

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE
QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL HALL AT 19.00 ON THURSDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2021**

PRESENT: C THOMAS (Town Mayor)
Councillors: C HYAMS (Deputy Mayor); Mrs S CONBOY; J HLADKIWSKYJ; A HOOKER; Mrs D MICKELBURGH; P MORGAN; P ROUND; R TAPLIN; C VANE PERCY; 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 was one member of the public in attendance

MINUTES

Action

21/151 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

CLlr P IRVING – apologies received (another engagement)
CLlr R MAHMOOD – apologies received (personal reasons)
CLlr M RADFORD – apologies received (holiday)

21/152 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLlr D TAPLIN – Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association (Treasurer)
CLlr S CONBOY – CCTV (would not take part in any decision as Non-Executive Director of HDC Ventures Limited)
CLlr A HOOKER – Swimming Steps
CLlr C VANE PERCY – Mill Steps

21/153 MINUTES:

The MAYOR proposed the Council approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16th September 2021. CLlr MORGAN proposed and CLlr TAPLIN seconded the motion; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**. CLlr TAPLIN proposed that Council approve, as a correct record, the minutes from the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 23rd September 2021. CLlr S WILSON seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**. The MAYOR advised that the two sets of minutes would be signed following the meeting.

The Mayor

21/154 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The MAYOR announced he had attended the Justice Service in Ely Cathedral and the National Police Memorial Day in Huntingdon. The Deputy Mayor had enjoyed a successful evening at Higham Ferrars Town Council's Race Night.

The Town's Civic Service had gone well but, regrettably, there had been a lack of support by Councillors. The MAYOR reminded Council that the Civic Service and Remembrance Sunday were Council events when the Council were on show to the public and should be in attendance. The MAYOR reported that an application

All to note

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Date:

to close the road on Remembrance Sunday had been submitted and he was looking forward to the service, followed by a small reception.

The MAYOR thanked those who were generously supporting the Civic Supper on 3 November.

21/155 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

The MAYOR welcomed Mrs Nan Taplin to the meeting. Mrs Taplin advised she was a member of the Executive Committee of the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association (HGTA). Mrs Taplin gave a presentation to the Council about HGTA and asked the Council to consider providing free use of its meeting rooms.

The MAYOR carried out the Club 800 Draw.

21/156 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

The MAYOR invited the Councillors to highlight any outstanding matters, and the following items were raised;

Cllr VANE PERCY referred to the Mill Steps item on the Outstanding Actions which mentioned that *'the maintenance of this area is expected to be carried out by a community group'* and asked who the 'community group' would be. The MAYOR advised that, contrary to many of our expectations, HDC were going to be responsible for the maintenance of topside, although confirmation of this had not yet been received in writing.

Cllr G WILSON asked that, in the Business and Finance Portfolio section (EOI CCC – Nursery Grant), his name should be replaced with Cllr CONBOY's. The MAYOR instructed r the attribution be changed accordingly.

Town Clerk

21/157 CORRESPONDENCE:

Cllr G Wilson referred to two letters received regarding the pigeon problem at Cambridge Villas. The TOWN CLERK confirmed that she had contacted Environmental Health at HDC, but had not received a response. The TOWN CLERK would progress this issue.

Town Clerk

21/158 FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTS:

Concerning the figure allocated for the acquisition of a Christmas Tree this year, the TOWN CLERK confirmed that in the past the Freeman of Godmanchester had given the Council a donation towards the cost of the Christmas tree. However, Council could not assume a donation would be made this year, and would certainly not know the amount until, if and when, it was received. Cllr VANE PERCY suggested that, in future, Council should plant its own tree.

An invoice for Toilet Hire was for the supply of toilets at the Nursery on Apple Day. This amount was paid by credit card and would be withdrawn from the Payment Schedule.

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Cllr CONBOY proposed that Council approve the Accounts Payable and the Cash Reconciliation which was seconded by Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ. The list of payments would be emailed to Cllrs WORTHINGTON and TAPLIN for approval and authorisation.

Cllrs
Worthington
and Taplin

21/159 BUSINESS REPORT:

Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ advised that there were two issues in his Report which were not time critical, and recommended that Council should defer debate on CCTV and Mill Lade dredging until further data was available. Cllr TAPLIN asked if the forecast budget would be impacted by the eventual decision in Mill Lade dredging. The MAYOR said a figure for dredging would be included in the budget and then adjusted subsequently if needs be. The DEPUTY MAYOR suggested that the issues should be returned to Council in three months' time. Cllr Hladkiwskyj agreed providing there was enough information available on both sides of the argument to make a fully informed decision. Cllr WORTHINGTON supported the decision but wished for it to be writing. Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ confirmed that he would work with the group and obtain outstanding detail.

Business
Group

Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ asked Council to consider reinstating the 10% Nursery-build contingency fund, as previously recommended by the Business Group. Although not against the increase in the contingency fund, Cllr TAPLIN raised his concerns again that, from his previous experiences, that spend could creep up. Cllr MORGAN advised that the removal/repositioning of the existing portacabin at the Nursery had not been taken into consideration. The TOWN CLERK confirmed that the Quantity Surveyor had suggested a 10% contingency and the cost of moving the two units was £2,000.

Cllr CONBOY agreed that there was no desire to spend more money than necessary. This would, however, ensure that when the buildings were on site if there were any unforeseen problems Council were in a good position and could manage the works. Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ proposed that the 10% contingency plan be reinstated. Cllr MORGAN seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour (2 abstentions) and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

The Group wished to delay seeking nominations for Honorary Freemen until after the May 2022 Elections when the new Council were in post. There were concerns that trying to advertise, seek nominations and appoint Freemen prior to the Elections would not provide sufficient time. Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ proposed that the Council should not appoint new Honorary Freemen at the current time. Cllr TAPLIN seconded the proposal all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ confirmed that HGTA had requested that Council made the hall hire free of charge to help them with their recruitment, paid from earmarked Council funds. Council discussed the options. If Council were to allow the free use of the halls to the HGTA, it would need to be reflected in current Policy as it would represent a unique situation. Cllr Hyams proposed that the Council should accommodate the HGTA request and pay for the cost of the hall hire for their meeting on 3 November 2021. This would be a one-off payment from the Twinning budget (£3,000) whilst Council reviewed its overall Twinning policy. Cllr

Town Clerk

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VANE PERCY seconded the proposal, and the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The MAYOR advised that the Mayoral Chain and regalia required maintenance work and, subject to Council agreement, financial provision needed to be made for this work. Cllr YOUNG suggested that a replica (and less costly) chain could be created to mark the Council 40 years' anniversary. Wearing of a replica chain would then protect and preserve the original chain. Cllr VANE PERCY supported this suggestion. Cllr CONBOY proposed that, whilst this was being investigated, quotes be sought to repair and appraise both the Mayoral Chain and the Mace. Cllr WORTHINGTON seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ advised that having asked Huntingdon Volunteer Centre (HVC) for more information to support their grant application, they had failed to provide such information. Cllr HLADKIWSKYJ proposed that the TOWN CLERK write to HVC declining the application but asking them to bid again at the appropriate time. Cllr S WILSON seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk

21/160 SWIMMING STEPS AND RECREATION GROUND:

Cllr G WILSON advised that the Environment Agency had advised that part of the reason that the swimming steps were considered unsafe by HDC was due to undermining erosion caused by the river flow. It was suggested that topsoil from the recent grounds work at Willow walk could be used in any potential rectification. Cllr TAPLIN proposed that Council approved without prejudice that the potential use of topsoil from the Willow Walk project be approved should this be required for restitution of the Swimming Steps site. Cllr Hyams seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

The MAYOR advised that HDC was now declaring that it had no interest in the recreation land or the river banks. The TOWN CLERK had made initial contact with two firms of solicitors. An initial informal view appeared to be that HDC had a continuing obligation as they have maintained the area for such a long time. Cllr WORTHINGTON proposed that the TOWN CLERK continued liaising with legal authorities. Cllr VANE PERCY seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Town Clerk

The MAYOR reported that HDC were proposing to use £26,000 of their CIL funds for ongoing maintenance of an area of the river bank and towpath. The MAYOR suggested that, while the Town Council might support the use of HDC CIL for this purpose, it should not offer a contribution from its own CIL. Cllr TAPLIN proposed Council approve this decision and Cllr ROUND seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**

Town Clerk

The MAYOR was concerned about the swimming steps site being an eyesore with the current mounds of soil and extensive Heras fencing. This could be rectified for a sum of around £6-7000 (ex-VAT). Led by the Planning Portfolio Group, Council would consider this issue and return a view at the November Town Council meeting.

Planning
Portfolio
Group

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Date:

[Afternote: HDC was subsequently denied access to CIL for maintenance purposes and this item was, therefore, not considered further]

21/161 PROPERTY REPORT:

Cllr WORTHINGTON noted that a portable Hearing Loop had been borrowed from HDC and used during the meeting. Unfortunately, it did not meet requirement and therefore the TOWN CLERK will arrange for its return.

Town Clerk

Cllr WORTHINGTON reminded portfolios that the text was required for the November Newsletter with the view to publishing before Christmas.

All to Note

21/162 PLANNING REPORT:

The DEPUTY TOWN CLERK would advise HDC of planning application recommendations.

Deputy Town Clerk

Cllr Hyams suggested accepting all six planning applications as per the recommendations in the Planning report which Council had been provided with. Cllr TAPLIN proposed that all six recommendations should be accepted. Cllr MORGAN seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr Hyams advised that the Council had been asked to provide suitable names for the new dwellings at the land east of 1 Cardinal West, Godmanchester. Cllr S WILSON confirmed that all the names of the men who lost their lives when their bomber crashed in Godmanchester during WW2, will be used as street names in the Town.

The MAYOR proposed that the new development should be named Stirling Square. Cllr TAPLIN proposed the decision and Cllr MORGAN seconded the proposal; all were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr HYAMS asked Council to note that £250,000 of CIL would be set aside for potential highways improvements following the transport study results. This work would take place over a number years and Council would seek contributions for the works from HDC, CCC and any other grants that may be available (e.g. A14 legacy). The TOWN CLERK advised that Council currently held approximately £600,000 in CIL.

Cllr HYAMS advised that the Police would be present in Godmanchester on 22 October addressing parking issues, allegedly with a zero-tolerance approach.

21/163 ENVIRONMENT REPORT:

Cllr HOOKER advised that the report had only items for Council to note and not to decide on.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC: It was resolved that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public

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(Mayor)

Date:

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.

21/164 TREE WORKS:

Cllr HOOKER advised that it had been decided not to pursue the role of a Tree Warden. The triennial tree report recently completed on the Town's trees highlighted work which required to be fulfilled within six months (Category A). Three companies were asked to quote for the work: GTS, MJC Tree and Drayton Tree Care. Cllr HOOKER proposed that Council accept the quote for Drayton Tree Care, subject to an early start being possible. Cllr HOOKER requested that Category B list, be circulated to the same companies as soon as possible for pricing. Cllr HOOKER suggested that if Drayton Tree Care's quote came in within £50 of each of the other two companies, and no higher than £4,500, to accept their quote for Category B work. The work would come from budget 4711. The TOWN CLERK confirmed that Drayton Tree Care were not a new company, however, they were new to the Council.

Cllr MORGAN was concerned about tree T119 in St Mary's churchyard which has been identified in the last three surveys. The tree is on the boundary and costing a lot of money to retain and Cllr MORGAN would be better felled. This would be investigated

Cllr TAPLIN proposed that Council approve the use of Drayton Tree Care at a cost of £2,850 (plus VAT) to carry out the Category A work (to be fulfilled within six months) subject to HDC approval. Cllr G WILSON seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour and it was so **resolved**.

Cllr ROUND proposed that if the Drayton Tree Care quote for Category B work (to be fulfilled within 12 months) came in within £50 of the other two quotes, Council should instruct Drayton Tree Care to carry out the work. Cllr G WILSON seconded the proposal; the majority were in favour (and it was so **resolved**).

21/165 PERSONNEL REPORT:

Cllr WORTHINGTON explained to Council that the TOWN CLERK had been busy with the induction of two new starters and wished to take the following week off as leave. This was agreed. Cllr WORTHINGTON reported that Mick Grice was now a Town Warden. The Nursery Manager was looking at the staffing structure at the Nursery and would be putting forward proposals for the forthcoming budget considerations

Cllr WORTHINGTON urged Councillors to reread the Communications Policy and reminded that outside communications should pass through the TOWN CLERK in the first instance.

All to note

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

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(Mayor)

Date:

The next meeting will be held at the QES Hall. To assist with the acoustics of the room, it was suggested that Council sit in a rectangle with the public sitting behind them.

The meeting closed at 20.52

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Date:

(Mayor)