

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 9th January 2018

1765

1 of 11

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 9th January 2018 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllr W Haggata (Mayor), Cllr J Carney (Deputy Mayor), Cllrs L Ashley, I Benney, A Carney, A Hay, P Murphy, F Newell, J Smith and I Taylor.

182) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr K Patterson. Cllr I Taylor sent apologies that he would be late and arrived during item 12 (min 192).

183) Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

Cllrs Hay, Murphy and Newell declared an interest in all planning matters as members of Fenland District Council's planning committee.

184) Open Forum

Two members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and expressed a wish to speak in Open Forum.

Mr Ian Mason, curator of the Museum, said members of the museum agreed the blue plaque for George Clare VC had raised the profile of Chatteris and had enhanced the history of the town. Volunteers at the museum were now researching the history of other venerable folks from Chatteris, from Mr Bricstan to boxer Eric Boon, and would pass on the information to the Town Council in the hope the Council would be inspired to put up more blue plaques. Mr Mason said he had been surprised that although there had been plenty of coverage of the George Clare commemorations on the radio and television there had been nothing published about the centenary event. As a result he had written a short piece about the commemorations and the idea was to use the report to update the George Clare biography.

A resident of Wenny Estate reported that the gate, which Cllr Newell had arranged to be installed across Horseley Fen Drove to stop the 4-wheel drive vehicles, had been broken off and thrown to one side. The resident had rescued it and at present it was supported by two pieces of concrete but a stronger gate was required and the resident asked if Cllr Newell could arrange for the gate to be replaced. The resident explained that the vehicles had even entered a sheep field.

The resident also said he had stopped a 4-wheel drive vehicle attempting to go along a footpath/drove on Sunday. Vehicles had turned Birch Fen Drove into a ploughed field and

there had also been a great deal of rubbish dumped. Some of the vehicles were attempting to reach horses which had been illegally (?) tethered on nearby land.

The resident then complained about the standard of the work being carried out by Virgin Media. He said block paving had not been sanded back into position and the bricks were, therefore, spreading; paving slabs had not been cemented and compacted back into position correctly; new tarmac was starting to lift; grass verges were not being re-instated and cables had not been dug in deep enough. This had resulted in trip hazards near Grove House and The Gables and the resident feared vehicles, such as the road sweeper, would cause the paving to sink further and create more hazards.

Cllr Newell said she had received a phone call about someone who had fallen over outside Grove House. The Mayor said a number of problems with the cable laying had been reported to the Council and he promised the resident the Council would voice its disapproval. He said the Council would invite a Virgin manager to a Council meeting and ask for an explanation

185) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2017 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record after one mistake, spotted by the Mayor, was amended – on page 5 under item 171) the line should have read: “The recommended Precept of £151,000 was £14,000 more than last year’s Budget” not £14,000,000.

186) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 176) Town Plan: The Chairman of the Community Plan Team, Mr Andy Smith, had suggested the way forward was to: 1) Send the plan to FDC (this had been done); 2) He would make any amendments in light of FDC’s input; 3) He would incorporate the Mayor’s introduction into the document, add a cover and correct a couple of typos; 4) The plan would be placed on the Council’s website and the public informed it was there (including a mention in Centrepunt); 5) The Council would start work on action points in February/March; 6) The plan and council actions so far would be presented at the annual town meeting in May 2018. Mr Smith said he believed the main focus at the annual meeting should be on what the Council was doing in terms of suggestions for action, the Council should set monitoring dates and there should be an annual review.

Cllr Smith had already requested the action plan go on the agenda of the Leisure meeting. She asked if it would be better to simply put the Town Plan on the website or to accompany it with a resume of what had been achieved by the Town Council as many of the action points were already being worked on.

Cllr Carney said it was planned to have a print run of 50 hard copies of the Plan. A few would be available at the Council Chambers and a few at the library but primarily people would be able to view the Plan on the Town Council’s website.

187) Police Matters

Members had a copy of the police update from PCSOs Dawn Rae and James Cox. Councillors were asked not to share the information with the public. The report included a resume of Neighbourhood Alerts received in the last month.

Councillors had received information about the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to increase the policing part of the Council Tax by £1 per month per household, £12 a year (based on a Band D property). The email sought the Council's opinion and support in promoting the consultation.

It was agreed the Council should not respond directly to the questionnaire - it should be up to individuals to respond - but the Council should state that it could not commit council tax payers to extra expense when there was no guarantee that the extra funding would result in a more visible police presence in Chatteris.

188) CCTV Update

Members had received a copy of the latest CCTV update from Fenland District Council.

189) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 2nd January 2018 showing expenditure of £204,788.05 and income of £239,033.06 (includes a full years precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

(2) Breakdown of costs for Slade Lode Ward Election Recharge

Members had before them a breakdown of the costings for Chatteris Town Council By-Election for the Slade Lode Ward as requested at the December 2017 Council meeting.

The Financial Officer verbally reported that council tax referendums would not be extended to parish and town councils in 2018/19 and the Government had also decided to defer the setting of council tax referendum principles for town and parish councils for 3 years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

189) Payment of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** that payment of the following accounts be noted and approved:-

Financial Officer	Payroll January 2018	1,007.66
Town Clerk	Payroll January 2018	1,468.25
Gardener	Payroll January 2018	212.93
HMRC	Payroll January 2018	674.39
Cambs Pension	Payroll January 2018	1,285.94

1768

4 of 11

Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee	10.79
Flying Fish	Cleaning of Council Offices	40.00
Viking	Stationery	155.91
BT Business	Q Phone Bill & Internet	226.62
AWA	Water Bill Council Offices	85.76
WD Haggata	Mayors Allowance	500.00
British Gas	Q Gas Bill	437.73
Barclays Bank	Charges	17.00
Doddington Parish Council	Members Capalc training	75.00
Anglia Stairlift	Renewal of annual service contract	300.00
British Gas	Q Elec bill	207.62
Mark Edgley P& Heating	Boiler repair & Service	234.45
David J Richards Ltd	Printing of gas lighting posters	87.98
SLCC	Membership renewal	185.00
Collings Brothers	Spare mower service	130.81
Cash	Petty Cash	19.07
Communicorp	Local Council Update renewal	75.00
Total		£7,437.91

190) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were advised that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October and January meetings each year. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability.

The approved budget for grants in **2017/18** was **£3,250**

Two applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, with recommendations, in Appendix A.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and applications were approved as listed below:

1. Chatteris Museum Requested £366 Granted £260
To purchase a custom made noticeboard to go outside the front entrance of the Museum.
2. Chatteris Kingfishers swimming club Requested £680 Granted £400
The amount requested was the total cost for a L1 teacher to take a L2 teacher training course which the club needed to be able to continue to support the young swimmers of Chatteris.

Cllrs Ashley, Haggata and Newell declared an interest in 1) as Museum Trustees.

The Financial Officer read out a letter of thanks she had received from Chatteris Christmas Lights committee for their additional funding.

191) Chatteris In Bloom Additional Funding Request

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received an email from the Chairman of the Chatteris In Bloom committee requesting additional funding.

This additional funding would be used to pay for a plant watering service to be carried out on a regular basis to ensure all plants would receive the water they needed to survive and bloom.

The Chairman explained in her e-mail that the In Bloom volunteers had always struggled to keep the plants watered on a regular basis in the summer months due to the amount of man hours required to keep the plants topped up.

The volunteers worked hard to keep the plants watered and In Bloom could not operate without those dedicated volunteers who put so much of their time in to watering, weeding planting etc. The scope of the works required to keep the plants alive and looking well was more than the volunteers could cope with.

The group also relied on the Christmas Lights Committee milk float which they borrowed every summer to water the hanging baskets and planters. The milk float was out of commission in the summer of 2017 for several weeks due to a punctured tyre. It was almost impossible to water the hanging baskets which then consequently died prematurely due to lack of watering. The hanging baskets cost £700 and it was money wasted.

Against all odds In Bloom received a Gold award in 2017. This showed the dedication of the committee and the volunteers who all worked exceptionally hard putting in additional hours required to make the award possible.

The Chairman explained that putting a paid watering service in place would give In Bloom an effective and reliable method of watering so the Town could continue to enjoy the baskets and blooms that it had become accustomed to. Without the paid watering service In Bloom could not guarantee this due to the ever increasing pressure put on the volunteers and the worry of equipment failure as in previous years.

Members were advised that In Bloom estimated a cost of between £1,500 and £2,000 to put the watering service in place.

The Financial Officer reminded members the Town Council had approved its Precept budget for 2018/19. Members had already approved a grant of £2,500 to In Bloom within the Precept budget. This grant would be used towards purchasing bulbs, plants and equipment. There would be no funds available within that grant to provide a watering service.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the amount of the 2018/19 Precept Budget could not be changed to include any additional grants requested, however the 2017/18 voluntary organisations grants budget and other budgets had been underspent. The Financial Officer advised Members that under the Local Government Act Section 137 the Town Council had the power to approve funding the additional grant request from the underspent budget/general fund.

The Financial Officer's original recommendation was to approve an additional grant of £2,000 to Chatteris In Bloom Committee to enable them to put a paid watering service in place, however, she advised Members that having seen In Blooms advert for the watering service and their up to date balance sheet she proposed a slight amendment to her original recommendation. The Financial Officer recommended that a grant of up to £2,000 be approved to pay for the watering service. Payments to In Bloom would be made each time they were invoiced by the contractor and on production of a copy of each invoice to the Financial Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members approved a grant to In Bloom of up to £2,000 to pay for the watering service. All were in favour of the grant being paid on receipt of copy invoices from the contractor to In Bloom.

192) To Approve Contract for Little Acre Fen Works & Section 106 Payment Recommendations

Little Acre Fen

The Clerk advised estimates had been sought to carry out clearance work, re-seeding and the installation of a footpath at Little Acre Fen.

Three quotes were sought but only two were obtained despite follow up work by the Clerk.

Company A quoted;

To clear and re-seed site	£19,257.98 + VAT
To install long footpath & 2 bollards	£25,661.70 + VAT
To install short footpath & 2 bollards	£13,097.83 + VAT

Company B quoted:

To clear and re-seed site	£4,245 + VAT
To install long footpath & 2 bollards	£8,459.50 + VAT
To install short footpath & 2 bollards	£5,046.20 + VAT

It was recommended the Council accepted the quote from Company B.

It was **resolved** that the quote from Company B for the clearance and re-seeding work and the installation of the long footpath be accepted at a total cost of £12,704.50 + VAT.

Section 106 Funding

Following talks with FDC's Open Spaces Manager Mr Bob Ollier it had been suggested that the works at Little Acre Fen should be paid for using Section 106 funds. This would ensure that all the basic works were carried out and the funds still held by the Town Council, from the Solar Farm contribution, could be used to carry out additional works on the site, such as the installation of seating, additional tree planting, the installation of a dry pond, etc. Funds could also be used for the maintenance of the area.

Mr Ollier had also suggested that Section 106 funds should be used to:

- 1) Replace the goal posts on the green at Tithe Road;

- 2) Clear and re-seed the open area at the rear of the Parish Church;
- 3) Refurbish the sign for the area at the rear of the Parish Church;
- 4) Refurbish the pathway at the front of the Parish Church leading to the Church door;

The total cost would be £18,234.16 from Section 106 funds.

In addition the Town Council would raise an order to install the new picnic table in a concrete base at Furrowfields Recreation Ground at a cost of £855.00.

All the works would be carried out by Company B with the exception of the Church pathway.

Resolutions

It was **resolved** that:

- 1) £18,234.16 should be allocated from Section 106 Funds for the projects listed above, including the works at Little Acre Fen.
- 2) The Town Council fund the installation of the picnic bench at Furrowfields at a cost of £855.00.

193) To Agree to Increased LHI Contribution & Decision on Bollard Funding

LHI: Members had been consulted by e-mail on the results of a feasibility study into an LHI scheme for Wenny Road. The proposals were to narrow the very wide road with hatching, traffic islands and introduce speed cushions. School warning signs would be relocated on the approach from the town and 20mph advisory school warning signs erected. The total cost of the project was £14,396 and the County Council would only contribute £10,000, the Town Council was, therefore, asked to increase its contribution to the scheme to £4,396.

Eight members replied to the e-mail and all were **in favour** of the proposal and the increase in contribution. The Clerk had, therefore, given the go ahead and would be speaking in favour of the scheme at the LHI Panel meeting on the 15th January accompanied by the Mayor.

Bollard: As requested the Clerk had enquired whether the Town Council could employ someone to install a bollard on the footpath cut through between New Road and Green Park to stop vehicles using the cut through. County Highways officer Mr Les Middleton had explained the works would need to be carried out by a Street Works Qualified Contractor arranged via the Highways Street Works Team. Mr Middleton said he might be able to help with the project when his budget was replenished in April 2018.

Members **agreed** to postpone the project to see if Mr Middleton was able to help with the costs.

194) Council's Gardener Vacancy

The Clerk reported the gardener had given written notice that he would be retiring from the position at the end of February. The position had been advertised with a 1st March start date.

The application form was aimed at individuals but to date only contractors had shown an interest in the work so the Clerk and the Financial Officer were considering revised rates of pay based on the available budget. Contractors had been asked to submit a quote for the work based on an hourly rate and how long they judged the work would take. A full list of responsibilities had been drawn up on the advice of the gardener.

All applications for the work had to be in by the end of the month with a view to holding interviews in mid-February.

195) Planning

Planning applications a) to m) (as shown on the **appended list**) were considered and it was agreed to return the following recommendations to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council:

- a) Support but concerns were raised about the drainage in the area, in particular there were worries the development could cause drainage problems for existing properties in Tern Gardens.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support, welcome tidying of the area
- f) Noted and request visit by FDC's planning committee
- g) Support (on the Chairman's casting vote)
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support
- l) No additional comments, re-iterate original comments
- m) Noted

The Clerk informed members that the application for 55 dwellings on land west and south of 74 West Street would be considered by FDC's planning committee the following day. The recommendation was to approve but, in view of the Town Council's comments about bungalows being overlooked by houses, there was a condition that trees/hedging should be planted in the gardens backing on to the existing bungalows in West Street.

The Clerk also informed members that the appeal against Fenland District Council's refusal to grant planning permission for a workplace home and storage shed for horticultural purposes at land south of 19 Blackmill Road had been dismissed.

196) FDC Draft Business Plan and Budget Consultation

A press release from Fenland District Council said residents were being asked to have their say on which local services were most important to them to help shape Fenland District Council's future priorities. Members had received a copy of the questionnaire which was available on-line and in leisure centres and community hubs.

Members were asked if they wished to give a joint response but agreed it would be best to submit individual responses and there should be a link to the questionnaire on the Town Council's website.

197) Pride in Fenland Awards

Members were asked to put forward suggestions for nominations for the Pride in Fenland awards and were reminded there were four categories: good neighbour; group, club, organisation or charity benefiting the community; volunteer in the community and Young Person (carer or community volunteer).

Two names were suggested and it was agreed the nominations would be decided at the February Town Council meeting.

198) Community Bus Route Questionnaire and Letter

There had been 25 adult and 167 youth replies to the community bus route questionnaire. Cllr Ashley explained she had given copies of the questionnaires to all the form tutors of 14 to 18 year olds at Cromwell Community College along with a covering letter and was delighted with the response. She said the youths thought it was a "brilliant" idea as they would not have to rely on other people for lifts to access other towns.

The Clerk said it appeared most of the youths favoured a bus to Cambridge or Peterborough and she asked for help in going through all the replies – Cllrs Ashley, Benney, Carney and Haggata offered to help.

The questionnaire had also prompted a letter from a resident concerned that the FACT buses might replace existing buses or lead to a reduction in the existing bus service when they were not as accessible as the large buses. The letter then went on to point out the problems with the existing bus services. It was agreed the letter should be passed to Stagecoach.

199) Traffic Regulation Order Letter

Following the Clerk's enquiry about whether it would be possible to fund a Traffic Regulation Order to introduce double yellow lines in Chatteris, the Council had received a detailed explanation of the TRO process from policy and regulations manager at the County, Ms Sharon Piper.

Ms Piper had explained that double yellow lines could be funded independently. The police would need to be consulted for their comments and the local community would need to support the changes. Initially £250 would have to be paid to begin work on a TRO, the cost of advertising the TRO (up to a maximum of £1,000) would have to be met plus the actual cost of on-site works plus associated officer fees.

The Clerk said it was an idea to consider in the future but at present it was likely the Council's budget for Highways works in 2018/19 would all go to the LHI scheme for Wenny Road.

200) Ideas for Locations for Safety Indicator Device

Following the Town Council's expression of interest in the use of the Red Tile-funded Speed Indicator Device (SID). The operators Community Roadwatch had asked for locations where it could go, confirmation the Council would insure the SID and help with the costs = a £60 minimum donation per month of SID usage. The Mayor was concerned there had been no previous mention of a usage cost and Cllr Hay said she would enquire at a Red Tile meeting to see if members were aware there would be a charge for the use of the Red Tile-funded machine.

It was agreed in view of the cost and the fact the Council would soon have its own Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs not to continue with the project.

201) Traffic Issues

Disabled Parking Bay: County Highways Officer Mr Steven Thoday had forwarded a very lengthy explanation of the process involved in applying for a Disabled Persons Parking Bay and for the removal of such a bay. Both of which required consultations and no objections from local residents, the Town Council and the County Councillor. Mr Thoday also pointed out any disabled parking bay could be used by all blue badge holders and not just the person who requested them.

Mr Thoday explained the quickest and most cost effective solution to the problem in Burnsfield Street would be for the bay to remain outside number 21 and be used by the applicant from 19. However as the owner of 21 was concerned keeping the bay outside her house would hinder the sale of her property and as she was willing to pay for the removal Mr Thoday had agreed to begin the consultation process.

The Mayor said he had been unaware of the process and believed residents should be fully informed of the implications of a disabled parking bay outside their property and the Council should think carefully about the implications when considering future applications.

Mepal Viaduct: The Clerk informed members that further remedial works to the Mepal Viaduct should have begun the previous day but the works had been postponed because they necessitated the bridge being closed at nights and at present the diversion routes were flooded.

Roadworks: The latest road works bulletins and information on events affecting the highway had been received.

202) Correspondence

Members had before them a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**).

Metalcraft: Cllrs Smith and Benney gave their apologies for the Stainless Metalcraft Community Fund event as they would be attending the councillors' training at Doddington. The Mayor and Cllr Hay said they would be attending and Cllr Ashley said she hoped to be there.

Filming: Councillors asked about the filming in Chatteris. The Clerk said she had been asked by a film crew from Channel 4 for permission to film in Chatteris for a series about couples making a long-term commitment but fearing they still needed to gain their families support and address prejudices. The Clerk had signed a form.

Buses: Members asked about the changes to the Stagecoach 9 bus service. Cllr Carney said there were small changes and gave out new timetables. He also said the 8 service had changed so it was a more direct service to Cambridge.

Survey: Cllr Smith took a copy of the request to complete a "Growing a Rural Community" survey for Fenland.

203) Reports

Cllr Smith said she would give a report of the Road Safety Route Report meeting she had attended at the next meeting.

204) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

