

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 3rd April 2018

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd April 2018 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

249) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and K Patterson.

250) 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.

251) Open Forum

There was one member of the public present, a shopkeeper from the High Street, who said he wished to compliment Fenland District Council who had given a discount when there had been a problem with an interment. The shopkeeper said he had sent the money he saved to Cancer Research.

252) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th March 2018 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record following one amendment: on Min 233) Cllr Murphy said he had reported the cost of a dog bin was £170 plus VAT, not £160.

253) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 229) The Mayor had received a response to his letter to the Chief Executive of Tesco's. The Head of Community and Local Communications, Mr Alec Brown, had said Tesco's had been working hard to find another operator for their site in Chatteris. They were pleased Poundstretcher had taken one half and hoped this would make the other unit a more attractive proposition. The process to fill the other half was ongoing. Mr Brown promised to update the community when he had further information.

254) 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 police report also included a resume of Neighbourhood Alerts received in the last month. PCSOs Rae and Cox sent apologies they were unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr Smith confirmed CCTV cameras had picked up the theft of the flags from the war memorial but it had been impossible to identify the culprit as it was dark and he was wearing a dark hoody.

The Mayor said he would be meeting the new Fenland Inspector Ian Lombardo on the 11th April at March Police Station. Due to a lack of meeting room space only the heads of the town and parish councils had been invited to attend the meeting but he promised to ask as many questions as possible.

Cllr Smith asked if there was any legislation which prevented the police from putting CCTV footage on more general display to help with the identification of culprits, if the police had been unable to identify them. The Mayor agreed to pose the question.

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

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

The Mayor was pleased to note that food safety inspections had shown all premises were broadly compliant and the rating for two premises had gone up.

256) Financial Officer's Report**(1) Financial Statement**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 26th March 2018 showing expenditure of £220,679.45 and income of £258,573.92 (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) New Picnic bench for grassed area behind the church

It had been suggested at the last Leisure meeting that a new picnic bench could be installed in the new grassed area behind the Church once the slabs had been re-laid.

Members were advised that the Vicar had confirmed that she was happy for a bench to be installed on the slabbed area as long as it was located in the middle of the slabs and not at the edge near any of the walls. The Financial Officer advised Members that she had obtained a quote for a picnic bench that accommodated 8 adults and 2 wheelchair users /pushchairs. The cost including delivery was £574.00 + vat.

Members were reminded that the Council had agreed in the past that provision should be made in the budget for more picnic benches to be installed around the town and open spaces. In the 2017/18 Recreation Grounds budget up to £1500.00 had been set aside for a new bench. This amount remained unspent in the budget.

On this basis the Financial Officer recommended Members approve the quote for a new picnic bench to be purchased and then installed on the slabs behind the church.

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

(3) Chatteris Youth Provision Service

The Financial Officer verbally advised Members that the Manager of the new Youth Provision Service Provider had been to see the participants at the previous week's Youth Club, to introduce himself and have a chat with them. He also gave out leaflets advising them of the date of his first youth club session.

The Clerk said the Manager had requested a payment to be approved in advance to enable him to purchase resources and equipment for his first session. (The previous provider had advised they would be taking away all their equipment).

The Financial Officer advised Members that the previous provider had invoiced for the full cost of a year's youth club provision at the beginning of the financial year and full payment was made in advance. The Clerk suggested that payment could be made termly in advance i.e. the full cost divided by 3 terms, less the cost of the hall hire.

All were in favour and it was **RESOLVED** that payment would be made termly in advance. The report was noted and approved.

257) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll April 2018	1,016.30
Town Clerk	Payroll April 2018	1,476.69
HMRC	Payroll April 2018	604.83
Cambs Pension	Payroll April 2018	1,260.12
Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee	10.79
Zurich Municipal	Insurance Renewal	2,020.02
FDC	Temporary License Re Mayors Charity Event	21.00
Zen Internet	Summer Festival Domain name	8.39
R J Warren	Tithe Goal Repair & Erection	450.60
Flying Fysh	Office Cleaning	40.00
Reg Tibbitts	Bunting Summer Festival	78.28

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Carol Chubbock	Annual Allotment rent	275.00
CPRE	Membership Renewal	36.00
Cash	Petty Cash	20.98
Gardener	Additional work Clearing of allotments	80.00
Barclays	Bank Charges	7.19
Total		£7,406.19

258) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded 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 **2018/19** was **£3,250**

There were separate approved budgets set in 2018/19 for the following:-

	£
Chatteris King Edward Centre – Staffing contribution	6,500
Chatteris Museum Trust	4,250
Chatteris Christmas Lights Committee	9,000
Chatteris Town in Bloom	2,500
Chatteris Youth Service Provision	3,600
Chatteris Town in Bloom Paid Watering service	

An amount of up to £2,000 was approved at January 2018 meeting (Min191) to contribute towards a paid watering service. This funding will come from 2017/18 unspent budgets and general fund account.

Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and all applications were approved as listed below:

Applicant	Amount Requested	Amount Granted	Spending Power
1 Cambridgeshire School Libraries Summer Reading Challenge, Chatteris Library	350	350	S137
2 Chatteris Army Cadets Youth Group Require new equipment for the additional 15 cadets who have joined.	3250	350	S137

They now have 45 cadets in the youth group and the MOD only supply equipment for 15 cadets.

3 Chatterbox Baby & Toddler Group	200	S137
To help towards cost of new toys, equipment, craft supplies & fun day for local community & members.		

259) To Agree Reply to E-Mail re: Precept Increase

Members were informed the Council has received the following e-mail:

“Good evening, I came home from work to the council tax letter from the Fenland District Council. I was Disgusted to see that the Town Council had claimed an increase of 8.1% compared to last year, the highest increase over all the other sections we have to pay council tax for.

You are claiming only £22.89 less than the fire authority whose increase was only 3.0%, less than half of your increase.

The residents of Chatteris pay more than any other town/village in the Fenland District Council area. You have to then question what the council are being paid for when you consider the facilities that March, Whittlesey and Wisbech have compared to Chatteris. In the time I have lived in Chatters we have lost the recycling centre, very little money, if any, has been spent in providing decent facilities, like improvements to the swimming pool. Has the town council considered the impact that the citizens of Chatteris have to suffer, as even the ones that have access to vehicles have to do a round trip of at least 20 miles to recycle their rubbish.

On top of that what are the town council are doing about the hassle we have to put up with with all the pot holes that litter the streets. Appreciate that this is probably not the town councils responsibility, but one would expect that if Chatteris citizens are paying the most in council in the FDC district we should not be treated like the poor man of the area.

Bus services for people living in Chatteris are very poor.

Infrastructure is not dealing with the rapid increase in housing. Lack of schools, GP surgeries, only one serving the increasing population. Whilst March has a bigger population, they have 3 times the number of GP services.

I suppose the ultimate question is how do you justify this massive increase?”

The Clerk suggested the Council responded to the points raised in the following way:

Paragraphs 1 & 2: The Town Council increase only represents an extra £3.42 a year per household, based on a Band D property.

Paragraph 3: Do you have figures to support this. The figures have yet to be published on the Fenland District Council website and it is highly unlikely that residents of Chatteris will be paying more than any other town or village. That certainly was not the case in 2017/18.

Paragraph 4: These statements are true but the argument was unfortunately lost many years ago and FDC will not re-open a recycling centre in Chatteris. They do, however, provide a good refuse service. The swimming pool is privately owned.

Paragraph 5: Every town and village is suffering from potholes. Any potholes should be reported to the County Council via their website. It is the County highways duty to repair potholes of a certain size and depth.

Paragraph 6: Agree, the Town Council is continually sending letters to the County Council and Stagecoach asking for improved bus services. Unfortunately the former says it can no longer afford to subsidise bus services and the latter says there are insufficient customers. The fight will continue.

Paragraph 7: Plans are already in hand for another primary school and there has been considerable investment in Cromwell Community College in recent years with further investment already identified as pupil numbers increase. It is true there is only one GP surgery but it is the NHS duty to provide more surgeries it is not a Town Council responsibility. The GPs have been consulted and tell us it is not the lack of surgeries which is a problem; it is the inability to attract more doctors.

Paragraph 8: Due to substantial cuts to the County Council and Fenland District Council budgets the amount the Town Council receives through the council tax reduction grant has decreased year on year and this has impacted on the Town Council's income. In addition the cuts to the County and District Council budgets have meant the Town Council has been expected to take on more services to prevent those services folding.

For example the Town Council is now the sole funder of youth services in the town. It also pays towards the maintenance of CCTV cameras, open spaces and recreation grounds, financially supports the King Edward Centre and the Museum, helps to fund the Midsummer Festival and solely funds the Summer Fun shows. It has also substantially increased its annual grants for the Christmas Lights and In Bloom to help enhance the town.

The Town Council has recently begun work on the provision of a new pocket park and has increased its budget for highways improvements (to help counter County Council cuts). It continues to maintain the Old Railway Line footpath. The budget for grants to voluntary organisations has increased, helping to keep many of the smaller groups running, and this comes at a time when the other councils have withdrawn grant aid.

Cllr Murphy pointed out in Paragraph 4 the recycling centre had been shut by Cambridgeshire County Council and it was agreed the reply should also point out the Town Council had invested a lot of money in the gym and All Weather Pitch and was continuing to fight for a swimming pool.

Councillors agreed the reply should be sent, with the amendments suggested.

260) Planning

Cllr Ashley (chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on 27th March 2018 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on applications a) to l) (as shown on the **appended list**), with the exception of f) which they had deferred to the full council meeting.

After a further discussion members voted two in favour and three against the application and it was, therefore, agreed to recommend refusal because it was out of character with the existing house and the area and was too bold.

It was agreed to return applications a) to l) to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Recommend Refusal, outside the development area and would set a precedent.
- b) Noted
- c) The submitted plans are not clear and do not show whether the access will be shared with the lorry park. Councillors remain concerned that there will be a danger to pedestrians using the garden centre if the access is shared with the lorry park.
- d) Support
- e) Recommend Refusal. Out of character and not in keeping with the street scene, will overlook bungalows at rear and will have a visual impact on the street scene. Recommend FDC's planning committee visit site to see impact on the bungalows whose owners have objected to the proposal.
- f) Recommend Refusal, out of character with the existing house and the surrounding area; too bold.
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support Conservation Officer's recommendation
- l) Support

The Clerk said a resident had emailed to say he had contacted FDC about the plastic windows installed at 42 High Street and had received a response stating the enforcement team were aware of the issue and an enforcement case had already been raised. The matter had been reported by a few members of the public and the Conservation Team had also noticed the windows.

261) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 20th March 2018 (**copy attached**).

L74) Flower beds: Cllr Smith said In Bloom had met with Mr Ollier and the Station Street flower bed would be a collaboration between FDC and In Bloom.

Cllr Murphy said the previous evening all the mowing equipment and grave digging equipment belonging to ISS (who maintained FDC's open spaces) had been stolen from their depot in March.

L75) Pocket Park: The Clerk reported she had met with a representative of L J Warrens to decide the course of the footpath at Little Acre Fen. The representative had offered to put in a temporary block at the entrance to the site to stop vehicles accessing the site once the footpath had been constructed. The Clerk had also spoken to a representative of another firm who were able to manufacture the elephant gates and she was awaiting a second quote.

L76) FACT Bus: Unfortunately the Clerk had still not heard about a date for a meeting with FACT but she agreed to chase the matter.

L77) Town Plan: The Mayor said he would contact Cllr Benney about a date for the first meeting about the retail areas of Chatteris. He hoped to have a date agreed so it could be announced at the Annual Town Meeting.

L79) TrailTale: Cllr Smith had reviewed the email and said TrailTale was an app which could be downloaded to phones and gave information on footpaths/trails in the area. She was in favour of the Town Council signing up if the service was free.

262) Market Towns Masterplan – Implications for Chatteris

Councillors were delighted to learn that Chatteris was to be one of the towns to benefit from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Market Town Masterplans for Growth project. A total of £50,000 would be spent on developing a Masterplan for growth for the town and the work would be carried out between April and December 2018. The Mayor had been alerted to the plans by a representative of Stainless Metalcraft who said the company had been in contact with representatives of the Combined Authority to discuss plans for a business growth zone in Chatteris, which they hoped would form part of the Masterplan.

It was agreed the Town Council should write welcoming the news and demonstrating enthusiasm for the project.

Cllr Hay said a partnership team would be set up to decide what the town needed and to develop the Masterplan. The matter would be considered holistically and the Town Plan should help with the considerations.

263) Community Literacy Project

Information had been received about the launch events for the Project – the March and Chatteris project would be launched on the 8th May at March Library. The Clerk had queried why there was no launch in Chatteris and was told the majority of key contacts/stakeholders for the project covered both March and Chatteris areas so it was agreed to have one joint event. However the Clerk had been assured that future meetings would alternate between March and Chatteris and a training event for childminders would be held at Chatteris Children's Centre in June. In addition Mrs Helen Wootton had offered to give an update on the Project at the Annual Town Meeting.

264) LHI Application – To Agree on Action

The Mayor and Clerk had been angered by the notification that the proposed traffic calming scheme and 20mph zone for Wenny Road would not be receiving LHI funding. The Clerk had requested reasons for the refusal and minutes of the panel meeting which the Mayor and Clerk had attended.

The panel had decided that the issue needed a holistic approach and planning with the introduction of the new school and large development in the area. There were also concerns that speed cushions might lead to damage to a grade II listed wall. Panel member Cllr Hoy had said the scenario had been achieved in Wisbech with investment from the education budget funding highway works.

Cllr Haggata said he was not happy with the reply and it was very disappointing since the main objective was to get a 20mph speed limit but the conversation tilted to speed bumps and the wall and education funding any works. The Clerk pointed out in the past money from the education budget had run out before promised highways works were carried out. Councillors also pointed out the listed wall had been damaged by a speeding car.

It was agreed that, despite Highways comment that there was no appeals process, the matter should be argued further.

265) MVAS Unit – Bracket Locations

The Mayor, Cllr J Carney and the Clerk had spent a morning working out possible locations for the MVAS (mobile vehicle activation sign) unit. They had identified two lampposts in Doddington Road/Curf Terrace, two in the High Street, three in Wenny Road and two in Huntingdon Road.

The Clerk had then sought permission from the County Council to fix brackets to the lampposts and had been told the County Council could give permission to use the lampposts in the High Street and Huntingdon Road, provided there were no other attachments present on the columns, but permission would have to be sought from Fenland District Council to use the lampposts in Doddington Road/Curf Terrace and the lampposts in Wenny Road were unadopted.

The Clerk was advised to write to Mr Trevor Watson or Mr Gary Garford at FDC seeking permission.

It had been agreed a unit would only be needed in London Road if the existing speed signs no longer worked. The Clerk had asked if the signs were operational and was awaiting a reply.

266) Traffic Issues

Bus Services: Notification had been received that Stagecoach was planning to alter the 9/X 9 bus service from March to Ely. Two journeys would depart later.

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

Potholes: Cllr Murphy asked when the County Council was planning to repair potholes in Chatteris. He said potholes in Ash Grove had been identified with white markings but that was so long ago the markings were now rubbing off. Cllr Hay agreed to enquire and to ask if the dragon patcher would be coming to Chatteris. Cllr Ashley reported there was a pothole on a speed hump outside 131 London Road which could lead to the hump breaking up.

Flooding: Members reported during the recent wet weather there had been flooding on the footpath in Park Street which meant water was lapping at the doorway of the Postal Sorting Office and there was a very large puddle on the pavement outside Simpsons newsagents in the High Street. The Clerk agreed to pass the concerns to Highways.

Homeless Man: Cllr Carney reported the man rumoured to be living on the streets in Chatteris was not homeless and was receiving help.

267) Correspondence

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

Scam leaflets: Cllr Smith said there was a supply of the scam leaflets and booklets in the library. She offered to deliver some to old people's homes. Cllr Taylor warned members to be wary of a number of telephone scams. It was agreed the elderly were particularly vulnerable to such scams.

Carerrooms: Members were concerned by the CareRooms idea.

268) Reports

There were no reports but the Mayor reminded members of the final opportunity to purchase tickets for the Mayor's charity Cocktails and Canapes event.

As this was his last session as Mayor, Cllr Haggata thanked fellow councillors for their co-operation and said it had been a pleasure to serve as Mayor. He also thanked the Clerk and Financial Officer for their help throughout the year.

269) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.