed she already had an outline of articles for inclusion in the next edition, which should be put together and ready for Town Council approval at the September meeting and then available for delivery towards the end of September.

#### **09/113 JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR IMPROVEMENT BID:**

CLLR DUTTON had completed the form for the 2010/2011 application for JFMIB recommending traffic calming measures along Crowhill/Sweetings Road. It was AGREED to submit this application but it was AGREED to remove the recommendation for speed cushions. This would allow the Traffic Engineer to assess the scheme and recommend the most appropriate method for traffic calming.

#### **09/114 SWINE FLU MANAGEMENT**

CCC have requested support to recruit volunteers to staff centres for the distribution of antiviral medicines in relation to a possible Swine Flu pandemic. Details would be included in the next Town Council newsletter and Town Clerk would advise CCC accordingly.

CCC has also made a request for possible venues for the possible mass vaccination of the community. It was felt the Town Council do not have suitable premises to offer, but other suggestions would be passed to CCC.

A possible increase in demand for spaces in Godmanchester Lawn Cemetery was considered as a result of a pandemic. It was AGREED that with immediate effect that in exceptional circumstances, the Town Council would reserve the right to refuse an application made to purchase a grave space from a non-Godmanchester resident. Current fees for cemetery plots would be reviewed at the Finance Working Party.

## **09/115 PROPERTY MATTERS**

CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON presented a detailed report following a working party meeting held at the end of July. Following discussion, the following resolutions were made: That the Town Council AGREED to formally acknowledge it's responsibility for the maintenance of the closed Churchyard for St Mary the Virgin Godmanchester and this commitment should be confirmed with the PCC for St Mary's.

That ownership of all walls surrounding the Churchyard should be confirmed and formally agreed with all affected parties.

That a firm be instructed to inspect the 4 monuments in the Churchyard, identified as requiring repair by the quinquennial report from the Architect to the Diocese, a quote is obtained for any immediate work to these four monuments and it was AGREED that this work would be undertaken as a matter of priority.

That a joint committee between the Town Council and PCC be formed to liaise closely on matters affecting both bodies

That in relation to the Non-Conformist Burial Ground, before further progress could be made, it was essential that ownership of the wall between the Non-Conformist Burial Ground and the Primary School was established. Correspondence from Leeds Day and Mr Pithey regarding issues related to the Non-Conformist Burial Ground would receive an interim response. CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON would also make enquiries regarding the Trust in place for the Non-Conformist Burial Ground to establish how it could be wound up.

That grave testing should begin with the London Road Lawn Cemetery and CLLR MRS WORTHINGTON would draw up a schedule of issues and proposed timescale for presentation at the September Town Council meeting.

That a sum should be set aside each year for maintenance of the Town Hall, Queen Elizabeth School and Judith's Field buildings.

That the Town Clerk would advise the Youth Club that they could provide a cupboard for their secure storage to be located in the changing rooms at Judith's Field.

That further investigation was needed to resolve the problems with water getting into the Queen Elizabeth School from the roof, which had periodically caused the floor boards in the small hall and large hall to swell and bow.

That the Town Council did not accept the blanket indemnity suggested by the Environment Agency in relation to possible removal of railings at the Mill Steps. The Environment Agency would be asked to remove the existing fencing and replace it, keeping to the existing alignment, with railings of a suitable style and in keeping with the conservation area.

CLLR WILSON left at 10.25pm

## **09/116 CORRESPONDENCE**

The list of correspondence in Appendix A was considered.

Town Clerk would reply to a letter from W Brown regarding the state of The Causeway and advise his letter would be referred to the Environment Agency for their response.

## **09/117 FINANCIAL/ACCOUNTS**

The list of payments to be made in Appendix B was approved  
Councillors received a copy of the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 20th August 2009. Councillors would receive a copy of the budget report on the year to date by email.

## **09/118 TRAINING REQUEST**

A request from the Town Clerk to attend a Training and Information Seminar on 18th September at a cost of £5 was APPROVED. CLLR COHEN and CLLR BROWN also wished to attend this Seminar and additional costs of £40 were APPROVED.

## **09/119 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.

## **MISCELLEANOUS**

THE MAYOR thanked the Chairs and attendees of working parties who had achieved a great deal in the past month.

The Town Clerk reported CPALC had provided details of a scheme to provide unemployed young people between the ages of 18 – 24 the opportunity to learn new admin skills by working with Parish Councils for a 6 month period. No financial contribution would be required from the Town Council. Further details would be provided in due course, but the Town Clerk felt it would be useful to have another pair of hands in the office and it was envisaged some of the routine admin functions could be passed to the trainee, freeing the Town Clerk and her assistant to concentrate on bringing Cemetery records up to date. The Town Council were happy to support this idea in principle. Town Clerk would advise CPALC.

CLLR MRS ANN LOOKER announced her resignation from her position as Town Councillor with immediate effect. She felt that with developments relating to land owned by her family, her position on the Town Council was untenable. However, she would continue to be on hand to provide knowledge or information she might have, on Town Council issues, as and when required. THE MAYOR thanked her on behalf of the Town Council for her many years service and felt the Town owed a great deal to her for her contribution, which had included three years as TOWN MAYOR.

The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the resignation and notices to advise of the casual vacancy would be displayed in due course.

**THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2009 IN THE TOWN HALL**

The meeting ended at 11.04pm Mayor