

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2009

PRESENT: M COHEN Town Mayor, D BROWN, Deputy Mayor
Councillors: R BUTCHER, M DOBBIE, J DUTTON, Mrs H HULL, C R HYAMS, Ms D MIDDLETON, C RICHARDSON, D TAYLOR, N WELLS, Mrs S WORTHINGTON, G WILSON,

Town Clerk: Mrs M LIDDIARD
Mace Bearer: Mr M WILLIAMS

3 members of the public were in attendance

09/120 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

CLLR CANT: work pattern; CLLR VANE PERCY: absent

09/121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR WILSON: item relating to The Causeway/Environment Agency as Environment Agency is his employer. CLLR Ms MIDDLETON: planning application from Wood Green as neighbour works at Wood Green. CLLR BROWN: planning application re 4F New Street – neighbouring property. CLLR COHEN: letter containing comments on planning application relating to London Road – knows author of letter. CLLR DUTTON: application from Mr Pauley to become Town Councillor as knows Mrs Pauley.

09/122 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th August were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

09/123 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

Mr Doherty asked the Town Council again to give urgent consideration to support provision of disabled parking bays in particular for residents visiting the chemist. He suggested the Town Hall car park an ideal location.

Mr Doherty stated the traffic flow into Cambridge Road and also into The Causeway was deteriorating and a one way system should be considered.

A resident expressed her interest in becoming a Town Councillor and was duly invited to call in to discuss this with the Town Clerk. CLLR DUTTON declared an interest as the resident is known to him through District County matters.

Mr Williams asked whether anything could be done about cars parking on the grass verge between Holmehill and Ferndown Close. CLLR DUTTON would look into this issue and pass this to CLLR HYAMS if it was a District County matter.

Mr Pauley advised he had been passed a letter from a resident in relation to The Causeway from the Environment Agency to Jonathan Djanogly, MP. He passed copies to the Town Council for information.

CLLR DUTTON confirmed he was in discussion with Cambridgeshire Highways Division and Cambridgeshire Constabulary with regard to the traffic issues that had caused problems at the morning Remembrance Day Service last year, with the aim of resolving problems in advance of this year's service. Everyone would be advised of the outcome in due course, and an article would be included in the next Town Council newsletter.

09/124 CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCY

Mr Pauley addressed the Town Council outlining his reasons for becoming a Councillor. After due discussion, it was AGREED to co-opt Mr Pauley. Town Clerk would advise HDC of the appointment and liaise with Mr Pauley at the earliest opportunity.

09/125 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

THE MAYOR confirmed that CLLR DAVID O'DONNELL had resigned creating a casual vacancy on the Town Council. The necessary notices were being displayed and anyone interested in applying should contact the Town Clerk in the first instance.

THE MAYOR confirmed the Town Office would be closed on Friday 18th September.

THE MAYOR also confirmed that Bill Looker's funeral would take place at 2pm on Friday 18th September, and he offered his apologies for not attending as he would be attending another funeral at the same time.

THE MAYOR confirmed arrangements for the Civic Service and that Cllrs and their partners should meet at the Town Hall at 11.00am to walk across to St Mary the Virgin at 11.10am.

THE MAYOR advised a Fairtrade evening in aid of the Hinchbrooke New Life Appeal and Help for Heroes, would be held on Friday 23rd October in the Queen Elizabeth School. Tickets would be on sale from the Town Office at £10 each. THE MAYOR would be grateful for donation of any raffle prizes for the evening.

THE MAYOR reported Godmanchester had been successful in this year's Anglia in Bloom event and had been awarded Silver in our category. Congratulations were offered to Huntingdon who won Gold, and to the Godmanchester in Bloom team for a splendid result.

THE MAYOR had represented the Town on 17 occasions, and the DEPUTY MAYOR on 4 occasions since the last meeting.

09/126 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING:

The Town Clerk reported that CLLR BROWN and CLLR HYAMS had met with a representative from the Environment Agency regarding provision and installation of handrails to the two existing disabled access fishing platforms and had requested further information.

The Town Clerk confirmed that paperwork was being put together to present to the next Town Council meeting to approve arrangements for additional bank accounts. The Co-op Bank, Nat West, and Abbey have all been approached for further information in the first instance and CLLRS: BROWN, BUTCHER, DOBBIE, DUTTON, Mrs HULL and Mrs WORTHINGTON all AGREED to act as signatories on the new accounts.

09/127 HDC ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT: CASE NO 17

CLLR BROWN read a statement he had prepared in relation to the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. The complaint, submitted by CLLR HYAMS and CLLR DUTTON had been considered by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee of the Standards Committee who decided no further action be taken in respect of the allegation as no breach of the Code was disclosed. CLLR BROWN asked for the formal record in the minutes to state that the conclusion of the Standards Committee in this case was that there was no case to answer and that he believed the complaint was made maliciously.

09/128 HDC ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT: CASE NO 16

CLLR COHEN advised that following his statement in the minutes in the previous month, he had tried to obtain further information regarding the complaint which had been made against him. He had obtained information under Freedom of Information but his request under the Data Protection Act was not granted as the matter was exempt under the whistle blowing legislation. He stated his opinion that this seemed ludicrous but confirmed he wished to draw a line under the matter at this point.

09/129 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS

CLLR DUTTON reported that concerns were being expressed regarding the CCC financial “black hole”. However, CLLR DUTTON confirmed that any S106 money already received and allocated to projects was secure although future S106 funding may take be delayed by years.

CLLR DUTTON reported that licensing laws were changing in relation to alcohol sales and although Temporary Event Notices were still available, the requirements relating to an annual licence were changing.

CLLR DUTTON confirmed work to replace the Chinese Bridge was scheduled to start on 9th November. CLLR DUTTON was asked to ensure CCC was kept informed of an apparent increase in the rate of deterioration of the structure due to vandalism, hasten interim safety measures to the bridge and reiterate that a further inspection of the bridge was recommended.

09/130 PLAY PATHFINDER GRANT APPLICATION

CLLR TAYLOR provided an update on the current position relating to the project and asked the Town Council to commit to four principles in respect of the Play Pathfinder project:
To commit to delivering an adventurous playground specially designed for children aged 8-13 in conjunction with CCC Play Pathfinder project – this may result in planning permission being required if the structures were to go beyond a particular height.
To support this facility recognising the implications for the budget in terms of insurance and grounds maintenance and ongoing risk assessments.

To devote up to £10,000 from the S106 fund for appropriate surfacing costs of the playground.

To agree to the proposed location being the north eastern end of Judith's Field.

CLLR TAYLOR was thanked for the incredible amount of work he and fellow Cllrs had put into this project so far and CLLR Ms MIDDLETON was recognised for producing quite outstanding documents.

Four companies would be invited to tender for 8 pieces of specific equipment and tenders were to be sent to the Town Office to be received no later than 2nd October. They would be reviewed on 5th October by the working party and a draft copy of the application for the Play Pathfinder Grant had to be submitted no later than 14th October. The Town Council would be asked to confirm the submission at the next Town Council meeting on 15th October.

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON confirmed the breakdown of available funding is as follows: S106 money set aside for the replacement of the skate ramps: £33k for capital costs and £19k for maintenance. £8k match funding from HDC. £16k set aside in our budget in this financial year. It was therefore proposed that some of the S106 money would be utilised for this project- £35k anticipated grant from Play Pathfinder + £10k from S106 capital costs for surfacing providing a project budget of £45k.

CLLR HYAMS arrived at 9.07pm

The above four principles were AGREED by the Town Council.

09/131 AUTUMN TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON advised the draft newsletter was not yet ready for discussion but there was too much content this quarter and some of the articles would need to be put aside for a future edition. It was AGREED that a four page edition was preferred to an 8 page edition and CLLR Ms MIDDLETON would circulate the draft to all for comment by email before passing to CLLR HYAMS to create the final document.

09/132 JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR IMPROVEMENT BID:

CLLR DUTTON advised that the Town Council needed to approve the proposals provided by Highways for traffic calming on London Road. Although there was some concern that the suggested build-outs did not go far enough to slow traffic, it was AGREED that the proposals should be APPROVED. Town Clerk would write to Highways to confirm.

09/133 TREES ON THE RECREATION GROUND

CLLR BUTCHER reported that four quotes had been received to pollard the Willow trees lining Queen's Walk. It was AGREED to accept the quotation from K Fergusons for the pollarding of 7 trees but not to remove the ivy on the tree already pollarded in the sum of £3080 (this deducted the sum itemised for removal of the ivy). Town Clerk would advise all parties who had provided quotations. CLLR BROWN requested that if possible a couple of the pieces of pollarded willow be kept with a view to using it in conjunction with the Play Pathfinder project.

CLLR BUTCHER also advised that an inspection of all large trees would be undertaken and it was probable that a further sum would be needed for additional pollarding for trees in our care. The question of numbering the trees was discussed and CLLR DUTTON advised he could provide suitable discs and CLLR BROWN offered to provide tools for applying the numbering. They would liaise with CLLR BUTCHER.

09/134 PROPERTY MATTERS

CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON presented a short report which identified memorials in the churchyard for St Mary the Virgin which needed urgent and immediate attention. It was recommended that Cemetery Development Services, who had visited the churchyard with CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON and the Town Clerk to inspect the identified dangerous memorials, be instructed to carry out immediate repair work at a cost of up to but not to exceed £1000. This sum was APPROVED. CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON confirmed that a letter would be sent to the Diocese of Ely explaining our intentions to carry out the urgent work (much of which was identified by the Diocese Architect in the quinquennial report). CLLR TAYLOR declared an interest as an Assistant Day Chaplain for Ely Cathedral. Town Clerk would contact Cemetery Development Services to progress this matter.

09/135 MEETINGS LIST/CIVIC EVENTS

The proposed list of Town Council meetings and Civic Events was considered. As the Annual Town Meeting is usually held at the beginning of April, this does not provide an opportunity for the end of year accounts to be provided prior to the meeting. It has therefore been suggested the Annual Town Meeting be held later in the month. (It must be held between 1 March – 1 June). As there will be elections taking place in Huntingdon clarification is needed from the Monitoring Officer as to any conflicts that provision of information may cause. Remaining dates on the schedule were all approved and Town Clerk would issue the list once clarification and advice had been received.

09/136 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

The Town Clerk advised that following advice from HDC Conservation Team it was acceptable to replace the existing Town Hall entrance doors with soft wood rather than hard wood. A revised quote in the sum of £1961.74 from Jacowe Joinery, which included painting the new doors inside and out, was APPROVED. A Listed Building Consent form would be required and the Town Clerk would liaise with CLLR VANE PERCY to complete all paperwork.

09/137 CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence in [Appendix A](#) was considered.

The Town Clerk would seek clarification regarding the requirement for regular marking of the football pitch at Judith's Field.

Town Clerk would confirm the Town Council AGREED to meet the cost of £1 per elector in respect of the traffic calming project in London Road.

Town Clerk would advise the Traffic Engineer that the Town Council did not support the suggested provision of short term parking bays in Silver Street as this would cause inconvenience to the residents of Silver Street. The proposals for a disabled parking bay at either end of the Causeway was APPROVED and supported by the Town Council, however the Town Council would keep in mind the option to provide disabled parking in the area in front of the Queen Elizabeth School, opposite Post Street. The Traffic Engineer would also be advised that a proposal to install bollards at the junction of Corpus Christi Lane with Old Court Hall was not supported although suitable pavement and road markings and appropriate signage were considered a better option and the safety at this junction should be considered.

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON declared in interest as she lives in Corpus Christi Lane and she volunteered to canvas opinion of residents in Corpus Christi Lane about the safety measures they would consider to be most effective.

09/138 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 17th September 2009. Councillors received a copy of the budget report on the year to date.

09/139 CLOSURE OF ANNUAL RETURN AND AUDIT

The Town Clerk reported that Moore Stephens had closed the audit for the year ended 31 March 2009 without comment. The Town Clerk was congratulated on production of another successful audit. The necessary notice and copy of the audit was on display on the Town Council noticeboard.

CLLR HYAMS left at 10.53pm

09/140 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.

Fairfield Partnership had asked to meet with the Town Council and it was AGREED the Town Clerk would invite them to attend the October Town Council meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

CLLR BUTCHER read a statement in which he expressed his opinion that the Council's aim has always been to provide the best possible service for the residents of Godmanchester. He was saddened that the recent issues had not been resolved amongst ourselves without reference to outside authorities. The end result was that this course of action had diverted a lot of the Council's time and effort away from its main aim and he believed the only people that would suffer, should it continue, would be the residents of Godmanchester.

CLLR BROWN advised the recent Twinning trip to Szentendre had been very interesting and he encouraged Cllrs to get more involved in Twinning matters.

The Town Clerk advised she would need to purchase up to date reference books which she would do within the next month.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2009 IN THE TOWN HALL

The meeting ended at 11.15pm Mayor