

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
ON-LINE AT 19.00 ON THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2021**

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

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

**MINUTES**

**Action**

**21/7 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:**

Cllr MAHMOOD left the meeting at 20.13.

**21/8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllrs RADFORD, G WILSON and S WILSON declared an interest in the allotments.

**21/9 MINUTES:**

The MAYOR proposed the Council approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the extraordinary minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and the extraordinary minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

**21/10 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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

**21/11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:**

Mr Pauley made a presentation to the Council on the flooding which took place over the Christmas period, identifying in particular the surface water issue and the inadequate flood defences. He advised that Skanska had a £32m maintenance contract for drainage, vegetation, drainage surface etc but questioned who was checking with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) that the work was being carried out. Mr Pauley referred to St Neots Town Council which, following the floods, made a Freedom of Information request to CCC regarding drainage maintenance. Subsequently, their drains had been cleared. He made a suggestion that the Town Council worked in conjunction with St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives Town Councils to resolve the drainage problem with CCC. Mr Pauley asked whether the Town Council were the riparian owners of the ditch near the A1307 flyover and suggested that an audit of all drains, ditches and gullies which are blocked and damaged was required. The Causeway had issues whereby the water was not allowed to drain back into the river. Mr Pauley applauded the Town Council on their intentions going forward and asked that his points be taken on board and that residents are kept up to date and informed.

Helen Galer spoke on behalf of the residents of Chadley Lane. She advised that the residents were generally in support of the proposal to erect the new play equipment (Skyworld) on the recreation land. However, Mrs Galer expressed her

concerns about parking and advised that when parking was not available at School Hill or Mill Yard, visitors to the area tended to park in Chadley Lane which was home to three key workers who had frequently been unable to park by their houses due to congestion on their return from work. The MAYOR thanked Mrs Galer for her presentation and advised that plans were in place for a full traffic survey to be carried out, when parking would also be considered.

#### **21/12 YOUTH COUNCIL:**

Cllr CONBOY welcomed four Youth Councillors (YC); Mark, Amy, James and Patrick to the meeting and advised that Cllr WORTHINGTON was now also involved with the group. The YC explained how long they had each been in their roles and the reasons behind their decision to become a YC. The YC advised that at their meetings they had met various Mayors, PCSOs from Huntingdon, the Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as the Town Councillors. They had previously been involved in assisting the Police with their bike-marking, helping at Gala Day and visiting Police Headquarters. James advised he had asked the PCSOs about the frequent bike thefts back in September last year and also the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the Town. Mark and Amy had tried to recruit more people to become YCs at gala day and had also held an event to try to increase YC activities in the Town. Mark had appeared on local radio and spoken about what the role of YC involved and had also tried to recruit more people. Cllr CONBOY explained that those wishing to join the Youth Council had to be in Year 7 or above.

As Editor of The Bridge magazine, Cllr HOOKER suggested that the Youth Council may wish to have one or two pages in the magazine dedicated to them. It was agreed that this would be a good idea to promote the Youth Council.

Cllr WORTHINGTON commented that that she would like to see more interaction between the Youth and Town Council. Cllr CONBOY advised that the Youth Council met every month, during term time, and were looking to recruit. Both the MAYOR and Cllr CONBOY congratulated and thanked the YCs for attending the meeting. The MAYOR encouraged the YCs to consider standing for the Town Council when they met the age requirement.

#### **21/13 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:**

The MAYOR asked the Clerk for an update on the progress of registering the Council's parcels of land. The Clerk advised that the applications had been sent but she was still awaiting a response from the HM Land Registry at this time.

#### **21/14 CORRESPONDENCE:**

The MAYOR sadly advised that the former Mayor of Csobánka (linked with our twin town Szentendre) had passed away. The MAYOR mentioned the Council had received a number of communications from the Twin Towns including Christmas cards and, more locally, further cancellations of civic invitations due to Covid-19.

#### **21/15 ENVIRONMENT REPORT:**

Cllr HOOKER advised that the permit for Willow Walk had been approved by the Environment Agency and would be scheduled in at the appropriate time. Cllr HOOKER referred to the comments made by Mr Sington which had been posted

on the Skyworld application via HDC's Planning Portal. The comments included the safety aspect of equipment previously supplied by Kompan to other companies. Cllr HOOKER confirmed that he had received a satisfactory response to those comments from Skyworld's suppliers, Kompan.

Cllr HOOKER advised that the proposed newsletter had been circulated to Council and wished to recommend that 3,500 copies be printed, at a maximum cost of £200, and to accept Club 800's offer of delivering the newsletters with Club 800's flyer. Cllr THOMAS advised that the Hunts Post were running an anniversary bumper edition of their paper on 3 February which could include a feature from the Council. Their paper covered an audience of 50,000 of which 3,370 would be letterboxes in the Town. Cllr THOMAS reported that normally the cost of printing the newsletters would be £480 for 3,000 copies. The Hunts Post would dedicate two pages of the paper to the Council at a one off cost of £450. This would also include posting the paper on their website with a link to the Council's website, Facebook and Godmanchester Living.

Cllr CAMPBELL highlighted the urgency of providing information. He also asked if information about the Osier beds could be added to the newsletter. Details would also be added to the Newsletter to include recruiting for the Youth Council.

Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ suggested that all different types of co-ordinated social media should be used and if wording was agreed then the TOWN CLERK would put out the good news via the town's website and by Facebook.

The MAYOR firstly proposed that the Council vote on the alternative option suggested by Cllr THOMAS; to circulate the newsletter in the anniversary edition of the Hunts Post. The majority voted against the proposal therefore the **motion was defeated**.

The MAYOR proposed that the Council vote on the original option of circulating the Newsletter with the Godmanchester Community Association leaflet as originally suggested by Cllr HOOKER. The majority voted against the proposal therefore the **motion was defeated**. The MAYOR thanked Club 800 for their extremely kind offer to deliver the newsletters, but it would not be required on this occasion.

There was a need to finalise the format of the newsletter and decide on some way of distributing it via the Hunts Post. Alternatively leaflets could be left in One Stop, Premier, Chemist etc as there was concern that possibly the younger or older residents in the Town may not use social media. The Editorial Group would go through the newsletter to make sure it was fit for purpose and adjust wording accordingly. Cllrs HOOKER, HYAMS, RADFORD, IRVING and HLADKIWSKYJ agreed to be involved.

Editorial  
Group

{Post-Meeting Note: The Business Portfolio subsequently decided that the newsletter should be included within the 3 Feb issue of the Hunts Post to be delivered to all Godmanchester residents only. The TC would simultaneously publish it on the Town Council website and on local Facebook groups}.

**21/16 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT:**

Following a recent portfolio meeting it had been decided that there was not enough information to make a recommendation to Council at this time. Therefore interviews with three of the companies would be required. Cllr HOOKER confirmed that he would withdraw the item.

**21/17 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:**

The TOWN CLERK advised that the petty cash reconciliation date should have read 31<sup>st</sup> December on the Agenda (and not 30<sup>th</sup> November) and to note that there was a duplicate entry on the Payment Schedule, a change to a payment to include VAT and that AVxpert had already been paid the balance of their invoice earlier in the month. Cllr HYAMS advised that the £35 payment to him had been donated to the local church.

The list of payments were approved and would, with the above amendments, be validated by the MAYOR and Cllr RADFORD.

Mayor and  
Cllr Radford

**21/18 BUSINESS AND FINANCE REPORT:**

Cllr THOMAS presented the Business Portfolio paper. Following the recent flooding in the Town, Cllr G WILSON had circulated the CCC and HDC Flood Review. Cllr THOMAS advised that it was anticipated that a number of recommendations would be required, from which improvements and future actions would eventually emerge. Although the Business Portfolio would lead on the project, they would draw on the entire Council for assistance. Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ advised he was trying to pull together what the Town, District and County do but was currently waiting for further details.

Under the current Covid-19 restrictions, Cllr THOMAS confirmed that the Council would not be considering reopening the halls for the moment. Cllr S WILSON confirmed that the skate park and the MUGA now had clear notices in place to advise the public that they were closed.

Cllr THOMAS was pleased to report the resounding success of the 'Festival of Light' over the festive period. He advised that the final costings would be out of General Reserve, as previously agreed. Cllr THOMAS requested that an article covering the lights be prepared by Cllr IRVING and included in the newsletter.

Cllr Irving

Cllr THOMAS advised that it had been agreed to replace the Youth Council's missing noticeboard out of the Business Portfolio's budget.

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Mill Steps Fish Pass project had been discussed at the Environment Portfolio Group meeting in January. This included a representative from the Environment Agency (EA), who gave a briefing on the final design proposals. The EA confirmed that they and HDC had received and acknowledged the top-side gentrification proposals submitted by the Godmanchester Liaison Group. The final costing estimates were awaited for both the Fish Pass and landscaping the Mill Steps area, to which Council had allocated £40,000 from CIL. If necessary, there remained the possibility of an application for Grant funding. Costing estimates were expected soon. The Town Clerk advised Cllr VANE PERCY that as he was an adjoining landowner with a Pecuniary Interest, he could not comment in the meeting, but that he was welcome to

address the Council as a member of the public during the allotted timeframe in the agenda.

Cllr THOMAS advised that the Standing Orders and Communications Policies would be discussed at next working group meeting.

Cllr THOMAS advised that a request had been received from a mobile catering facility to park their truck on School Hill. They had suggested visiting the site for three hours, twice monthly. Following a discussion it was decided that, although the facility would be welcomed and useful, unfortunately, the Council would not wish to encourage mingling in the current Covid-19 climate. The MAYOR proposed that the TOWN CLERK would write a letter of refusal to the mobile catering facility. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

#### **21/19 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REPORT:**

Cllr IRVING thanked the Council and, in particular, the Christmas Group for their support which had been very much appreciated, and confirmed it had been a real team effort. Depending on the situation with Covid-19, there would be a recommendation to have a similar event in December 2021. The MAYOR thanked Cllr IRVING for his personal effort in making the event such a success and confirmed that the feedback throughout the town had been extremely positive. At a time of darkness, it had brought a lot of light into people's lives.

#### **21/20 PROPERTY REPORT:**

Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed that four tenders had been received for the Multi Wheel Fun Track. Cllr CAMPBELL advised that all of the contractors had prepared a scheme for same price, design and suggestions. The Councillors and the TOWN CLERK would then check the background of the contractors. Three Councillors (Cllrs HLADKIWSKYJ, RADFORD and CAMPBELL) and a group from the community, who responded to a Facebook request for volunteers, would meet, virtually, next Tuesday (26<sup>th</sup> January) for the first presentation. Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed that external members of the group would not be included in any of the financial aspects of the project, it being sensitive and confidential information.

Cllr CAMPBELL confirmed that the retention of 2.5% had been released for the final certificate of Judith's Field Pavilion as all of the defects had been addressed.

Cllr CAMPBELL advised of a deterioration of The Chinese Bridge structure and confirmed that there was evidence of wet rot. Whilst removal of moss and grass could be carried out by volunteers, the lack of proper maintenance was a concern. The MAYOR proposed that the TOWN CLERK write to the CCC asking for their proposals for maintenance plans for the bridge. All were in favour and it was so **resolved**. Cllr G WILSON said he would be happy to assist to ensure the letter reached by the right person. In addition, Cllr VANE PERCY offered his assistance, having helped build two Chinese bridges.

Town Clerk,  
Cllrs G Wilson  
and Cllr Vane  
Percy

Cllr CAMPBELL advised that the work on the toilet block at Judith's Field should have been underway by now. However, the contractor was still waiting for HDC to confirm that it was a 'permitted development' before work could commence on site. The worst case scenario would be if HDC say that a full planning application was necessary as this would delay the start on site by several months.

**21/21 PLANNING REPORT:**

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

Town Clerk

**21/22 FLOODING REPORT:**

Cllr G WILSON advised that HDC's Flood Review Report had been circulated to the Council. He reported that, following the floods over the Christmas period, there had been a briefing on 7 January where it had been identified what went well and where improvements were needed for the future. Cllr WILSON reported that sadly eight homes were flooded internally on 23<sup>rd</sup> December and floodwater surrounded other homes, roads and fields. The river flood alleviation defence had worked as designed, however, it was not a surface flooding elimination scheme and unfortunately, it had been an extreme event. Cllr G WILSON commented that HDC had asked the TOWN CLERK for further information to be provided. Godmanchester would suffer from flooding in the future but it could also experience other exceptional events such as hot weather, power cuts, drought and pandemics.

Town Clerk

Cllr G WILSON advised that it was timely for the Town Council to consider what further actions it wished to plan for and how it may mitigate the impacts. Cllr G WILSON wished to express his thanks to all those involved in helping during the floods, both on the various nights and behind the scenes, and commented on what an amazing response there had been. Cllr IRVING praised Oscar Jeakings, the Nursery Manager who had, at very short notice, found bags and a supply of sand for which people had been most grateful. The Council had sent a Freedom of Information request regarding drainage maintenance to CCC. Cllr G WILSON would ask questions as a County Councillor at their February meeting. Discussions took place regarding whether the Council should have an emergency plan, and whether it should be a simple one just for flooding or whether a plan to cover other things too. Parish Online could be used to ascertain boundaries who was responsible for ditches etc.

HDC had promised that they would offer help to parishes and towns for flood alleviation. The TOWN CLERK agreed to write to HDC requesting timescales.

Town Clerk

Cllr S WILSON wished to propose a vote of thanks to Cllr G WILSON who had worked so hard over the flooding period and, with his professional background, had proved to be a great advantage to the Town. The MAYOR agreed and wholly endorsed the comments of Cllr S WILSON.

**21/23 PERSONNEL REPORT:**

Cllr WORTHINGTON reported that the Committee had not met since the last Council meeting so would be brief. The Committee had been working on updating the Mayor's Handbook with current legislation and also updating the Risk Assessment for the matters concerning the Town Office.

The MAYOR thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their hard work during the current, difficult times.

The meeting closed at 21.28