



CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report

Year Ending 30th April 2011

Patience and perseverance have finally been rewarded this year with the completion of one major project in Chatteris and the launch of another.

Both projects – the King Edward Centre and the All Weather Pitch - have received substantial support in terms of finance and man hours from the Town Council.

The newly renovated and extended King Edward Centre opened its doors at the end of 2010 to reveal a community centre fit for most purposes in the 21st Century. The Centre continues to cater for its long-established clients such as the pre-school, guiding groups and the Women's Institutes, but is also home to some exciting new projects including a community cinema and short mat bowls. To help ensure its long term future the Town Council has agreed to contribute towards staffing costs.

After many setbacks the Council was delighted when the diggers finally moved on to the Cromwell Community College site to begin work on a new all weather pitch. The multi-purpose sports area, which received financial backing from the Town Council, the Football Foundation, Fenland District Council, the County Council and the school, should be completed by the end of July, to the particular delight of Cllr Florence Newell who attended many meetings in her fight to see the project finally reach fruition.

The good news is that plans for phase two of the scheme for new leisure facilities in Chatteris – a 50 station gym and an exercise/dance studio – are progressing well and the project, part of the Building Schools for the Future Scheme at Cromwell Community College, is due for completion in 2012. The main funders will be the Town Council and Fenland District Council.

The Town Council has not sat back on its laurels, it also:

- a) Held a very successful Historic Festival in June in partnership with Fenland District Council. Thousands attended and enjoyed a weekend of sunshine and fun and 500 local schoolchildren found learning can be fascinating at a living history day.
- b) Was successful once again with a bid for JFMHI funding which will result in measures to help pedestrians safely cross Bridge Street. The funding for 2010/2011 saw part of Huntingdon Road turned into a cul-de-sac.
- c) Unveiled a public bench in memory of Cllrs German and Greenwood.
- d) Agreed to increase its contribution towards the costs of CCTV cameras and to upgrade its four cameras.
- e) Supported the application for a crematorium in Chatteris.
- f) Supported in principle a major planning application for 1,000 homes and ancillary services to the south of the town while also raising points of concern.
- g) Gave out grants to a number of local organisations including substantial contributions towards the running costs of the Christmas Lights, Chatteris Town in Bloom and the Museum and sponsored the summer reading scheme at the library.
- h) Hosted a successful Mayor's Civic Charity Ball which raised funds for local organisations.
- i) Organised and financed the increasingly popular Summer Fun programme of events for children for the 10th anniversary year.
- j) Adopted a red telephone kiosk in Wood Street which is now being renovated by volunteers for use as a display area.
- k) Sponsored an archaeological dig at Furrowfields attend by local schoolchildren.
- l) Advised on how Section 106 funds should be spent on recreation grounds in the town.
- m) Welcomed the provision of new equipment at the Huntingdon Road Skatepark and is now looking forward to the installation of a multi-use games area at Furrowfields and new equipment at Wenny Road Recreation Ground.
- n) Successfully argued that a Section 106 contribution towards education should be sought from the developers of the housing estate near Kingsfield School.
- o) Opposed plans to cut BSF funding for Cromwell Community College.
- p) Began work on setting up a new Council website – www.chatteristowncouncil.info
- q) Agreed to support the trial of a hand-made crafts market.
- r) Fought for the adoption of roads and open spaces on new housing estates.
- s) Opposed the closure of Wisbech Magistrates Court.
- t) Funded improvements to the small amenity area in Bridge Street.
- u) Administered over 130 allotments which are all let and there is a waiting list.
- v) Opposed the replacement of paid, qualified staff with volunteers at the library.
- w) Opposed the rumoured closure of Chatteris sorting office.
- x) Requested the regular attendance of police officers at meetings, to no avail.
- y) Wrote of concerns about the under provision of public open space in the town.
- z) Welcomed improvements to the roadway in Cox's Lane and Chapel Lane.

Speakers and guests at Town Council and working group meetings included:

Mr Richard Cassidy, FDC, who attended regularly with the FDC updates and to answer relevant questions.

Mrs Anne Marshall, FDC, who attended regularly with Street Scene updates.

Mr Nigel Brown, FDC, gave advice on plans for 1,000 homes application and on adoption of roads and open spaces.

Cllr Alan Melton, with FDC and County Council updates at annual town meeting.

Pc Andy Harcup-Rudd with the crime figures.

Mr Keith Ashmore and Mr Geoff Kent, of FDC, on one-stop-shop opening hours.

Mr Simeon Carroll, County Rights of Way Officer, on footpaths.

Mr Mick Gipp and Mr Aaron Locks, of FDC, and Insp Rob Hill and Sgt Steve Atkin, of Cambs Constabulary, on CCTV coverage in Chatteris.

Cllr Martin Curtis, County cabinet member for children, on Section 106 and BSF funding for schools.

Mr Bob Ollier, FDC, with open spaces/recreation grounds update.

The Council

Cllr Peter Murphy is nearing the end of his second year as Mayor and has been busy representing Chatteris at many events. He has been assisted by Cllr Newell in her fourth year as Deputy Mayor.

The number of full meetings of the Council attended by members is shown below. There were 13 full council meetings in total but several members also attended monthly meetings of the planning working group and/or bi-monthly meetings of the leisure working group. Councillors also represented the Council on numerous outside bodies.

Cllrs Murphy, Newell, Howes and Stimson attended all full council meetings.

L Ashley	12	P Murphy	13
D Baldry	7	F Newell	13
J Chambers	12	M Petrou	6
C Colbert	6	S Rigby	9
S Elam	8	R Stimson	13
C Howes	13	I Taylor	8

The Town Council continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the month and the meeting includes a 15 minute Open Forum when members of the public can raise issues. During the past year these have included: the telephone kiosk in Wood Street (updates and requests), shop closures, speeding in London Road, enforcement action over windows, street lighting, fly tipping in a skip and a campaign to save Manea fire appliance.

The Council's planning working group met monthly and made recommendations on 115 planning applications. The leisure working group met bi-monthly to discuss plans for the town's recreation grounds and footpaths.

The Council has a regular dialogue with Fenland District Council and receives monthly rolling updates on issues of concern and Street Scene matters.

Three members of staff are employed by the Council – the Clerk, the Financial Officer and the Gardener. The Financial Officer, among other duties, prepared the annual return for audit and budget purposes, advised on the precept, reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit arrangements and presented a report on the Mayor's allowance. The internal and external audits were successfully completed and no matters of concern were raised.