

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE
QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019**

PRESENT: Mrs S CONBOY (outgoing Town Mayor), R TAPLIN (incoming Town Mayor)
Councillors: Mrs S WILSON (outgoing Deputy Mayor); G CAMPBELL; A HOOKER; P MORGAN; Mrs M RADFORD;
C THOMAS; D UNDERWOOD; G WILSON; J YOUNG; C VANE PERCY; P IRVING

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

8 members of the public present

19/062 TO RECEIVE TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Action

The outgoing Mayor CLLR CONBOY announced that one nomination for MAYOR had been received in favour of CLLR TAPLIN. CLLR CONBOY asked if there were any other nominations – none were received. CLLR CONBOY requested a show of hands to elect CLLR TAPLIN to the office of MAYOR all were in favour and it was so **resolved**. CLLR CONBOY announced that one nomination for the position of DEPUTY MAYOR had been received for CLLR WORTHINGTON (absent) CLLR CONBOY asked if there were any other nominations, none were received, it was therefore proposed that CLLR WORTHINGTON be elected to DEPUTY MAYOR all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

CLLRs CONBOY, S WILSON and TAPLIN left the Chamber with the Mace Bearer; CLLR TAPLIN was robed and returned as the incoming mayor, and chairman of the meeting. Before being seated, the Mayor advised that the Reverend David Busk, Vicar of St Mary's Church, had kindly agreed to continue as Chaplain to the Mayor. Reverend Busk then led the Council in prayer.

19/063 TO RECEIVE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

This could not be taken as CLLR WORTHINGTON was not present.

19/064 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs S WORTHINGTON - HOLIDAY
R MAHMOOD – PERSONAL
C HYAMS – HOLIDAY

19/065 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were advised.

19/066 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18 April 2019 were duly APPROVED and signed by the MAYOR as a complete and accurate record.

19/067 OUTGOING TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLLR CONBOY advised that she was very sorry to advise Council that she had received a resignation letter from CLLR MALLEY, who felt, for personal reasons, that it was time to end his time as a councillor. The MAYOR and Council thanked CLLR MALLEY for all of his hard work and dedication throughout his time as CLLR and agreed that he would be missed.

CLLR CONBOY offered her thanks to everyone for supporting the St Georges Day Service, including all of those that had helped with refreshments.

CLLR CONBOY thanked all those who had attended the 'End of Term Dinner' which had been very ably organised by the outgoing DEPUTY MAYOR.

CLLR CONBOY advised that the visit to Wertheim to attend the inauguration of their new mayor had been very successful, that their new Mayor is 30 years old, and had 750 people had attend his inauguration.

CLLR CONBOY thanked the Council for its unwavering support in her role, without which it would have been impossible to achieve so much. She wished the MAYOR every success in his new year, and

thanked the staff for their support, and the Mace Bearer for ensuring that she was in the right place at the right time. CLLR CONBOY thanked the residents - some of whom were in attendance - for their support, and extended her thanks to her family, who were unable to attend this particular evening evening. She reflected on the many highlights during her tenure, including visiting schools, uniformed groups, Civic Services, Remembrance Services, and even a wonderful ride on a Tuk Tuk courtesy of CLLR MALLEY! She also mentioned a number of unexpected challenges, such as the uninvited occupants at Judiths Field and sometimes needing to hold the line when decisions are unpopular. CLLR CONBOY said that It had been a real pleasure to work with such a can-do Council with the will to pull together for the improvement of the Town, and confirmed she was looking forward to getting stuck in again as Councillor. CLLR CONBOY also thanked the outgoing DEPUTY MAYOR for her support, whom she described as amazing.

19/068 INCOMING TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The MAYOR firstly thanked the Council for electing him to the post and said that it was a great honour, albeit not easy, having seen CLLR CONBOY in action in such a happy and vibrant town. The MAYOR advised that his first and most enjoyable duty would be to present CLLR CONBOY with the insignia as a Past Mayor of Godmanchester, recognising that she had served many years as a Councillor and Deputy Mayor previously. THE MAYOR announced that his second pleasant duty was to install his Mayoress which would be his wife of 47 years, Nan.

The MAYOR was sorry that the DEPUTY MAYOR was unable to join the Council for the evening but looked forward to working with her and particularly looked forward to the coming year with excitement and apprehension. While the Council worked as a team we can only achieve so much, and are also dependent upon other organisations within the Town working within and for Godmanchester. The MAYOR announced that, following on from the previous MAYOR, the Scouts and Guides would benefit from his fundraising efforts this year but he also wanted to support older residents, and thus he would be holding a number of events throughout the year to help the Royal Air Forces Association, and Royal British Legion.

The MAYOR advised that, in many ways, the Council is here to add the icing on the cake, and that it is managing a number of major projects designed to benefit all: these include the refurbishment of the Judith's Field Social Centre; the building of a state-of-the-art skatepark; the restoration of the Mill Steps area; and the eventual management and development of the Godmanchester Plant Nursery, which the Council are adopting from HDC. However, he also expressed concern over a number of challenges the Town faced, the first being the growth of the Town - particularly the Romans' Edge development - where it is important and urgent, that newcomers are welcomed and integrated into the community. His second concern is helping to make the Town successful economically; we do not want people living here to have to commute to work, but we want to encourage the development of additional local businesses and employment opportunities, and he welcomed any ideas and initiatives to achieve this end

19/069 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr Thackray congratulated the MAYOR and DEPUTY MAYOR and wished them every success in the year and also extended his thanks to CLLR CONBOY for her past service.

Reverend Busk spoke with regard to the St Mary's Church refurbishment, advising that they were speaking with English Heritage and that there was a lot going on with the refurbishment. Reverend Busk thanked the Council for their support.

The Club 800 draw took place.

19.34 CLLR YOUNG left.

19/070 CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERSHIP OF PORTFOLIO GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Membership of the four portfolio groups was AGREED. The Town Clerk asked that the Portfolio groups select a chair for their group.

CLLR UNDERWOOD volunteered to support the MAYOR representing the Council at the Twinning Association meetings.

19/071 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The report on outstanding actions was noted.

19/072 CORRESPONDENCE

CLLR CONBOY advised the Council that she had received an invitation for a Family Party to welcome a Syrian refugee Family to the Town. The MAYOR advised that he had confirmed his attendance at the same event together with the Mayoress.

19/073 ANNUAL RETURN AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The MAYOR confirmed the Council's accounts had been subject to an internal audit which had been circulated to Council, and was pleased to report that no issues had been found. The MAYOR offered his thanks to the Clerk for the hard work with the accounts and ensuring a smooth transition between manual and electronic account systems. CLLR CONBOY thanked the Clerk and staff for all of their work during this period. The Town Council AGREED current financial controls were adequate.

The statements of assurance in respect of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2019 were read to those present and all statements were AGREED and the Annual Governance Statement duly APPROVED. The MAYOR and Town Clerk signed the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Council.

19/074 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS

19/074.1 The list of payments to be made was APPROVED.

19/074.2 Councillors noted receipt of the Petty Cash Reconciliation for the period to 30 April, a copy of the budget report on the year to date, and a copy of the monthly bank reconciliation approved by the Deputy Mayor.

It was noted on the list of payments that the figure provided for the replacement flag needed the VAT and net figure to be swapped over.

CLLR MORGAN queried a payment to Malcolm Lyons for parking – CLLR CONBOY advised that this was half of the expense of the airport parking from her trip to Wertheim, which came out of the Twinning budget.

19/075 BUSINESS REPORT

CLLR UNDERWOOD advised that the Business Portfolio thought it appropriate to form a personnel committee which would work to clear terms of reference agreed by the Council. CLLR UNDERWOOD explained the advantages meant that the Committee could make decisions within a framework set by the town council and can thus operate between meetings, since time was of the essence for many personnel issues. CLLR UNDERWOOD requested a decision in principle subject to Terms of Reference to be brought back to Council and ratified. CLLR S WILSON advised that standing orders would also need to be revised. The MAYOR asked for a vote for a Personnel Committee in principle – all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Personnel

CLLR THOMAS added that one reason would be the timeliness factor, the office is still one person short which increased the workload on the Clerk and Julie. CLLR UNDERWOOD agreed that this was exactly the reason why the Council require this set of processes. The MAYOR proposed that the Council agree to allow the Clerk to employ a temporary member of staff in the interim, should she so choose. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

CLLR S WILSON suggested that the Council hold an extraordinary meeting to get outstanding personnel matters resolved.

CLLR UNDERWOOD provided a Community Nursery update and advised that the District Council, while being very willing to go ahead, have discovered they were not proceeding in an appropriate manner. Hence, Godmanchester Town Council cannot be engaging in running the nursery until the deed is signed, hopefully in October. In the meantime, the District Council have confirmed that they are not permitted to give the Town Council any financial contribution towards the running of the Nursery however it is raised. The Open Day will go ahead on 1st June and, while still supporting the event, the Town Council will not now be paying for the portable toilets. In addition, CLLR CONBOY has got a number of people to agree to provide free stalls on the day.

CLLR CONBOY advised she would have Town Council gazebo out for the event, and that it would be a

good opportunity to tell the public what changes are planned for the Community Plant Nursery.

CLLR UNDERWOOD confirmed the Town Council retained the General Power of Competence since all Councillors are elected and there is a qualified Clerk in post.

CLLR UNDERWOOD reminded portfolio groups that the Council had agreed to review each groups' part of the budget and invited the Environment Portfolio to present their initial figures in June.

CLLR UNDERWOOD highlighted concerns about provision of the local doctors in light of the increase in numbers of patients because of the Romans' Edge development. CLLR CONBOY advised she had received an update from the Surgery, advising that they were currently going through a tender process and would not know until that had finished if there would be adequate funding to extend their existing premises. Importantly the Roman Gate Surgery has categorically denied that it is not taking patients from the new area, as it is in their catchment area and their list is open.

CLLR UNDERWOOD had been liaising with Mr Sloper at HDC regarding the Mill steps. The Town Council had been requested to show its support by granting the required £40,000 towards the improvement in the area. Mr Sloper was reporting back to the Cabinet and needed to show that the Town Council was supporting this project. The MAYOR agreed that this was a good opportunity for the Town, particularly while A14 Legacy Fund money was available. CLLR UNDERWOOD proposed the Clerk write to Mr Sloper expressing the Town Council were very willing to engage and will favourably consider a £40k grant in principle. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town
Clerk

CLLR S WILSON proposed that the Terms and Conditions of Hire of the QES Halls be revised, reducing the 14 day cancellation period for regular users to 7 day period, as in the previous terms and conditions. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

CLLR S WILSON proposed the Council continue to agree and accept the mandatory policies: Standing Orders; Financial Orders; and Code of Conduct. All of these policies had been accepted in the previous 3 months. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

19/076 ENVIRONMENT REPORT

CLLR MORGAN advised that the Town Council had accepted the watering costs for four planters from GMCiB, but were not minded to take on further commitments without a full policy review. The Environment Portfolio has addressed the street scene looking from the Chinese Bridge towards Portholme, and had agreed that all items on Queen's Walk side of the bridge should be re-sited. The Environment Portfolio would also arrange to remove elder bushes on Queens Walk, and tree canopy work was still due to be carried out at the Churchyard. CLLR MORGAN reported that CLLRs IRVING and YOUNG had re-treated the Town sign.

CLLR S WILSON asked about the meeting with Mr Thackray (on behalf of GMCiB). CLLR MORGAN explained that he had presented a proposal to put two further flower display tubs in the Town Hall car park and had required an urgent decision which the Portfolio Group were not prepared to make in haste. CLLR THOMAS suggested that the Council required a policy on the matter. The MAYOR confirmed the Council's desire to work with GMCiB but confirmed the Council could not be rail-roaded into what they GMCiB would like, without full discussion.

19/077 PLANNING REPORT

The applications and correspondence set out in Appendix 19/077 were considered. The Town Clerk would advise HDC of the Council's recommendations.

Town
Clerk

CLLR G WILSON requested that the Council wrote to Highways England regarding the Rectory Farm Bridge to again highlight the health and safety concerns because of the roosting pigeons, and concerns for its structural integrity. CLLR CONBOY requested that the public were kept up to date with progress

CLLR G WILSON advised that the Local District plan had been approved and requested that the Town Clerk contacted the District Council to ensure Tyrells Marina and adjoining properties and are considered and that the area of land is improved.

Town
Clerk

CLLR G WILSON advised that he had been exchanging emails about the Station Masters House, where Japanese Knotweed – a foreign invasive plant - is growing.

CLLR MORGAN reported on the real-time bus stop signs being installed in the Town, which was causing major traffic hold-ups throughout the town. He had since discovered that the company were due to carry out further work the opposite side of the road next week and was concerned about possible disruption. CLLR CONBOY and CLLR G WILSON advised they would speak with the Highways Department again to try and clear traffic lights unless they were actually protecting a hazard. CLLR MORGAN asked that they also avoid rush hour for this work.

19/078 PROPERTY REPORT

CLLR CAMPBELL advised that the Property Portfolio had not met this month. He had little to report due to delays at Judith's Field, but that he would be attending a meeting the following day with the Contractor and the MAYOR. The main topic would be to agree to cut off the access along the left-hand side of the pavilion until work has finished. Access would still be available to the right of the building. THE MAYOR advised that lots of work was happening internally.

19/079 SKATEPARK REPORT

CLLR CAMPBELL was pleased to report that the Council had been offered all of the grants that they applied for which, together with the money allocated by the Town Council, totalled £184,100. CLLR CAMPBELL advised that the Council could now proceed with the full skatepark and full lighting scheme. There would be some money left over but he requested that this be kept in case there are any issues and contingencies are needed. CLLRs IRVING and CAMPBELL had met with Maverick that day and reported that the JCT contract was ready to be signed. CLLR CAMPBELL advised they were very professional and would be starting on site in two weeks' time and the completion date given was August 9th. As part of the quote, Maverick also have an event to officially open up the skatepark later on in the month of August. Maverick will use the access to the left of the pavilion and the Town Council will need to cut back the shrubbery. The Town Clerk will ask Fergusons to carry out the work. CLLR CONBOY congratulated CLLR CAMPBELL for getting the project to this point. The MAYOR requested that the information be shared on Facebook and Godmanchester Living. CLLR UNDERWOOD thanked those CLLRs involved and the Clerk. CLLR MORGAN drew attention the lights at MUGA, which need to be upgraded before winter months.

The meeting ended at 9.05

Mayor