

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT: R TAPLIN (Town Mayor)
Councillors: S WORTHINGTON (Deputy Mayor); G CAMPBELL; Mrs S CONBOY; A HOOKER; P IRVING; P MORGAN; P ROUND; C THOMAS; C VANE PERCY; Mrs S WILSON; G WILSON; J YOUNG

Town Clerk: Ms V PRYCE
Mace Bearer: Mr M WILLIAMS

No members of the public were present

MINUTES

Action

20/21 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

CLLR Hladkiwskyj – OTHER ENGAGEMENT
CLLR Radford – HOLIDAY
CLLR Hyams – HOLIDAY

20/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

20/23 MINUTES:

The MAYOR proposed that the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16th January were accurate and should be accepted as a true record, all were in favour and it was so resolved.

20/24 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The MAYOR had attended the Huntingdon Mayor's Masked Ball; it had attracted a lower turnout than had been expected and so was moved from the new Coneygear Centre to the Town Hall.

20/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

No members of the public present
The club 800 Draw took place.

20/26 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

CLLR Wilson advised that further correspondence had been received from the Freeholders of Judith's Field advising that they did not want to pursue a sale of the freehold at this time. Correspondence from Copley's solicitors advised that the strip of land along the A1198, north of Judith's Field had been sold to Pan English development limited.

No progress had been made regarding the agreement for the A1198 access gate to Judith's Field with David Wilson Homes.

CLLR Wilson confirmed that he would chase up the double yellow lines on Tudor Road.

CLLR Conboy updated the Council on progress of the Nursery. She advised that candidates for the role of Manager had been shortlisted for interview. She hoped to confirm the appointment at the next Town Council meeting. CLLR Conboy thanked the Town Clerk for her work ensuring that the Council would in a position to ensure an effective handover to the new candidate. Town Council is on course to take-over the Nursery from the 31st March. CLLR Worthington and the Clerk had met with the volunteers on site and it was felt that everyone was very keen to see the Nursery develop. CLLR Conboy confirmed the next Nursery Group meeting would be held on 27th February, and all were welcome to attend. She advised that work was ongoing on a press release, and a draft business plan would be circulated at that meeting.

CLlr Wilson

CLlr Thomas updated the Council on the Mill Steps and reported that the next Community meeting would be held on the 24th March at which point the results of the piling test and the costings should be presented.

20/27 CORRESPONDENCE:

A list of correspondence was noted.

20/28 PROPERTY REPORT

CLLR Campbell presented the property paper. The final account for the renovation of the Judith's Field pavilion has been agreed at a sum of £338,197.63 with a £8,454.94 retention. CLLR Campbell advised that a sum of £3,750 had been included within this figure to cover additional Quantity Surveyor fees for the contractor, due to the number of changes in the contract. He advised that the matter had been debated at the Property Group meeting. CLLR Campbell advised that he and the architect had attempted to negotiate a lower sum - of £1,000 - with the contractor without success, and the Property Portfolio had suggested the Council might pay up to 50% of the contractor's Quantity Surveyors fees. CLLR Campbell advised that under the contract it is the architect that assesses the final contract sum and that contractually it would be difficult for the Council to object to that figure. The Clerk advised that any sums in excess of the agreed tender figure should be ratified at a full Town Council meeting prior to any agreement. The MAYOR proposed that the Council agree to pay up to 50% of the requested amount (£1875); all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr CAMPBELL noted that the Town Hall was in need of redecoration, he advised that in the past the Senior Citizens had replaced the carpet. CLLR Vane Percy advised that they had also redecorated the hall in recent years. CLLR Vane Percy suggested that the Town Hall needed to undergo a total renovation. CLLR Campbell advised that the Property Portfolio would be looking into a major refurbishment of the Town Hall in all of its areas once the lease reverted to the Council. CLLR Worthington advised that under lease the Town Council has no current responsibility to redecorate the Town Hall. CLLR Wilson asked if the Council would allow the Senior Citizens to continue to use the hall after the lease had expired and suggested that having some 'in principle' discussions with that group may be helpful with regard to future CIL expenditure.

CLLR Campbell advised that quotes had been received to replace pigeon spikes on the Town Hall, but that we would first seek to use our own staff to replace those which had become dislodged.

CLLR Campbell advised that the intercom was now being used to access the office. All CLLRS and staff had been given the access number and signage for the doors would be reviewed.

20/29 ENVIRONMENT REPORT:

CLLR Hooker presented the report and discussed the declared climate emergency. The MAYOR advised that there is a national network of other bodies which include county, district and town councils – that this was a mutual support network which would give the Council visibility and access to assistance and that there may be various grants that can be made available. The MAYOR advised that he had reviewed the Council fuel bills for the past five years in order to provide a baseline for future economies. CLLR Campbell proposed that the Clerk register the Town Council to the climate change network; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

CLLR Hooker advised that on Saturday 29th February the Community Association would be having a clear up of the Recreation Ground and would reset the temporary fencing. On behalf of the Council, The MAYOR thanked the Community Association for their efforts. CLLR Hooker advised that emergency work would be carried out on trees near the Osier beds, and that he was having discussions about clearing up one of the streams where there are five fallen willows. He advised that this work would be a joint project between the Community Association, the Town Council and the Pollarding Society.

The Town Council had ordered twelve mature trees which would be arriving at Judith's Field on 21st February, and volunteers were requested to assist with the planting.

CLLR Vane Percy advised that the request for the cleaning of the war memorial in time for VE Day (8 May) was valid and asked about the purchase of the pressure washer to carry out the work. CLLR Hooker advised that the purchase was being investigated, and also the possible

Town Clerk

Signed:

Dated:

purchase of a bowser.

20/30 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:

20/30.1 & 20/30.2 Approved the list of payments to be made. This included an additional payment to Hutchinson's, which had been received late but as this was part of an agreed tender price an exception was made to pay it.

20/30.3 Noted receipt of petty cash reconciliation to 31st January, monthly budget report on the year to date, monthly bank reconciliation.

20/31 BUSINESS REPORT:

CLLR Thomas presented the report for the Business Portfolio. The group had discussed CIL and proposed that a working party be formed to create a rolling prioritized plan of where CIL money should be expended – CLLRs were asked to email the Clerk to register their interest in joining the group. Council was advised that CLLR Conboy would be holding a meeting to refresh Councillors on the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan and its strategy.

CLLrs

CLLR Conboy requested additional support from Council with the Youth Council involving one Friday a month, while CLLR Thomas requested a further volunteer to represent the Council on the HGTA for nine meetings a year – CLLRs to advise the Clerk.

Council had previously proposed £150 per day for the use of Judith's Field for a Circus. The owner had since written to the Council and offered £700 for its duration on the land. CLLR Thomas proposed that the Council accept the £700 and report back on any potential damage to the land. The Circus had agreed that they would do the site survey and would then be responsible for the services and any ground damage. All in favour, and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

The Business Portfolio had collated the comments received by CLLR's and stallholders regarding the Xmas market, there had been unanimous praise for Cllr RADFORD and her team. Council had previously agreed that the Council would hold another market in 2020. Unfortunately, CLLR Radford had advised that she was not available for the 2020 Market, however, CLLR Irving had agreed to continue. A working group will be formed, a format would be agreed at Council, and preparations for 2020 market would begin. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr Irving

CLLR Thomas discussed the provision of defibrillators at key Council sites and hoped that, if Council took the lead, it would encourage others to follow. He advised that IPADS (Intelligent Public Access Defibrillator) were self-checking and that the company providing them would be responsible for replacement pads and an annual maintenance. The cost would be £1,500 for each defibrillator with an annual cost of £45 each for maintenance. The company also offered on site training for up to 50 people within this cost. CLLR Thomas requested the Council's approval in principle for the concept of buying three defibs subject to him returning to Council with a final business case. The MAYOR proposed the Council agree to the request, all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The group had discussed and agreed that the implementation of any Climate Emergency measures need to be co-ordinated and integrated and in accordance with a long-term strategy. CLLR Thomas asked for views on the Council forming a working group to advise Council on the way ahead. CLLR S Wilson commented that all working parties would be impacted by the Climate Emergency decision and thus should include it as a standing agenda item. The MAYOR proposed Council approve the formation of the working group; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**. Nominations should be made to the Clerk for the Youth Council, HGTA, Climate Portfolio and Christmas Market groups. CLLR Worthington suggested that a representative from each portfolio group form the Climate Portfolio.

Cllr Thomas

CLLR Thomas suggesting that the Town Council meeting should be expanded on occasion to debate wider topics - such as the third river crossing - with CLLRs asked to submit items they wished to discuss. CLLR Conboy emphasised the importance of where a topic is discussed, and a Council decision had previously been agreed, that this must be taken into consideration and give everybody the opportunity to know the history. The MAYOR proposed that Council approve of the debate of wider issues on occasion; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

All

20/32 PLANNING REPORT:

CLLR Round presented the planning report: The MAYOR proposed that Council accept the recommendations; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

CLLR Round advised that he had attended the DMC meeting on Monday 17th February, regarding the planning application for 7 Old Court Hall, and reported that the vote had gone against the Council's recommendation with permission being granted with certain conditions. CLLR Conboy commended CLLR Round for his presentation at the DMC meeting.

20/33 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

CLLR Worthington presented the Personnel report. She advised that the Committee had met at beginning of February.

All staff appraisals had been carried out by the Town Clerk and, as the appraisals were satisfactory, they would all move up one point on the pay scale.

From 1st April it had been agreed that the Town Wardens would move onto the local government scales at SCP 5. The Town Clerk would also progress up one point subject to her appraisal being satisfactory.

The Town Office workload was discussed through the Business Portfolio and the Budget Advisory Portfolio in order to establish Council priorities. In order to consider and deliver time critical projects, other items would be given a lower priority from time to time. Staff should also make CLLRs aware if they are unable to carry out requested tasks, and all requests for work should be channeled through the Town Clerk so that she can control the workload and know what the staff are doing.

Feedback received from members of the public about the Town Office had also been very positive.

CLLR Worthington advised that the Town Council workload was likely to increase in the future. As current staff did not wish to increase their hours, provision has been made for a third member of staff for the next financial year.

The Personnel Committee was also reviewing the Council's Social Media Policy. CLLR Worthington advised that she was also reviewing the Staff Handbook.

The Mayor advised he was holding a Charity Quiz Night on 27th March, with places for 60 people, and invited all Councillors to attend if they could.

Meeting concluded: 20.42

Signed:

Dated: