

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes Dated 12th May 2015

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Minutes of the annual meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 12th May 2015 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs L Ashley, J Carney, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy, F Newell and J Smith.

1) Election of Mayor

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr James Carney continue as Mayor for a second term, this was seconded by Cllr Haggata and unanimously agreed by all present. Cllr Carney was duly elected Mayor. Cllr Carney said he had enjoyed his first year as Mayor even though it had been challenging at times and he was looking forward to his second year.

2) Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3) Members' Declarations of Acceptance of Office

All members present signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

4) Election of Deputy Mayor

Although Cllr Burrow had send his apologies and was not present Cllr Carney said he had indicated he was willing to continue as Deputy Mayor. Cllr Ashley, therefore, proposed Cllr Burrow this was seconded by Cllr Newell and unanimously agreed. Cllr Burrow was duly elected Deputy Mayor for a second year.

5) Registering of Members' Interests and Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

Councillors were asked to complete the Register of Member Interests and return it to the Clerk by the 2nd June 2015 at the latest.

Cllr Haggata declared an interest in the RSPB in anticipation of a matter he wished to raise later in the meeting.

6) To Accept Apologies for Absence

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

7) Appointments to Outside Bodies

Members agreed to represent the Town Council on the following groups/committees:

King Edward Centre – Cllrs Ashley and Newell – *one vacancy*

Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Carney and Smith, *Mr Richard Cross*

All Weather Pitch Management Committee – Cllr Newell

Town Plan Working Group – Cllrs Burrow and Carney

Sport Chatteris – Cllrs Ashley and Newell

Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay

Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllrs Murphy and Smith

Neighbourhood Watch – *Cllr Taylor?*

Isle of Ely Blind Society – Cllr Murphy

CAFY – Cllrs Newell and Smith

Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley and Newell, *Mr Chris Howes to continue?*

Fens Youth Trust – Cllr Newell

George Clare Patients Alliance – Cllrs Murphy and Newell

Midsummer Festival – Cllrs Carney and Newell

Transport Committee – Cllrs Haggata and Newell

Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Murphy and Newell

Adult Education Working Group – *Mrs Christine Colbert*

(Mr Cross and Mrs Colbert had indicated their willingness to continue on the groups listed.)

8) Election of Working Groups

Members indicated they were willing to serve on the following working groups:

Leisure and General Purposes: Cllrs Burrow, Carney, Haggata, Hay, Newell and Smith.

Planning: Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Haggata, Hay, Murphy, Newell, Smith and Taylor.

9) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members considered approving the Mayor's Allowance for 2015/16 as shown in the budget.

It was **resolved** that an allowance of up to £1,700 be paid to the Mayor in respect of expenses incurred in the performance of official duties under the scheme approved by the Council on 11th January 2011 and in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Regulations. The Financial Officer also stated £241 would be rolled forward from the 2014/15 budget.

10) To Agree Arrangements for Co-option to Fill Vacancies on Slade Lode Ward

There were no elections to fill any of the seats on the Town Council on May 9th. However there were sufficient candidates to fill the seats on the Birch, Mills and Wenneye wards but no candidates applied to represent on the Slade Lode ward. The Clerk explained that as a result there were three vacancies on that ward which had to be filled by co-option. There was no firm guidance on how quickly a co-option should take place or how long the vacancy should be advertised but members agreed the seats should be filled as soon as possible. They agreed to the Clerk's suggestions that the closing date for applications should be the 26th May 2015 and the co-options should take place at the 2nd June meeting.

It was arranged that the vacancies would be advertised on posters, on noticeboards, the Council's website, via Twitter and on the What's On in Chatteris Facebook page.

The Clerk explained that if there were more candidates than vacancies each vacancy had to be filled by a separate majority vote in a secret ballot at the meeting on 2nd June. Candidates would be invited to attend the meeting and give a two minute presentation on why they wished to be considered for the seat.

11) Open Forum

There was just one member of the public present, Mr Ian Mason, who gave an update on activities at the museum.

Mr Mason spoke about the exhibition opening on the 6th June and said Radio Cambridge, the Town Crier and the Fenland Poet Laureate would all be helping to advertise the event. He said a mural would go in one of the windows of the museum to help direct people to the museum as there still appeared to be doubts about its location.

Mr Mason said Chatteris schools had visited the museum and Flag Fen to learn about the Stone Age. He would be collecting the last replica item from that period, the shield, from Cornwall at the weekend and it would then go on display.

12) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 7th April 2015 and the Annual Town Meeting held on the 17th April 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

13) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 265) Roads: Cllr Hay reported that Westbourne Road was among the worst in the town and the people who lived in the area were very angry about the road surface which had not

been properly re-surfaced for at least 30 years. She also pointed out the car park for the gym was in a terrible state and visitors risked damaging their car if they used it.

The Financial Officer said the County Council had promised to improve the car parks when the All Weather Pitch was installed but they ran out of money. In 2014 they once again promised to remedy the situation but this had not happened so the Town Council and the AWP committee had written again. FDC was also communicating with the County Council on the issue. Cllr Murphy confirmed the car parks were part of the Building Schools for the Future project but the County Council ran out of money. Cllr Ashley said the car park was further damaged by the lorries which were used to re-surface Eastwood. It was agreed to continue the pressure for improvements to the car park. The Clerk said she had written to the County Council about the state of roads and would add Westbourne Road to the list.

Cllr Haggata reported that the County Council had spent £10,000 extending the footpath from Wenny Road, Chatteris to Dean Drove and a large vehicle had now churned it up.

Cllr Ashley reported motorcycles were churning up the Old Railway Line footpath.

Min 266) Town Plan: The Mayor reported that a committee had been appointed to take forward the Town Plan and had held two meetings. Mr Leigh Sessions was chairman, Mr Andy Smith vice chairman and Mr Mat Carpenter secretary.

The plan had been named “Our Chatteris, Our Future: Our Community Plan” and the group was called “The Community Plan Team”.

The group planned to have 2,000 postcards printed asking three basic questions: “Three things I love about living in Chatteris; Three things that I don’t like about living in Chatteris; Three things that I would like to see improved”. These would be distributed across the town and at the Festival and would help to influence the questions for the main questionnaire. Cllr Carney said he hoped once it was widely known the town plan was going ahead that more people would be inspired and would join the steering group. The group was aware the Council had a budget for the plan and would have to formally approve any expenditure from the budget.

Members **agreed** that the group could spend £85.36 on printing the postcards.

14) Police Matters

There were no police officers present but PCSO Dawn Rae had produced a comprehensive update from the team working in the town which gave a breakdown of crimes, anti-social behaviour and parking issues. Members were given a copy of the report (**copy attached**) and also an update on Police Matters prepared by the Clerk using information received (**copy also attached**). Members agreed the preferred date for the next Neighbourhood Forum meeting at Manea would be the 5th August 2015.

The Clerk said she had reported problems at Huntingdon Road Recreation Ground following an approach by local parents who said they did not dare allow their children to use the park

because of drug taking. Both the police and Fenland District Council had confirmed they were looking into the matter and would take action, if necessary.

CLlr Newell said she had been informed of drug activity in Bridge Street in an empty building formerly occupied by Harding's and then ServiceMaster. The Clerk agreed to pass on the information.

15) FDC, Street Scene, CCTV & Section 106 Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest updates (**copy attached**) and noted the contents.

CLlr Smith said she had reported a large amount of asbestos dumped on the track which leads from the Old Railway Line to Little Acre Fen. She also pointed out one of the signs referred to in the FDC update (for a business in Wenny Road) was still in situ at the bandstand area.

The Clerk had received updates from Mr Bob Ollier on the skate park and Wenny Road Recreation Ground and Larham Way play area.

Mr Ollier was delighted to announce that WREN had agreed to give £75,000 towards the skate park project which would now go ahead. In the meantime the County Council had approached Mr Ollier to say they had the money to put a cycleway and footpath around Wenny Recreation Ground, to tie in with the road safety scheme in Wenny Road. Since a footpath was part of the skate park project this should mean a saving on the project and Mr Ollier was looking to put the savings towards the scheme to improve the parish church grounds (with railings, bollards, etc.). Mr Ollier had met the Vicar who was apparently happy with the proposals. He hoped work on the skate park would begin in July.

Mr Ollier also said the County Council was planning to carry out an archaeological dig at Wenny and had raised the question of three Poplar trees at the entrance which they would like to fell. One was diseased and the other two were affecting the roadway. The trees would be replaced with up to 10 new trees. Members raised no objections to the proposals.

At Larham Way Dentan Williams had confirmed that a new pedestrian gate was being manufactured and would be installed and the area had been re-seeded. If the grass did not take it would be seeded again in September.

16) Payment of Accounts

Payment of the following accounts was approved:-

		£
Chatteris Museum Trust	Grant 2015/16	4,050.00
Chatteris Community Centre Assoc	Grant 2015/16	6,350.00

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Chatteris Town in Bloom	Grant 2015/16	1,650.00
Chatteris Christmas Lights	Grant 2015/16	3,200.00
MAGPAS	Grant 2015/16	100.00
Fenland Volunteer Centre	Grant 2015/16	100.00
Cambs County Council	Grant 2015/16 (Summer Reading)	350.00
Fenland Assoc Comm Transport	Grant 2015/16	100.00
Mandley Bros	Hard core – Allotments roadway	32.50
L Newman	New door – Council Offices	356.00
Clerk	Pay – May 2015	1,401.77
Financial Officer	Pay – May 2015	948.83
Gardener	Pay – May 2015	505.64
H M Revenue & Customs	PAYE – May 2015	812.89
Cambs CC Pensions Income A/c	Pension contributions – April 2015	889.30
Gardener	Petrol for Mower, etc.	29.95
Chatteris Comm Centre Assoc	Room hire – Annual Town meeting	21.00
Cash	Petty cash reimbursement	23.04
Collings Bros of Abbotsley	Mower service (spare), etc.	296.92
S Crosbie	Rosettes, etc. – Summer Festival	166.60
Jensen Security Systems Ltd	Adjustment to sensor	84.00
Johnston Publishing Ltd	Job Advert – Financial Officer	392.73
Collings Bros of Abbotsley	Purchase of new mower	804.00
Archant Community Media Ltd	Job Advert – Financial Officer	749.01
Cash	Cash Float – Summer Festival	100.00
Archant Community Media	Job Advert – Financial Officer	217.02
Zen Internet Ltd (D/D)	Website rental	9.59

17) Final Accounts and Annual Return

The Financial Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to recommend approval of the Final Accounts for 2014/15 and to deal with the content of the Annual Return for the year to the 31st March 2015 due to be submitted to the External Auditors (Littlejohn) by the 8th June 2015. **(A full copy of the report is appended to these Minutes)**

As neither the total income nor the total expenditure for 2014/15 exceeded £200,000 the Council's accounts for 2014/15 should attract a 'Basic' audit. A detailed Statement of Accounts was shown at Appendix A to the report and the Financial Officer summarised the position. The Budget for 2014/15 had contained £5,000 for preparation of the Parish Plan. Only £28.50 was spent in the year and the unspent balance of £4,971.50 had been transferred to a Parish Plan Fund to allow, subject to detailed Council approval, for future stages of the preparation of the plan. The Reserves had increased to £146,797.86 through the addition of £7,500 to the All Weather Pitch Carpet Replacement Fund, the creation of the Parish Plan Fund described above, a revenue contribution of £2,000 to the CCTV Reserve and accrued

investment interest for the year of £1,444. The General Fund balance had increased by £18,603. The reasons for this were shown in Appendix B to the report, expressed as a comparison with the Budget 2014/15.

Also contained in the full report were the content of the Summary of Accounts required under Section 1 of the Annual Return (Appendix C), Section 1 requiring the signatures of the Financial Officer and the Mayor, and the year-end bank reconciliation (Appendix E).

Appendix F set out the assurances under the Annual Governance Statement that members were required to attest to in Section 2 of the Annual Return, together with qualification of each section to enable the Council to provide the required assurance over the signatures of the Mayor and the Clerk.

Members noted that the Internal Auditor's Report would be presented to the June meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that:-

- [i] the transfer of the unspent balance of the Parish Plan budget (£4,971.50) to an earmarked fund be approved;
- [ii] the detailed accounts and analyses for 2014/15, as submitted, be approved;
- [iii] the Summary of Accounts (Appendix C), to be certified by the Financial Officer and endorsed by the Mayor, be approved;
- [iv] the Annual Governance Statement as detailed in Appendix F be approved for signature by the Mayor and the Clerk.

18) Planning

Members considered applications a) to c) (as shown on the appended list). It was agreed to return the applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Raise No Objections
- b) Raise No Objections
- c) Request more information as concerns about balcony overlooking neighbouring property and what is in the tank marked on the plan?

(Cllrs Murphy and Newell declared an interest and did not take part in the decision making). The Clerk updated members on the latest decisions from Fenland District Council. She was asked to query why the Council was not consulted on an application for a change of use of an office to a dwelling, which was refused planning permission.

Members noted a consultation on the proposed 3rd revision of the Local Validation List for applications to Cambridgeshire County Council for planning permission.

19) Development off Railway Lane – Suggestion for Name

Members were asked for suggestions for a name for a small development between 5 and 7 Railway Lane. It was agreed to suggest Railway Mews.

20) Tesco's Community Fund Advertising & Distribution

The Clerk reminded members that at the April meeting of the Council reservations were expressed about the proposed distribution of the Tesco's Community Fund grants. Following the meeting the Council had received an e-mail from the Mayor of Whittlesey stating that the idea that the funds should be distributed through a public voting system organised through the Cambs Times had been unanimously rejected by Whittlesey Town Council. The Council wished for its Finance and Policy Committee to decide upon the distribution of the funds for the good of the town.

The Mayor explained again that the Cambs Times had been suggested because the Fenland Citizen did not cover Whittlesey and the Cambs Times had a better, more up to date website. Fenland District Council planned to be in charge of the marketing. It had also been proposed to use Centrepont, however he acknowledged there were constraints on using the newsletter as it was only published four times a year. He also acknowledged readership of the Cambs Times was low in Chatteris.

Mr Richard Cassidy at Fenland had argued that the proposed scheme had worked well in other parts of the country.

Cllr Ashley suggested Chatteris Town Council should be responsible for the distribution of the money. The Council should advertise the fund and then consider applications for a share of the fund. The Mayor pointed out Tesco's were keen to see the money spent on tangible assets.

The Financial Officer said the Town Council would need to draw up a set of guidelines and criteria for applications and would need to see evidence that the money had been spent within a certain period. If it was unspent the money should be passed on to another group. Members felt some of the smaller groups in the town should benefit.

Members **unanimously agreed** that the Town Council should be responsible for advertising the scheme and distributing the money. The Clerk agreed to inform Mr Cassidy of the Council's decision.

21) Chatteris Midsummer Festival Update

The Clerk confirmed plans were progressing well for the Midsummer Festival and requested members help over the weekend.

22) Traffic Issues

The Clerk reported the issue regarding double or single yellow lines in Wenny Road was ongoing.

Mr Matt Pickering had put the Council's call for double yellow lines to the police and Cromwell Community College for comment. The police said they would enforce whatever restrictions were in place when possible while the school had stated they would prefer to see single yellow lines to allow visitors to park during the day. Mr Pickering argued that single yellow lines would allow some parking which would slow the traffic and was worried motorists would not "buy into" the double yellow lines and would not respect them.

After consulting members again the Clerk had replied that the majority of councillors remained adamant that the lines should be double yellow since motorists were more inclined to adhere to double yellow lines and they would be more enforceable when the police did decide to take action. The Clerk had also passed on members' suggestions that visitors to the school should be using the bus bay during the day and not parking on the road.

23) Correspondence

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

The Mayor commented that in addition to the article in the national Royal British Legion magazine, the youth section of the Chatteris branch had also won the Judges Special Award at the Pride of Fenland awards and it was a very proud moment when the decision was announced. The group had also been entered into the Young People Awards.

24) Reports

Mayor: Cllr Carney reported he had carried out four engagements in his role as Mayor. He had attended the Mayor of Huntingdon's Mad Hatter Tea Party for charity, Chatteris Rotary Club's Charter Night and the 25th anniversary of the Emmanuel Church. In addition he had lit the beacon the previous Friday as part of the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day.

RSPB: Cllr Haggata said the RSPB had asked for his support for an application submitted to FDC to carry out conservation work at the Nene Washes Nature Reserve near Whittlesey. It was agreed Cllr Haggata was at liberty to write in support of the application.

25) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

The following item (26) was dealt with IN COMMITTEE:

26) Appointment of Financial Officer – To Agree Interview Arrangements