

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE
QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL HALL AT 19.00 ON THURSDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: C THOMAS (Town Mayor)
Councillors: C HYAMS (Deputy Mayor); Mrs S CONBOY; A HOOKER; P IRVING; D MICKELBURGH; P MORGAN; P ROUND; R TAPLIN; G WILSON; Mrs S WILSON; Mrs S WORTHINGTON and J YOUNG

Town Clerk: Ms V PRYCE
Minute Taker: Mrs C WHITLOCK
Mace Bearer: Mr M WILLIAMS

There were 5 members of the public and 2 staff members in attendance

MINUTES

Action

21/134 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

CLlr C Vane Percy – apologies received
CLlr M Radford – apologies received
CLlr J Hladkiwskyj – apologies received
CLlr R Mahmood – no reason

21/135 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLlr HOOKER declared an interest in the swimming steps and would be asked to leave the meeting at the appropriate time.

21/136 MINUTES:

The MAYOR asked for any comments on the minutes dated 19th August 2021. CLlr G WILSON advised that item 21/128 should be amended; *CLlr G WILSON and Councillors discussed the options for a bid proposal and agreed to publish the application under the Local Highways Improvement (LHI) Initiative 2022/23 to reduce the speed limit to 20mph in the town.*

CLlr YOUNG noted a grammatical error under item 21/128 which should have read 'was' and not 'were'.

The MAYOR proposed the Council approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th August 2021, all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

21/137 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The MAYOR requested that all Portfolio Group reports must be with the TOWN CLERK by 5pm on the Thursday before the Town Council meeting. This was to ensure that all the reports could be circulated with the Agenda on the Friday preceding the meeting.

All to Note

The MAYOR confirmed that all Councillors had been provided with the dates for the Civic Service, Civic Supper and the Remembrance Day Parade and would be grateful if Councillors would support these events.

The MAYOR thanked Councillors and staff for their hard work and support which

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Date:

aided the success of the garage and car boot sales. The Mayor would report on amount raised once he was in a position to do so. Documents (electronic) would be kept by the Town Office which could be referred to if a similar event was arranged in the future.

The MAYOR congratulated Godmanchester Community Association on the success of Gala Day and Picnic in the Park.

The MAYOR confirmed that Cllr WORTHINGTON had circulated details on recruitment which would be raised under item 21/146.

21/138 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

The MAYOR welcomed the public to the meeting and explained the rules of the session.

Jeremy Sheppard made a request, on behalf of residents of all ages and disabilities, that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation from the development of Roman's Edge should be spent on making the Town safer. Mr Sheppard had previously invited Councillors to walk around the town with him to identify problem areas. However, this offer had not been taken up.

Mr Sheppard reported the lack of disabled car parking spaces in car parks, the need to highlight the edges of the Chinese Bridge steps by repainting them in yellow. Mr Sheppard commented that as the Town Council had both District and County Councillors that a joined up working approach should not be a problem. Mr Sheppard handed his statement to the Town Clerk and wished for the document to be included in the minutes.

Next, Kate Poole addressed the Council and reported that she worked for the Cambridge Resettlement Campaign as a volunteer. Her focus was on housing Syrian refugees. However, following the problems in Afghanistan, she asked whether the Council would consider the possibility of housing at least one Afghan family. Mrs Poole was aware that Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Peterborough City Council were looking to assist. The TOWN CLERK advised that social housing came under the remit of HDC and not the Town Council.

Finally, Jackie Kirby, a resident from Cambridge Villas, expressed her concerns over the pigeon situation along her road. The pigeons had previously been a problem under the A14 bridge until deterrent maintenance work had been carried out. The pigeons had been dislocated and were now causing a lot of mess in Cambridge Villas.

The MAYOR carried out the Club 800 Draw.

21/139 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

The MAYOR invited the Councillors to highlight any outstanding matters, but none were raised.

21/140 CORRESPONDENCE:

The MAYOR invited the Councillors to highlight any matters, but none were raised.

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21/141 ENVIRONMENT REPORT:

Cllr HOOKER advised that there were no items requiring a decision. However, he requested that Councillors noted the sections within the report on the Tree Wardens and Devana Park grass verge.

In response to a question raised by Cllr CONBOY, Cllr HOOKER confirmed he was aware that HDC were providing 'trees' free of charge. However, Cllr HOOKER advised that these were whips/saplings, whereas there was currently a potential need to replace some 5 trees with something more substantial. These would need to be ordered now so that they could be planted in the Spring. Cllr G WILSON questioned whether Mr and Mrs Campbell would carry out the watering of the trees if they were to become volunteers for the Council. The Health and Safety Policy would need to refer to volunteers who are not working in the Nursery. Cllr HOOKER confirmed that discussion concerning the possible use of Tree Wardens was ongoing. The MAYOR commented that, when studies were completed, the use and roles of Tree Wardens would be for Council Resolution. Pending this the advice from the public was to be welcomed.

The MAYOR thanked Cllr TAPLIN for all his work on updating the Health and Safety Policy, which was a lengthy painstaking document. At the appropriate time, the Policy might need to include information relating to Tree Warden volunteers. Cllr TAPLIN proposed that Council should approve the Health and Safety Policy. Cllr ROUND seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour (one abstention) and it was so **resolved**.

21/142 PLANNING REPORT:

Cllr HYAMS advised the council of the current list of HDC planning applications and the recommendations of the planning and Transport portfolio. The Council voted and endorsed the portfolio recommendations.

Cllr HYAMS recommended that the TOWN CLERK and/or Councillors meet with the developer, Accent Group regarding the building site on the A1198. Council confirmed approval for a small team to meet with Accent Group.

Cllr HYAMS reminded Council that the Local Highway Improvement Scheme (LHI) was presented last month but no vote was taken. The proposal was for a 20mph speed limit through a designated section the Town. Cllr HYAMS advised that Cllr G WILSON had prepared a bid which Council were being asked to endorse. Cllr YOUNG advised that the Government were bringing in cars which would restrict the vehicle to driving at the speed limit of the area. Cllr TAPLIN and Cllr CONBOY fully supported the proposal to try to reduce the speed within the Town and hoped for a positive view on this occasion. Cllr HYAMS proposed that Council should endorse the submission of the LHI bid produced by Cllr G WILSON. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour (one abstention) and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr HYAMS proposed that Council should agree to the specification document for the Transport Plan and ask the TOWN CLERK to invite proposals to select a

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professional organisation who would carry out the study. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

21/143 PROPERTY REPORT:

Cllr WORTHINGTON asked Council to note that the Property Group were seeking quotes for moving the external wall at the back entrance to Judith's Field Pavilion. This would hopefully prevent anti-social behaviour in that area. The Group would also be enquiring about a suitable hearing loop for the QES Hall.

Cllr WORTHINGTON explained that the Senior Citizens' lease on the Town Hall was due to expire in October 2025. The building would need to be refurbished which would be largely funded from CIL money. To ringfence the money for the future project, Cllr WORTHINGTON proposed that Council should approve the Property Group commencing a review of the future refurbishment of the Town Hall. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr WORTHINGTON confirmed that a large number of Town Trail leaflets had been found in the Town Office. These had originally been produced by Cllr VANE PERCY. The master document would need to be slightly amended and then could be made available to download from the Council's website. Cllr MICKELBURGH offered assistance with this.

21/144 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:

The list of payments would be emailed to Cllrs CONBOY and WORTHINGTON for approval and authorisation. The TOWN CLERK reported that there was an error in the pensions line due to an accounting anomaly and required amending. Cllr MORGAN questioned the payment to Ethos for the photocopier. The TOWN CLERK advised that the existing photocopier had been purchased for the Town Office and the payment related to that.

Cllrs Conboy
and
Worthington

21/145 BUSINESS REPORT:

Cllr ROUND invited the MAYOR to update Council on the recent meeting he had attended concerning the ownership of the recreation ground. The meeting comprised HDC, Cllrs Worthington (Chair of the Land Ownership Working Party) and Thomas and the TOWN CLERK.

The MAYOR confirmed that some clarification concerning the recreation ground. Had been received. HDC had stated that it neither laid claim to the Recreation Ground nor held any interest therein. HDC acknowledged that Council had a continuing interest in maintaining the Recreation Ground as a community asset. As a result, it was recommended that work on the Recreation Ground that had previously been held in abeyance could recommence.

Town Clerk

Cllr ROUND proposed that Council agreed to resume work on the Recreation Ground including the Willow Walk and Skyworld projects. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The MAYOR confirmed that the river banks and riparian rights had been discussed and HDC had been informed that any proposed changes to established

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practise, whereby HDC had exercised Riparian responsibilities and maintained the river banks and towpath, was outwith the purview of Council. In addition, HDC was informed that Council would be asked to agree to begin the process of Registering the Recreation Ground up to but not including the river banks.

Cllr ROUND proposed Council to authorise the TOWN CLERK to start the process of registering the Recreation Ground up to but not including the river banks with the Land Registry. Cllr MORGAN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC: To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

Cllr Hooker also withdrew

Following the works undertaken on the Swimming Steps site by Godmanchester Community Association it had been reported by the EA via HDC that the area was unsafe. The EA had outlined a cost-effective method of restoring the Swimming Steps site to a safe condition and agreed that a contractor nominated by HDC, has the competence to carry out the work and will be appropriately authorised. The cost this work would be £6739.64+vat (£8087.57) and it was intended to invoice the organisation that initiated the unauthorised work on the site.

Following discussion, Cllr WORTHINGTON wished to thank HDC for their assistance, understanding and positive approach to this situation. Cllr WORTHINGTON proposed Council meet with GCA to outline the EA proposal and offer advice if required. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC. To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

Cllr Hooker rejoined the Meeting

Cllr CONBOY advised that the Honorary Freeman policy had been updated relating to the ability to review/remove the award should it be needed. Cllr ROUND proposed that Council approve the update to the policy. Cllr S WILSON seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr ROUND proposed that Council approve that Portfolio Groups could spend up to £2,500 from their own budget lines without needing to bring decisions back to Council, which was in accordance with the current financial regulations. Cllr CONBOY seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The MAYOR proposed that Council agreed to the creation of a Civic Purse for incidental Council hospitality. This is currently met from the Mayor's Purse. The TOWN CLERK was tasked with reporting to Council in October a suggested figure

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for the size of the purse for the remainder of the year, and a forecast requirement for the following financial year.

Cllr ROUND proposed in principle the formation of a Civic Purse. Cllr WORTHINGTON seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC: To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

21/146 PERSONNEL REPORT:

Cllr WORTHINGTON congratulated Clair Whitlock on her promotion to Deputy Town Clerk and welcomed Anna Chivers to the team as an Administration Officer and who would also be PA to the Mayor. Caroline Elhers would be joining the team on 20 September as another Administration Officer and would be predominately responsible for hall hire and invoicing. Cllr WORTHINGTON confirmed that one of the Council's Town Wardens, Stephen Wakeman would be leaving the Council on 24 September and took the opportunity to wish him all the best. Martin Williams, the Council's Mace Bearer had been offered the position of Town Warden and had recently taken up the post. Cllr WORTHINGTON advised that details of staff working hours would be circulated showing when staff were working and whether from home or in the office. The DEPUTY MAYOR commented that Councillors should not expect staff to email/work outside of their working hours.

Deputy Town
Clerk

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC. To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

The MAYOR thanked those who had attended the meeting and gave special thanks to Martin Williams, the Mace Bearer, for his 20 years' service.

The meeting closed at 20.28

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(Mayor)

GODMANCHESTER TOWN CONCIL
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION
STATEMENT BY JEREMY SHEPPARD
16TH SEPTEMBER 2021

I wish to make a request on behalf of those residents of all ages with disabilities for the TC to start allocating some of the residents' Infrastructure Levy allocation, received from the Roman's Edge development, to take account of their needs.

With over £1M of CIL having so far been spent in the town I ask that future allocations should be partly used to make getting around the town easier and safer for those with disabilities.

I recently invited a town councillor to walk around the town with me so that we could look at the various problem areas.

Unfortunately, he said he was not allowed to speak directly to any resident because of the TC's communications policy and that all contacts with councillors must be made via the Town Clerk. This is very un-satisfactory and adds unnecessarily to the TC's workload.

Examples are the need for disabled spaces in the two public car parks. As well as older residents with disabilities there are children with serious problems who have specially adapted wheel chairs and whose carers need to be able to park near the Recreation Ground.

The repair and re-painting of the very rough handrails to the Chinese bridge, as well as re-painting of the yellow lines on the step edges is needed.

There are also very many obstructions to our footpaths which create un-necessary hazards for those with sight problems.

These will in some cases mean that the District or County Councils will need to be involved, but as we have town councillors who are

also county and district councillors, co-ordination should not be a problem.

Please will the TC provide the name of a councillor who is prepared to take a personal interest, as a point of contact, so that I can walk around the town with them and they can then report back to the TC.

At a time when we are repeatedly told to 'look on the internet' it is time for the voices of those who find daily life a struggle to be listened to.

I am providing the Town Clerk with a copy of my statement so that it can be recorded in full in the minutes.

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(Mayor)