

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 6th March 2018

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6th March 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, K Patterson and J Smith.

227) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Burrow and I Taylor.

228) 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.

229) Open Forum

A shopkeeper from the High Street attended the meeting to raise two issues. He pointed out PVC windows had been installed in a building in the conservation area, in the flat above the former DIY shop in the High Street, between Christmas and New Year.

He then raised the issue of shops closing in the High Street and businesses leaving town. He said the planned closure of Budgens would be a disaster. He asked if any grants were available to help struggling shops. The Mayor said he was not aware of any grants but he was concerned about the number of shops closing and as a result the issue was on the agenda to be discussed later in the meeting. However the Mayor warned that the Town Council had very limited powers. The ownership of the Budgens premises was then discussed.

The shopkeeper suggested the answer might be to set up a community shop. The Mayor pointed out community shops existed where there were no other shops and the Council/community could not set up in opposition to private shops. Cllr Benney said whether a shop opened or not was down to financial viability not the council and he warned of the substantial cost of renting the Bugdens' premises. The Mayor said he had written to the Chief Executive of Tesco's asking if there were any plans to utilise the Budgens' site or if there was any news about who would be occupying the other half of the redundant Tesco's store, now that Poundstretcher had opened in one half. He promised to make the answer public, if he was able. Cllr Carney said there was speculation that Tesco's might open a trial discount store in the other half of the store. Cllr Benney explained Tesco's worked on population and postcodes, knew their market share and would not be influenced by Councils.

230) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th February 2018 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

231) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 219) Bin: Following the request from the Town Council, the bin outside Chilli Masters in the High Street had been replaced.

Min 219) Churchyard: The Vicar had requested permission to put up three small signs on each of the entrances to the churchyard stating: “No Public Parking, Church Car Park”. The Vicar explained the church wished to see the church drive available for church use such as funerals, weddings and users of the Bricstan Hall and not for the general public to abandon their cars. Members agreed motorists were unlikely to take notice of the notices and pointed out the area was maintained by FDC using public money. Cllr Patterson had sympathy with the Vicar’s views pointing out it would be upsetting for those attending funerals and weddings to dodge the traffic. However, Councillors pointed out gates, fencing and lockable bollards had been offered in the past and these had been rejected by the PCC. It was agreed these would be a far more effective solution to the parking problems in the area.

Cllr Smith said In Bloom had met with Mr Bob Ollier that morning and had looked at the area at the rear of the Church. They had suggested the paving slabs which were to be taken up at the front of the Church could be used to create a paved area on the right hand side of the open space, behind the proposed wildflower garden area. The remainder of the area would be mown regularly and should create an attractive area. The Clerk said the Vicar was in favour of the slabs being used in the area but not broken pieces of slabs as these would be used as weapons. The Clerk pointed out the Town Council had money set aside for picnic benches so a picnic area could be created. The Mayor was keen to see the area advertised as a public open space/picnic area on the information board.

232) Police Matters

Members had two reports before them; a second report was issued following late information about bogus police officers asking people for money (**copies attached**). They had also received email communication from the new Fenland Inspector, denying that Fenland would be losing its local policing team but admitting there would be changes to the way Neighbourhood Policing was managed across the force. There would be just two command areas with Fenland joining with Peterborough. Sgt Lombardo said a significant number of additional officers would be committed to delivering neighbourhood policing, including in Fenland. In addition to the Neighbourhood Policing teams there would also be Community Action teams, who would be deployed to areas of greatest need. Insp Lombardo said he would be sending out invites for the leaders of Councils to meet him so he could explain the changes in context and the benefits to the residents of Fenland. It was agreed the Clerk should chase up the meeting.

PCSO Rae had informed the Clerk that the police were regularly ticketing cars illegally parked in the town and near the schools. Cllr A Carney confirmed ticketing had taken place near Glebelands School that afternoon.

Cllr Smith said the chain link fence outside the library had been targeted several times but there had been no apparent action by the police. Councillors welcomed the news of ticketing but continued to be concerned about the lack of action on low level crime. The Mayor said accepting low level crime could lead to more aggressive and serious crimes. Cllr J Carney was worried the public might take the law into their own hands.

233) FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV Updates

Members had before them the latest FDC, CCTV, Street Scene and Section 106 updates (**copy attached**).

Cllr Hay expressed surprise at the level of fly tipping in Chatteris. Cllr Patterson suggested the new brown bin charge might be a factor but Cllr Murphy assured her there was little difference in the level of green waste dumping. The main problem was household items and builders' waste, some van drivers offered to take away rubbish and then dumped it. Cllr Ashley reported cardboard had been dumped along the Old Railway Line.

Cllr Smith reported a red tent on the land between the travellers' site and Poundstretchers.

Cllr Murphy said it was a private field but it was agreed the matter should be reported to the police as there were concerns it could attract more tents.

Cllr Patterson asked about the installation of a dog foul bin on a lamppost in King Edwards Road as it was a hotspot for problems. Councillors pointed out there as a bin at the top of the road. Other areas were suggested and Cllr Murphy said the cost of a bin was £160 plus VAT plus the cost of installation. Cllr Smith pointed out the issue of bins had been raised in the town/community plan and she suggested looking at the issue in more depth and arriving at a strategy about where bins should be located.

Cllr Patterson was concerned about the number of trees which had been felled in Wenny Road Recreation Ground, particularly in the spinney. It was pointed out the trees were dead and had to be removed for safety purposes but Cllr Patterson suggested FDC should be replacing the felled trees. Cllr Murphy said FDC did not have the funds to replace them and Cllr Smith suggested individuals could sponsor a replacement tree or Section 106 money could be used if there were surplus funds. Cllr Murphy said very mature trees would be needed, at a substantial cost, and Cllr Smith agreed pointing out saplings planted elsewhere had failed to thrive. The Mayor praised Bartlett's who had planted mature trees outside their factory.

Cllr Smith reported the next CCTV liaison group meeting would take place on the 18th April and Cllr J Carney said he would try and attend the meeting.

234) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 28th February 2018 showing expenditure of £214,931.06 and income of £239,404.71

(includes a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

(2) Town Council Asset Register

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting held in February, they requested a list of the full assets held by the Council.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had updated the Asset Register (attached) to include the Gas Lamps, Telephone Kiosk, Council Chambers table & chairs and other items owned by the Town Council.

The Financial Officer advised Members that under the Financial Regulations any assets under £2,000 should not be included in the Council's Asset Register, however; she confirmed that all assets and other items owned by the Town Council have been listed on the asset register at Members request for information purposes only.

All were in favour and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

235) Approval of Insurance Renewal

Members were advised that the Council's Insurance policy was due for renewal on the 31st March 2018. The current insurance policy was with Zurich under a three year contract which would reach full term in 2020.

The Financial Officer advised Members that as the Council was in a long term agreement (LTA) with Zurich it was committed to renewing the policy and in return Zurich had applied LTA discounts and frozen the rates that had been applied to the relevant lines of cover.

The cost of the renewal insurance for 2018/19 was £2,020.02. This included an additional fee of £85.50 and a reduction of £111.14 for the "All Risks" section of the policy.

The additional fee amendment to the "All Risks" section was to add the following Council assets to the policy:-

2 x Victorian Gas Lamps

1 x Telephone Box

7 x Benches

1 x Picnic Bench.

The above had been added to the policy with immediate effect at no additional cost to the 2017/18 policy.

The reduction amendment was for the removal of the gardening equipment and tools from the policy (the equipment had been sold on).

The Council building sum insured was index linked and had increased to £499,530.73 which was an increase of 3%. The Contents of the Council building had been increased to £30,000 to ensure the Council Chambers table and chairs were adequately covered. The remaining lines of cover were based on the same principles as the previous year's policy.

All were in favour and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

236) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll March 2018	1,007.66
Town Clerk	Payroll March 2018	1,468.25
Gardener	Payroll March 2018	236.41
HMRC	Payroll March 2018	678.99
Cambs Pension	Payroll March 2018	1,295.28
Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee	22.78
Viking	Stationary order	143.04
Viking	Stationary order	98.32
Barclays	Bank Charges	6.79
Clerk	Reimb Gardeners leaving present	117.00
Clerk	Mileage re collection of MVAS	10.80
C F Corporate	Q Lease of the photocopier	212.36
BT business	Q phone Bill	300.43
Financial Officer	Reimb DBS check on new gardener	37.00
Cash	Petty Cash	45.53
Total		£5,680.64

237) Appointment of New Gardener

The Clerk reported a new gardener had been appointed and had begun a three month probation period. He would begin cutting later in the month when the weather improved. In the meantime he would be renovating and reinstalling the memorial bench at the top of Horsegate Gardens which vandals had attempted to steal.

238) Planning

Cllr Ashley (chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on 27th February 2018 (**copy attached**). Cllr Smith had requested one amendment to the minutes. She said she had not requested FDC introduce planning regulations to encourage the installation of swift boxes, rather the Town Council should write asking FDC to encourage those applying for planning permission to think about the use of boxes by making suitable applicants aware of the swifts, and the decline of the species, along with the information about the boxes available and in use in other districts. She also suggested having just one or two boxes available from TC might help kick off the scheme.

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to h) (with the exception of d) (as shown on the appended list) and these were ratified by the full council. The group also recommended refusing application r) from the previous month as they deemed it over

development of the site and were concerned it would have a detrimental impact on 25 Linden Drive.

Further information had been received on application d) and members considered two further applications.

It was agreed to return all applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support, some of the Council's concerns were met by the amendments
- e) Noted
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support

239) Empty Shop and Business Units in Chatteris

The Mayor said he was concerned about the number of empty shops and business units in the town and he asked members to consider suggestions about how to improve the situation. Cllr Haggata was anxious to demonstrate the Council was being proactive ahead of the annual town meeting. He admitted there was nothing the Town Council could do to stop private businesses moving out but it could encourage the installation of brown signs on the roads into Chatteris pointing out there were shops and places to eat in the town. He also pointed out several groups worked hard to enhance the town including the Christmas Lights and In Bloom committees.

Cllr Benney said one of the biggest downsides to getting people into town was the parking in the town centre. He said residents would not use the car parks preferring to park on the streets but these were often congested, in some cases with cars whose owners had caught a bus and left their cars parked on the street all day long. Cllr Hay pointed out shopkeepers often parked outside their shops instead of using Furrowfields car park. Members pointed out the car park was usually empty. Cllr Patterson commented that residents of March had to use car parks and walk into town. She was against the provision of more car parks favouring encouraging people to use the existing car parks and walk along the High Street. Members were in favour of those with access problems being able to park in the High Street.

Cllr Benney suggested charging those who parked for more than two hours on the streets and Cllr Haggata suggested more signs highlighting the free car parks.

Members favoured the idea of the main bus stop being located at Furrowfields but Cllr Newell said that idea had been advocated a few years ago and County would not agree to it.

Cllr Smith suggested setting up a working group to look at the issues in more depth. Cllr Benney agreed to lead the group and the shopkeeper attending the meeting said he was interested in being involved and suggested other businesses could also have an input. Cllrs Haggata, J Carney, Smith and Patterson all expressed an interest in joining the group. They also pointed out it would be helpful if businesses would work together to set up a business forum in the town.

Cllr Hay reminded members that Stainless Metalcraft and Bartletts were keen to set up a local enterprise zone. She had met with the combined authority leader who was keen to promote market towns. The authority had already set up a trial with St Neots as a growth area and were now looking for another town. Cllr Hay said she had already asked if the new leader of FDC would push for Chatteris to be that town. She also informed members that the new portfolio holder for growth at FDC, Cllr David Mason, was planning to meet councillors and look at ideas for promoting growth in Fenland.

240) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2018 (**copy attached**).

L67) Gates: Cllr Benney said he was still chasing a quote for the elephant gates. The Clerk said it was imperative to install the gates quickly as vandals had started to drive around the pocket park area as it had been cleared of vegetation.

L66) Station Road: Cllr Smith said the Station Road flower bed had been discussed. ISS were tidying it up and In Bloom were devising a new plan for the area.

Recreation Ground & Cemetery: It was agreed to chase up the repairs to the Huntingdon Road Recreation Ground gate and Cllr Smith confirmed Mr Ollier had inspected the fence between the cemetery and The Orchards.

L68) Local Government: Cllr J Carney said he had updated his information sheet on the responsibilities of the different tiers of local government and he would distribute it.

241) Youth Club Provider

The Clerk said three organisations/individuals had expressed an interest in taking over the running of the Youth Club at the King Edward Centre but two had decided they could not provide a service for the funds available and there was now just one applicant – the Financial Officer's son. The Financial Officer and her son had put in writing their association (in line with Standing Orders) and the Financial Officer left the room while the item was discussed.

Members had a copy of a letter from the applicant, who was employed by Vivacity Peterborough providing PE lessons in schools, breakfast, after school and holiday sports clubs. He had listed his qualifications, his experience in working with children and his plans for the youth club and ideas for promoting it to increase numbers. He explained he would be

assisted by his girlfriend, who was studying sport and education at university and would begin working as a trainee teacher in September.

The Clerk said the applicant had helped at the Midsummer Festival in 2016 and was popular with the children. Members agreed he sounded an ideal candidate and asked the Clerk to seek a reference from Vivacity and to check he and his girlfriend were DBS checked. Subject to a positive outcome to the checks it was **agreed** he should be offered the position and should be asked to keep attendance figures.

242) Stopping Up Order Update

Written confirmation had been received that the County Council had applied to the Magistrates' Court for a Stopping-Up Order for the highway adjacent 15 The Hawthorns, Chatteris. The Clerk had acknowledged that the Town Council had no objections to the application being placed before the Magistrates' Court but maintained its objection to the Stopping Up Order. The Mayor and Cllr Newell said they were prepared to attend the Magistrates' Court if permitted.

243) MVAS Unit – Bracket Locations

The Clerk had collected the MVAS Unit, four brackets, two spare batteries and mounting bands from the County Council and it was up to the Town Council to decide where they wished the brackets to be mounted.

Members suggested - in addition to Doddington Road - locations at New Road, London Road, Huntingdon Road and Bridge Street should be explored. The Clerk warned the device required a straight stretch of road, measuring at least 80 metres, to operate.

244) Traffic Issues

Disabled Parking Bay: Members confirmed they had no objections to the proposed removal of the disabled persons parking bay in the vicinity of 21 Burnsfield Street.

Huntingdon Road: The Clerk had been asked for an update on the removal of double yellow lines in Huntingdon Road. The County Officer responsible said the budget was very tight at present as disabled parking bay provisions had been prioritised. The earliest the work could be programmed was spring when additional work in the area was carried out.

Parking Issues: The Clerk had been approached by three householders, two complaining they were unable to park near their home and enquiring about resident parking permits, and another complaining about the state of the footpath outside their home. The first two had been advised parking on double yellow lines was a police issue and parking permits were a County Highways issue and they had always advised that permits were not issued outside the major cities. The other had been advised it was a County Council issue and could be reported on line.

Roadworks: The latest road works bulletins had been received.

245) Correspondence

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

Fly a Flag: Members were advised the Commonwealth flag would be flown from the war memorial at 10am on Monday 12th March and the Mayor would read out the messages.

Metalcraft: Members agreed a letter of congratulations should go to Stainless Metalcraft on winning a national engineering award for its investment in skills.

Sensory Room: Cllrs A Carney and Patterson agreed parents of children with special needs would be likely to travel to Manea to access a sensory room if it was well publicised. They suggested the Ormiston Children's Centre should be able to give information on the number of children who would benefit from such a room.

Cycling: It was suggested the invitation from the organisers of the Tour of Cambridgeshire, to apply for funding for projects to improve the health of children, should be directed to the primary schools and Chatteris Cycling Group.

246) Reports

Charity Event: The Mayor invited everyone to his Cocktails and Canapes Charity event on the 20th April and asked members to support the event which would be in aid of McMillan Nurses and local charities.

Town Guide: The Clerk had been informed that Rotary were not able to update the Town Guide, due to a death and an illness, although they had promised to help distribute the guides. The Clerk asked if members wished her to research a professional company to update the guide but Cllrs Smith said she was happy to carry out the task and Cllr Patterson offered to help her with the layout.

247) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

The next item (Min 248 GDPR Compliance) was discussed IN COMMITTEE due to the sensitive nature of the information.