

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 15 JULY 2010

PRESENT: A WELTON: Town Mayor
Councillors: Mrs S WORTHINGTON (Deputy Mayor), D BROWN, R BUTCHER, Mrs J FLETCHER,
Mrs H HULL, C HYAMS, Ms J MacLEOD, A MARTIN; Ms D MIDDLETON, N
PAULEY, C RICHARDSON, D TAYLOR, C VANE PERCY, N WELLS

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

5 members of the public were in attendance

10/109 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

CLLR CANT: work pattern; CLLR WILSON: holiday

10/110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR HYAMS: all items relating to HDC; CLLR Ms MIDDLETON: items relating to Wood Green as a friend works there; CLLR Mrs HULL: proposed flood defence scheme – personal and prejudicial interest; CLLR Mrs FLETCHER: items relating to Judith's Field as Mr Ireson junior is a family friend, and planning matter relating to Community Primary School as children are on waiting list; CLLR RICHARDSON: planning matter relating to Roman Way/Judith's Field; CLLR VANE PERCY: item on proposed flood defence relating to Mill Yard as his property over looks this area; CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON: planning application relating to Salvation Army Hall which is submitted by her neighbour.

10/111 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2010 were duly APPROVED and signed as a complete and accurate record.

10/112 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

Mr Kynoch expressed his concern regarding the state of the flood defence measures installed in the Hemingfords two years ago. He stated the defences were crumbling as wrong materials had been used and Godmanchester would be advised to bear this in mind when considering flood defences for the town.

Mr Doherty advised that he had read in the local paper that the Huntingdon/Godmanchester footbridge would be subject to restrictions while repair work was carried out from 19th July for 9 days. He suggested the local schools be contacted to advise them of an alternative route across Portholme Meadow which would be a safe route for cyclists and walkers.

Town Clerk

10/113 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

THE MAYOR advised he had represented the town on 8 occasions since the last meeting. CLLR VANE PERCY, CLLR WILSON, CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON had all represented the town on one occasion and CLLR RICHARDSON on two occasions.

10/114 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING:

The Town Clerk advised that Morrisons, the contractor who had laid pipe work along The Avenue and Post Street, had been approached with a request to meet the cost of 2 bags of bulbs, which would be purchased and planted later in the year by Godmanchester in Bloom. Four bags in total would be needed to fill in gaps and enhance the planting in these areas.

CLLR BROWN had undertaken investigations into the ongoing problems of water ingress

to the Queen Elizabeth School. The next proposed step was to erect a temporary scaffold tower and remove some of the tiles to determine how deep the lead lining ran. CLLR BROWN confirmed David Stokes had been involved in the discussions to date as he had been involved in the refurbishment of the QES in 1987.

10/115 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS

CLLR HYAMS and CLLR WILSON had both presented a written report to the meeting. CLLR HYAMS provided an update on discussions he had held with HDC regarding the future of the public toilets in Godmanchester. He confirmed that as a result of an independent cross party review the HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel had looked at HDC's finances and budget on 11 June 2009 and made the recommendation that led to the decision to close the toilets. Recommendations were made on a number of issues including planning enforcement, industrial units, leisure centres etc affecting the whole district. CLLR HYAMS confirmed that the public toilets were to be offered to the Town Council's for them to take on but if they did not take up this offer, the toilets would be closed and the land disposed of. HDC were also looking at the possibility of approaching hotels and other establishments with incentives to make their toilets available for members of the public.

CLLR HYAMS stated HDC would continue to discuss this issue in a positive manner to see that the toilets in Godmanchester were reopened. CLLR HYAMS confirmed that St Neots Town Council had now reached an agreement regarding their public toilets, Huntingdon Town Council had not taken on responsibility for public toilets but Purvis Marine had taken on responsibility for the riverside public toilets which would be for the use of their customers, rather than general public. CLLR HYAMS stated that as soon as meaningful negotiations between HDC and Godmanchester Town Council were underway, the toilets could be opened.

CLLR HYAMS questioned the Town Council's position in supporting the petition presented to the Town Council by the Community Association, which was then presented to HDC by CLLR BROWN on behalf of the Town Council. CLLR PAULEY said that a formal vote on support or presentation of the petition had not been taken, but it was confirmed that the petition was in line with what the Town Council wanted to happen – to urge HDC to reconsider their decision to close the public toilets in Godmanchester.

CLLR WILSON had advised that it was probable that we could have the traffic stopped for the 2 minutes silence, and for the procession to and from the Town Hall on Remembrance Sunday. It was felt that this showed tremendous disrespect to the fallen and Town Clerk would work with CLLR WILSON to seek closure of the road throughout the service.

**Cllr Wilson/
Town Clerk**

CLLR PAULEY asked that CLLR WILSON follow up on the matter of provision of protected entrance white line markings for a resident in East Chadley Lane. The Town Council would also like information about criteria/strategy applied to provision of protected entrance markings from CCC.

Cllr Wilson

With the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy it was AGREED to discuss this issue at the next Town Council meeting with a view to confirming the Town Council's opposition to the development of land east of the A1198 in writing to HDC.

10/116 CORRESPONDENCE

Five people have applied for the vacancy for P/T Caretaker.

CLLR RICHARDSON advised there were due to be changes to the mobile library route.

Cllr Hyams

CLLR HYAMS would forward a copy of his response to an application for provision of a disabled parking bay in Fox Grove. The Town Council had not received the application in time for consideration at this Town Council meeting and had requested an extension to the deadline for comments.

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON suggested we should draw up a policy as to which items of email correspondence should be included in the correspondence schedule. The communications working party would draw up a draft policy in the first instance.

10/117 PROPOSED FLOOD DEFENCE FOR GODMANCHESTER

The Town Council have been asked to nominate representatives to attend a meeting with the Environment Agency and HDC to discuss their views on the Mill Yard, and the two green areas either end of The Causeway. Following lengthy discussion, it was AGREED that members of the Town Council would not attend a meeting with the EA and HDC. The Town Clerk would advise the EA that we wished the Mill Yard, slipway (area of land near the Post Office) and the grassed area at the other end of the Causeway (to the side of Ethnic Origins) to remain in keeping with the nature of the town. The EA were to be asked to put forward their proposals for our comments. The EA were also to be asked to communicate regularly with the Town Council to keep us advised as progress was made.

Town Clerk

CLLR PAULEY proposed the following motion, which was seconded by CLLR HYAMS: "Godmanchester Town Council accepts in principle the Environment Agency's intention to introduce a flood defence scheme it claims is vital to protect more than 500 homes in the town from flooding – but we reserve the right to comment on individual sections of the scheme we are unhappy with and we reserve the right to suggest changes/alternatives. We also reaffirm that Godmanchester Town Council will not be contributing financially to the scheme or any planned enhancements." 8 votes for this motion, 0 against, 6 abstained. Motion carried.

CLLR PAULEY proposed the following motion, which was seconded by CLLR HYAMS: "Godmanchester Town Council requests that the Environment Agency review the process of keeping the channels clear on an annual basis, on the river that affects Godmanchester." All in favour. Motion carried.

10/118 FINANCIAL/ACCOUNTS

10/118.1 The list of payments to be made in Appendix B was approved. The Town Clerk confirmed that confirmation had been received from Moore Stephens, Chartered Accountants, of the successful closure of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2009. Thanks to the Town Clerk were recorded. Closure of the audit would be advertised on the notice board.

10/118.2 Councillors received a copy of monthly salary information, the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 15th July 2010, a copy of the budget report on the year to date, and a copy of the monthly bank reconciliation as verified by THE MAYOR.

10/118.3 It was AGREED to purchase and install an additional litter bin to be located at Judith's Field at a cost of up to £700. This would be met by the Environment budget.

Cllr Vane Percy left at 9.58pm

Cllr Taylor left at 10.05 pm

10/119 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. It was noted that the Town Council does not receive sufficient documentary evidence in terms of pre application advice provided to applicants or copies of correspondence HDC has received in respect of planning applications. CLLR HYAMS would request this information be provided.

Cllr Hyams

As the Town Council had previously recommended approval in respect of an application for a timber gazebo at the rear of the White Hart in Cambridge Road, it was AGREED that CLLR WELLS would write on behalf of the Town Council to support the appeal against HDC's decision to refuse this application. (2 Cllrs were not in favour of this support).

Cllr Wells

Confirmation was received that there were no locations being considered for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Godmanchester at the present time.

Discussions regarding access to Judith's Field from Bascraft Way and Roman Way continue to be held. It was AGREED to seek information from the Looker family concerning boundary lines for Judith's Field in respect of ditch ownership. Letters would be sent to those residents who had raised the initial enquiries or concerns about anti social behaviour to advise the matter had proved to be more complex than originally anticipated.

Cllr Wells/
Town Clerk

10/120 WORKING PARTY REPORTS

10/120.1 **PROPERTY**: CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON confirmed she and THE MAYOR had attended a meeting with Chris Allen at HDC to discuss the public toilets in June. The petition to HDC had been presented to the Cabinet and we awaited the outcome of both.

Cllr Brown

CLLR BROWN asked for approval to hire a scaffold tower to access the roof of the Queen Elizabeth School. Costs of £100 were APPROVED.

Cllr Mrs Hull left at 10.37pm

10/120.2 **PERSONNEL**: CLLR Mrs FLETCHER presented a report recommending the Town Council agree to the employment of two further part time caretakers to cover 7 days at Judith's Field and one day at Queen Elizabeth School. CLLR Mrs FLETCHER confirmed that despite his willingness to work 7 days, Keith Walters must work a maximum of 6 days and have a rest day to meet legal requirements. However, as we currently have 3 staff (Town Clerk, Town Clerk's Assistant, QES Caretaker) if we employ 2 more staff, the Town Council will have an obligation to offer access to a pension scheme to all staff. At present, as there have only been 4 members of staff, there was no requirement to offer access to a pension scheme. CLLR PAULEY asked questions about the cost of additional holiday pay if another member of staff were employed and expressed his view that increasing expense on staff costs at this time was not acceptable. CLLR HYAMS said he would not support the employment of an additional member of staff. CLLR Mrs FLETCHER confirmed the national minimum wage was £5.80 per hour and we could not pay a rate lower than this; that a caretaker could not work a 7 day week and therefore to cover the two facilities: QES and Judith's Field, 3 caretakers were needed.

Cllr Hyams left at 11.15pm

Cllr Wells left at 11.30pm

Cllr Middleton
Cllr Worthington
Cllr Fletcher

It was AGREED that CLLR Ms MIDDLETON would provide calculations to show costs of employing 3 part time caretakers. CLLR Mrs WORTHINGTON would speak to CPALC and take advice regarding the position of pensions and the costs involved and it was AGREED a further Personnel working party would be held to discuss these matters. In the meantime it was AGREED that the candidates for the part time caretaker vacancy would be interviewed. Town Clerk would arrange. CLLR PAULEY abstained from these votes.

Town Clerk

10/120.3 **JUDITH'S FIELD FACILITIES**: CLLR Ms MIDDLETON presented a report following a recent working party meeting.

10/120.4 CLLR RICHARDSON presented a report on the work of LINK, COPE and the Patients Participation Group.

10/121 COUNCILLORS RESPONSIBILITIES/PORTFOLIOS

It was AGREED that due to the lateness of the hour, discussions on Cllrs responsibilities/portfolios would be carried forward to the August meeting. THE MAYOR confirmed that CLLR BUTCHER had taken on review of the Cemetery records and CLLR Mrs FLETCHER had taken the portfolio for Personnel for the time being.

MISCELLANEOUS

Town Clerk

Town Clerk would email Whippet Coaches regarding poor pushchair access to some of

their coaches.

Clr Brown

CLLR BROWN advised he had taken pictures of cracks on the chimneys on the QES roof. He would send these to all Cllrs for information.

All Cllrs

CLLR Ms MIDDLETON asked all Cllrs to send articles for the next Town Council newsletter to her by the end of the following week. CLLR Ms MIDDLETON asked that thanks to the Community Association for a successful Gala week and Picnic in the Park be recorded and also for a good edition of The Bridge magazine.

All Cllrs

CLLR BUTCHER suggested an extra litter pick be undertaken to supplement that carried out in April. A date of 25th September was set.

Town Clerk

CLLR PAULEY asked for confirmation of the times of operation for the landfill site at Cow Lane. Several lorries were queuing to enter the site at 7.30am. Town Clerk would establish times and advise all Cllrs.

CLLR PAULEY asked whether the traffic lights outside the White Hart in Cambridge Road could be supplied with shields/guards as the lights were extraordinarily bright and the possible cause of recent accidents. Town Clerk would liaise with Highways.

Town Clerk

CLLR PAULEY reminded everyone the next open meeting for members of the public to meet their Town Councillors would be held on 17th July from 11am to 1pm.

All Cllrs

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2010 IN THE TOWN HALL

The meeting ended at 11.55pm

Mayor