

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON-LINE ON THURSDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2020**

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

Town Clerk: Ms V PRYCE
Minute Taker: Mrs C WHITLOCK

One member of the public

MINUTES

Action

20/164 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr MAHMOOD – no apologies received

20/165 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr Irving, Cllr MORGAN and Cllr YOUNG – Church Transformation Project
Cllr HOOKER, Cllr HYAMS & Cllr IRVING - Community Association Grant Funding

20/166 MINUTES:

The MAYOR proposed the Council approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15 October. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

20/167 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The MAYOR had agreed that it would be more economical to have the Town's Christmas lights put in place at the same time as the neighbouring towns. He confirmed that this had now been completed. The MAYOR was pleased to announce that the Freemen of Godmanchester had provided £500 towards the Christmas tree again this year and wished to thank them for their generosity.

Cllr WORTHINGTON reported that St Mary's Church would be going through a Transformation Project and the Council had been asked if they wished to support this. As no objections were raised, the MAYOR confirmed he would draft a letter to assist the church in gaining funding for the project. {Sec's Note: a letter of support has now been sent to the Project}.

The Mayor

20/168 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

The MAYOR welcomed Mr Terry Smy to the meeting. Mr Smy attended the meeting to present the planning application at 43a West Street. Mr Smy confirmed he had seen the Council's constructive comments on the application and subsequently new drawings had been produced and were now on the planning portal. The chimney was now on the elevation to the front of the property, the design of the brickwork would now be in Flemish bond and the large section at the back of the property had been reduced in height. Mr Smy commented that the house would, unfortunately, look like a bungalow on the back of the house but that was on the advice of the Conservation Officer. The windows which were of a concern had been amended or would have obscured glass incorporated. Mr Smy's wish was for the property to be demolished and replaced with a Georgian house which would improve the aesthetics of the street.

The MAYOR thanked Mr Smy for his concise presentation and confirmed the matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

The club 800 Draw took place with the assistance of the Mayoress.

20/169 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

Cllr HYAM commented that he was interested in receiving the Parish Online map reading training. Cllr CAMPBELL and Cllr HOOKER had already signed up for the training. The TOWN CLERK would

Town Clerk

resend the email to see if there was further interest. No date had been set for the training, however, it would be online so a date to suit the majority would be arranged.

Cllr G WILSON advised that no progress had been made with regards to the double yellow lines in Tudor Road.

The MAYOR confirmed that the application to register the Town Hall, QES and the War Memorial with the Land Registry had been completed and the declaration sworn. The MAYOR thanked the TOWN CLERK for the progress which had been made.

Cllr HOOKER confirmed that the ground maintenance tender had been posted on Contract Finder and he was currently awaiting quotes to come in.

The Environment Agency (EA) had written a letter about loose coping stones on the Champagne Terrace and loose steps further down the Causeway by the Town Sign. The EA had reported that the coping stones on the terrace were their responsibility; however, the coping stones on the Causeway were the Council's responsibility. Cllr HOOKER agreed to inspect the area and report back.

Cllr Hooker

20/170 CORRESPONDENCE:

The MAYOR reported that, unfortunately due to the Covid-19, the 40th anniversary celebrations with the Council's twinned town, Wertheim had been cancelled. However, he hoped that the 41st anniversary would be celebrated in 2022.

The MAYOR advised that Perry Parish Council had emailed regarding their concerns for the proposed change to Luton Airport's 'stacking' arrangements. Perry Parish Council were against the proposal and enquired whether the Council would join them in an action, known Against Luton Airport Stack (ALAS). Cllr G WILSON suggested waiting until next month's on-line meeting to ascertain whether the Council would wish to support Perry or otherwise.

20/171 PLANNING REPORT

The TOWN CLERK was to advise HDC of planning application recommendations.

Town Clerk

Cllr G WILSON advised that the application for land north of 13 Anderson Crescent was also considered at DMC on Monday and had been thrown out by HDC as the applicant had not carried out the sequential test for river or surface water flooding.

Cllr G WILSON referred to Mr Smy's presentation regarding the application at 43a West Street. He advised that the requirements for Flemish bond and chimney position had not been the Town Council's requirements but HDC's. Cllr G WILSON was concerned that the application was an over-development of the site and it would have an adverse impact on the neighbours either side of the property. The MAYOR recommended Council refuse the application due to the over-development of the site and the impact on the neighbours. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr G WILSON referred to correspondence received from the EA regarding the swales at Romans Edge. The EA thought they would adequately alleviate the drainage from that area but did not consider landscaping aspects raised with HDC. The swales are the EA's responsibility.

Cllr G WILSON confirmed that the MAYOR would be representing the Council on the change to Luton Airport's stacking arrangements. A decision was not required yet so the matter would be discussed at the next Portfolio meeting and then at the December Council meeting.

Cllr G WILSON was not happy to support the trial closure of the bridge between Godmanchester and Huntingdon until consultation had taken place with both residents and businesses. Cllr G WILSON had discussed this with the case officer the previous day and they were due to respond but had not heard back. Both the Transport Secretary and the Director of Highways had advised a consultation first.

Cllr G WILSON confirmed he and Cllr CONBOY would be attending a meeting with HDC next week to discuss outstanding planning matters. Some of those matters would include the sequential approach to flooding regarding the Anderson Crescent application, Tyrrells Marina, to discuss the swales, and the timescale of updating the Local Plan

Cllr MORGAN asked Cllr G WILSON to note that the Property Portfolio had discussed that the cemetery had approximately 35 years left before it would be exhausted. He would not wish to see a cemetery in another part of the town when the desire would be to extend the cemetery and not be restricted by any adjoining developments.

20/172 POLICE PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE:

Cllr G WILSON reported that the Chief Constable had proposed to reduce the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) from 80 to 40. Although the Planning Portfolio were not happy with the decision it was felt that more information was required from the Constabulary. Cllr G WILSON and the TOWN CLERK would draft a response to send to the Acting PCC.

Cllr G Wilson
and Town
Clerk

20/173 PROPERTY REPORT:

Cllr CAMPBELL advised that the Council's buildings would remain closed to the public but would be reviewed again in December. The MAYOR confirmed that the Foodbank would be using either the QES or Judith's Field for two days in December (Tues 15th and Wed 16th) to allow them to prepare their Christmas food parcels. The MAYOR confirmed he and one of the Town Wardens would be meeting the Foodbank contact to have a look at the premises. The preference would be to use Judith's Field. They would be expected to follow Covid-19 rules and not use the kitchen, and to only use the disabled toilet. The TOWN CLERK would ask ACR cleaning company to provide a deep clean of the hall once the Foodbank had used the premises.

Town Clerk

Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed the contract for the public toilets at Judith's Field was proceeding with a revised cost of £76,875 plus VAT which now included a zinc roof and not a green roof. Cllr CAMPBELL advised that he was currently awaiting confirmation from the Planning Department as to whether permission was required or not. If permission was not required, the process would be quite quick. Barker Associates had been appointed as the Contract Administrator at a cost of £2,800 plus VAT. They had been tasked with preparing a contract between the Council and Healthmatic to sign for both parties to sign.

Cllr CAMPBELL asked that the Council approve the tender documents for the Multi Wheel Fun Track so that they could be posted on the Contracts Finder. The MAYOR proposed the Council approve the decision. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr CAMPBELL advised that the 12 month defects liability period inspections had taken place for the skate park and Judith's Field pavilion. There were a number of issues in the pavilion which had now been addressed. However, the skate park did not have any issues and had therefore been signed off. The Council were now required to pay the remaining 2.5% of the contract.

Town Clerk

Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed that the Portfolio Group had been looking into a CCTV policy at length as a matter of urgency.

20/174 ENVIROMENT REPORT:

Cllr HOOKER confirmed that the EA required a couple of details before the approval could be made for Willow Walk.

Cllr HOOKER asked that the Council recommend that the Skyworld tender document be approved. The MAYOR proposed that the Skyworld tender document should be approved; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr HOOKER reported that the family of an ex-Mayor, Mr Pat Dougherty had offered the Council an Oak tree which had been in his garden prior to his death last year. It was now 3m tall and the Portfolio Group agreed that it would be a lovely addition to Judith's Field and would be planted in the centre of the hedges which back onto London Road.

Cllr HOOKER referred to the Town Wardens now not replenishing the dog bag bins, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, which prompted a discussion on whether councillors could volunteer to carry out small jobs if they so wished. The TOWN CLERK confirmed that if councillors read and signed the Council's Health and Safety Policy document, and agreed to abide by it, that they could carry out jobs and would be covered by the Council's insurance. It was agreed that any offers of help should go through the TOWN CLERK. All to note

Since moving the picnic table at Judith's Field, Cllr HOOKER reported that there was now nowhere for people to meet and sit at that end of the field. The Portfolio Group had agreed that a new bench would be located on the concrete block where the football pitch used to be.

Cllr HOOKER required Council to approve the revised Memorial Benches and Trees Policy. The MAYOR proposed that Council approval of the policy. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

BUSINESS & FINANCE PORFOLIO MATTERS:

20/175 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:

The TOWN CLERK advised that five additional payments had been added to the payment schedule and that there were two cheques which required two signatures.

The list of payments were approved.

Cllr G
Wilson/Cllr
M Radford

20/176 BUSINESS REPORT:

Cllr THOMAS advised there was a need to remove a row of conifers at the Nursery which would potentially open up both visitor and car parking and working space. The cost would be in the region of £11,000 for which funding would be from either CIL or the General Reserve as deemed most appropriate by the TOWN CLERK/RFO. Town Clerk

Cllr CONBOY confirmed that the enormous amount of logs and tree trunks, some of which were substantial in size) would also be removed. Research had proven that there would not be any commercial valuable in the logs as they were damp and fungi ridden. However, if the Council were aware of anyone interested in the logs to notify the TOWN CLERK. The MAYOR proposed that the conifers be cut down and the logs and tree trunks be removed at a cost of approximately £11,000 cut down. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**. All to note

Cllr THOMAS referred to the draft specification for a proposed temporary building at the Nursery which had been circulated to Council by the TOWN CLERK. Comments had been received and the Portfolio Group required the specification to be approved. The MAYOR proposed that the specification be approved and issued to potential providers to elicit proposals for a final design and installation. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Community Association had requested a grant of £6,000 towards the cost of next year's Picnic in the Park. For 2020, the Council had allocated £4,000 to be applied to the conjoint weekend events of Gala Day and Picnic in the Park, but which did not take place due to Covid-19. The Portfolio Group felt that, as a one-off, the additional funding should be made available to the Association and requested that the Community Association ensure the Council received recognition for its support. The MAYOR proposed that the Council approve the grant of £6,000 to be used by the Community Association across the two events. The majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Group had been tasked with investigating the installation of EV charging points on a no commitment basis. BP Chargemaster had visited the sites and carried out surveys at both QES and Judith's Field. They had confirmed that a two-vehicle installation was feasible at both locations at a cost of between £7,500 and £9,500. The Group felt with the loss of normal car parking spaces and the visual impact on School Hill, amongst other things, that the Council should not pursue the installation and for the TOWN CLERK to write on behalf of the Council to thank BP Chargemaster for their assistance. The MAYOR proposed that the Council did not pursue the installation of the EV Charging points and for the TOWN CLERK to write to BP Town Clerk

Chargemaster. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr THOMAS confirmed that the Group had suggested that the TOWN CLERK respond to the Scouting movement regarding the use of the Nursery. Although, during the current pandemic, the Scouts would not be able to use the site, the Council would revisit the request in the longer term.

Town Clerk

Cllr THOMAS also advised that the Group had received another request for financial support from Finding Fitness for the Sports Holiday Clubs, similar to the request the Council had received in the Summer. The TOWN CLERK had been asked to respond along previous lines and to liaise with the Town's schools concerning the possible interest. The HDC Sports Development Officer had offered to provide a range of activities for the Town's Senior Citizens such as walking and New Age kurling. During the current climate this would not be possible, however, Cllr S WILSON would contact HDC to discuss a possible way ahead.

Town Clerk

Cllr S Wilson

Cllr THOMAS confirmed that a request had been received (and subsequently withdrawn) to erect a stall on School Hill. The Group would support, in principle, the concept of allowing local groups and charitable concerns to use School Hill at weekends. The Group would consider this further and report back to Council.

Business
Portfolio

Cllr THOMAS advised that the EA engineers had recently issued a technical drawing of the proposed Mill Steps fish run and surrounds. However, there was concern that the appearance of the area would be somewhat utilitarian which had caused some concern amongst the Godmanchester Liaison Group. The Council had provisionally allocated £40,000 towards the enhancement of the Mill Steps surrounds and a drawing of these aspects had been requested. Cllr THOMAS agreed that all parties involved wanted to be pleased with the end result.

Cllr THOMAS confirmed that Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ had offered to join Cllr S WILSON in providing Covid safety advice to the Council. The MAYOR thanked Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ for volunteering to assist and recommended the Council's approval. All in were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr THOMAS advised that a councillor was required to support the Mayor on the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact the MAYOR directly.

All

20/177 CHRISTMAS:

Cllr IRVING advised that there had been three Christmas Market meetings during the year. At the August meeting it was decided that, due to Covid limitations, the market should not go ahead this year due to the uncertainty. However, the Group still wished to have some kind of celebration in the town and various possibilities were explored resulting in a 'Festival of Light'. Following a meeting with AVxpert, when discussions took place to project light/images onto various familiar sites in Godmanchester, they submitted a quote totaling £4,500. Cllr IRVING felt very passionate about the Festival of Light which would be a 'one off' event for a 'one off' Christmas. Residents would not be expecting such a show and he believed the lights would be something residents would enjoy. A number of concerns were raised including the high cost, environmental concerns and the safety aspect; would drivers be distracted on the bend of the road if there were animated pictures and would accompanying sound be too much for those living closest to the display? Cllr THOMAS asked whether this would be the best use of public money and sought advice from the TOWN CLERK/RFO. Cllr RADFORD agreed that the display would be a wonderful light show for the children, during a difficult period. The TOWN CLERK confirmed that three estimates would be required before a vote could take place and which would need to be sent directly to her. The MAYOR suggested that an Extraordinary Council meeting be called on Thursday 26 November at 7.30pm to discuss the matter further. In the meantime, that would give the Council time to obtain additional quotes for consideration. The MAYOR thanked Cllr IRVING for his enthusiasm in wishing to do something special for the town.

Cllr IRVING had invited school children to write to Santa which would receive a reply from the Town Office and a sweet (the cost of which would kindly be covered by the MAYOR and Cllr IRVING). The TOWN CLERK asked that any children's letters would need to be collected from the

schools and the responses and sweets distributed by the schools. Cllr S WILSON advised that children should not be told of this proposal until discussions had taken place with the schools to give them the opportunity to agree or otherwise.

20/178 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MATTERS:

Cllr WORTHINGTON advised that the committee had agreed the revised Personnel Committee policy.

Cllr WORTHINGTON confirmed that within next year's budget staff would receive a 2.5% rise in salaries in line with the National Agreement. The employer's pension contribution would be increased from 6% to 8%.

Cllr WORTHINGTON confirmed that, at the beginning of the year, the recruitment of a third Admin Assistant had been allocated in the budget. Due to Covid-19, Cllr WORTHINGTON confirmed that this would now go ahead in March/April 2021 and the position would be based at the Nursery to partly assist the Nursery Manager. Cllr WORTHINGTON advised that due to the limit on capacity within the Town Office the appointment of a senior resource, such as a Deputy Town Clerk, had also been included in next year's budget to help to deal with the next three years' CIL projects.

The meeting closed at 21.22