

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 5th June 2018

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Minutes of the meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th June 2018 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

28) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Burrow and A Carney. Cllr Patterson joined the meeting during item 6 (min. 33).

29) Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interests

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

30) Open Forum

Two members of the public were present and were invited by the Mayor to speak. A resident of New Road spoke about a wall between two properties which he was proposing to rebuild. He made certain allegations before he was warned by the Mayor that it was not Town Council business.

Community Plan team member Mrs Helen Wootton said she had worked with the schools on the plan and had drawn Cromwell Community College's attention to the Town Council's response to issues raised by the plan. One of the main concerns was traffic calming measures at the front of the college and pupils were now calling for a zebra crossing outside the school. A letter had been sent by teacher Mrs Priest asking the Council to consider applying for a crossing and asking if the Mayor would meet with pupils on the 29th June to receive a letter requesting a zebra crossing.

The Mayor explained the Council's application for LHI funding for traffic calming measures and a 20mph speed zone had been knocked back but the issue was to be discussed again later in the meeting. He said he would be only too pleased to accept the invitation to meet with pupils on the 29th.

31) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 1st May 2018 and the Annual Town Meeting on the 11th May 2018 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

32) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 22) Closure of Lloyds Bank: A representative of Lloyds Bank had offered to meet with Councillors to discuss the proposed closure of the bank. It was agreed to take up the invitation.

Annual Town Meeting Min 1): Cllr David Mason, FDC Portfolio Holder for Growth, had sent apologies he was unable to attend the annual town meeting but said he was happy to meet with councillors and business people of Chatteris to explain his role. It was agreed to invite Cllr Mason to a Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting.

Annual Town Meeting Min 7s): The Council had received a Community Literacy Project Update from Mrs Wootton which included details of how local community groups could apply for funding to set up activities to meet the projects aims – developing children's communication, language and literacy skills.

33) Police Matters

Sgt Richard Lugg and PCSO Dawn Rae were welcomed to the meeting. Sgt Lugg explained his local policing team covered Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and the villages. He said he would not be routinely attending meetings but was present to explain the new format of the monthly report. In future the report would cover all the towns and villages where his team worked, as writing one report would take far less time than writing individual reports. This would allow officers to spend more time solving community issues. In addition Sgt Lugg pointed out a problem in one town could often affect other areas.

Each month the report would highlight about 4 priorities being tackled by the team. Even if Chatteris was not mentioned routine patrols would still be going on in the town. Sgt Lugg assured members that the town was still covered 24/7 by a response team and minor crimes were being investigated. In addition the team was going in to secondary schools to educate pupils on the dangers of drugs. In the past month the police had also met with FDC representatives to seek funding for measures to stop cars congregating in Furrowfields car park and causing a nuisance.

The team was currently looking for a better location to hold regular meetings with the public; the library was a possibility. They were also trialling on-line liaison sessions in the evenings.

Sgt Lugg was pleased to announce that the number of warranted police officers on his team would have increased by the end of the year. He spoke about a new system for sharing information on offenders.

The Mayor mentioned the problem of motorcycles on land behind the Wenny Recreation Ground at weekends, Cllr Carney asked about an issue with a defibrillator in March and Cllr Taylor asked why the theft of tools from two vans in Chatteris was not included in the report sent to councillors. The Clerk said a Neighbourhood Alert had warned that two sheds were broken into overnight between the 2nd and 3rd June and items were stolen.

Cllr Benney asked how the police perceived the drugs problem in Chatteris. Sgt Lugg said Chatteris was no worse than elsewhere and the police were taking action against people dealing drugs at school gates and those using children to deliver drugs. Cllr Benney said he believed there was a problem in Chatteris and was asked to pass on any information he received about drugs.

Sgt Lugg and PCSO Rae were thanked for attending the meeting.

34) 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 Clerk had asked if the CCTV camera at Wenny Recreation Ground had captured a bench being ripped out of the ground and taken into the woods before an attempt was made to set it alight. Unfortunately CCTV monitoring officers had reported the camera was not operational for the two hour period when the bench was uprooted. The Mayor said the bench was still intact and youths were sitting on it in the wooded area. FDC had been asked to rescue the bench and re-instate it.

35) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 30th May 2018 showing expenditure of £50,458.71 and income of £93,477.31 (includes a half years precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

(2) Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Maintenance

Members were advised that at the Leisure meeting held on 8th May 2018 (Min L4) members discussed delaying the re-seeding of the Pocket Park until the autumn to give the grass a better chance of growing.

The Clerk advised Members at the Leisure meeting that the area to be seeded would need to be sprayed during the summer to keep the weeds down. There had been provision made in the maintenance budget to cut the grass in the summer months so this budget could be used for the cost of the spraying.

The Contractor who was carrying the works out at Little Acre Fen advised the Clerk that it would require 4 sprays during the summer to ensure the weeds were kept down. They quoted £620.00 + vat to apply 4 sprays of Herbicide during the summer months which would keep the area maintained and weed free ready for re seeding in the autumn.

Cllr Carney questioned if it would in fact need spraying four times. The Financial Officer advised Members that she would relay the concerns back to the contractor and instruct them to only spray four times if it was required; payment would be adjusted accordingly.

All were in favour of delaying the reseeding and spraying the weeds up to four times if required.

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

36) Reinvestment of Council Assets

Lloyds One Year Fixed Term Deposit Maturity.

Members were advised that the Council's investment with Lloyds Bank (£85,000 at 0.8%) matured on the 21st May 2018. Lloyds could not provide a new investment rate until a few days before the maturity date. As the investment matured after the Council's May meeting and before the June meeting the Financial Officer extended the term of the investment by 16 days to mature on the 6th June 2018. This earned an additional £13.15 in interest at a rate of 0.35%.

Lloyds had now released their new reinvestment interest rate of 1.00% fixed for 12 months or 1.1% fixed for 18 months on £85,000 investment.

Nationwide Building Society Business 1 Year Fixed Rate Saver Maturity

Members were advised that the Council's investment with Nationwide Building Society (£75,000 at 0.65%) would mature on the 16th June 2018. The new reinvestment interest rate for 1 year fixed was 0.90% on £75,000 investment.

The Financial Officer advised Members that whilst there were no short term plans for use of the £160,000, any reinvestment for a period longer than a year would be inadvisable in the current financial climate. The Financial Officer also advised Members that there was scope in the general balances to invest an additional £10,000 with Nationwide which would make a total investment of £85,000. This amount would still be protected under the FSCS. The Reserve Accounts held balances of £135,702, the AWP and other holding accounts held balances of £66,470, amounting to £202,172.48 in total.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had compared the above rates to similar fixed term savings accounts and confirmed that the rates offered by Lloyds Bank and Nationwide Building Society were competitive and were both protected under the FSCS.

Unity Trust Bank offered a Net interest rate of 0.160% for an Instant Access Saver account they did not do a fixed term account. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA Investment Management) offered a cash Public Sector Deposit Fund with an interest rate of 0.6043%.

All the savings schemes mentioned had a low risk factor and the interest rate offered reflected this. Although the rates were very low they would give a better return than an instant access savings account.

Members of the Council considered and **approved** reinvestment of £85,000 with Lloyds Bank at 1.00% and £75,000 plus an additional £10,000 with Nationwide Building Society at 0.90%, both fixed for 1 year.

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

37) Internal Auditor's Report 2017/18

Members had before them copies of the Internal Auditor's Report and his signed certificate of the Annual Return for the year end 31st March 2018. Members noted that the Auditor had no issues that he wished to draw to the attention of Members.

The Financial Officer advised Members that all relevant documents were ready to go to the External Auditor on Member's approval of the internal audit. She also advised that the unaudited accounts had been put on public display on the Town Council's website, in the Council Offices window and on the town's notice board. The Financial Officer confirmed that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return along with the Final accounts had been completed within the timescales set under the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Internal Auditor's report for the year 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 be noted and approved.

38) Read to Succeed Funding Request

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received a letter from Mr Steve Barclay MP on 28th May requesting funding for the above scheme. The letter advised that any donation payments needed to be received by Friday 1st June which was after May's council meeting and before June's.

The Financial Officer emailed all Members requesting their approval to donate a grant to the scheme and advised them of the critical time scale.

The MP's letter advised that a donation for £150 would be enough to purchase a new book for a whole class of children in the Fenland area. As a grant of £250 was given to last year's scheme the Financial Officer recommended a grant of £300 which would give books to one whole class in each of the two primary schools in Chatteris.

The Clerk asked the members of the Planning Committee, at the meeting held on 29th May, to consider a grant payment of £300. Six members approved the £300 payment and a further two members advised the Financial Officer of their approval the following day.

At the meeting Members expressed their concerns regarding the short notice given by the scheme organisers. They asked the Financial Officer to write to Mr Barclay advising him that Members were not happy at the short notice given and that they would not consider any future grant applications on such short notice.

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

39) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll June 2018	1,053.78
Town Clerk	Payroll June 2018	1,539.13
HMRC	Payroll June 2018	676.05
Cambs Pension	Payroll June 2018	1,325.65
Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee	10.79
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges Mar Apr	9.82
Back Two	Cancellation fee Mayors Charity Event	140.00
Wave AWA	Water Bill Council Offices	64.19
Wave AWA	Water Bill Allotments RHS of Honeysome Rd	83.15
Wave AWA	Water Bill Allotments LHS of Honeysome Rd	25.19
CF Corporate Finance Ltd	Q Lease Hire Photocopier	212.36
C.C.C.A.	Hire of King Edward Centre Annual Town Meeting	43.50
Rose Fire & Security Ltd	Service of Fire & Emergency Lighting & New Covers	160.94
Jensen Security	Service of Intruder Alarm	78.00
Barclays	Apr May Bank Charges	6.50
Viking	Stationary Order	149.89
Viking	Stationary Order	86.21
Norfolk Children's Book Centre	Read to Succeed (Steve Barclay)	300.00
Financial Officer	Reimbursement 100 2 nd class Stamps for GDPR Letters	58.00

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S Payne	Grass cutting Service 5x weeks May	1,000.00
M Saunders	Internal Auditor	300.00
Cash	Petty cash	66.21
Fran Orridge	Reimbursement Summer Festival items	240.93
H E Spall Aitch	Summer Festival Photography	150.00
Total		£7,780.29

40) Council Chambers/Museum Security System

Members considered the following report from the Clerk:

“In order to secure the long term loan of 11 items, originating from the Ferry Hill Tumulus, from the British Museum, Chatteris Museum was required to organise a security inspection.

This was carried out in May by Instrom Security Consultants who decided that the security and fire prevention overall at 14 Church Lane was reasonable for a small local museum but there were a couple of improvements required to be made to the intruder detection system.

The report identified the following:

- i) The current signalling method for security is by a dialler. This is not a secure signalling method and should be upgraded to a dual path signalling technology. The Fire Alarm System uses dual-com to signal to an approved ARC.
- ii) There is insufficient detection in the front half of the building to generate a verified activation. Therefore, two additional detectors should be installed in the central lobby and main display space where the loan items will be displayed.

As a result of the recommendations, the Town Council’s officers requested a quotation from Jensen Security, who supply and maintain the Council’s security system, to carry out the work suggested. During his visit the technician suggested that the security, fire alarm and fire extinguishers could all be maintained and monitored by one provider instead of the current three which would save on call out fees. This idea will be explored over the summer by the Financial Officer.

Members must decide whether they wish to invest in two more detectors and whether they wish to upgrade the security system as suggested. They must also decide, if the answer is positive, on the level of contribution from the museum.”

The Financial Officer said although the security system was old it was adequate for the Council but she had been happy to propose the installation of two additional detectors and to

consider a dual com system in time. However she had just received a report from Jensen Security which stated that in order to comply with the report the control panel, keypad and all intruder detectors would need to be upgraded at an estimated cost of £1200. It would not be possible to upgrade the existing system or install two additional detectors.

A discussion took place on whether the system should be upgraded and who should pay. The Mayor pointed out the museum was keen to enhance its displays by borrowing more artefacts, thereby increasing visitor numbers. A recent exhibition of borrowed artefacts had proved to be popular. Artefacts would only be loaned in future if the security system was improved. The Financial Officer said the museum was always invoiced for half the costs of repairs, maintenance and bills for 14 Church Lane.

Members **agreed** in principle that the system should be upgraded and officers should obtain three quotations for the work. Cllr Taylor suggested it might be worth including CCTV cameras in the improved system.

41) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 29th May 2018 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to d) (as shown on the appended list) and these were ratified by the full council. The Council then considered applications e) to j) and agreed to return the plans to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support those who are investing in the town, especially as they have addressed the safety concerns by the removal of the lorry park. It will tidy the area which is a gateway to Chatteris.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support but concerned about apparent lack of window in bedroom.
- h) Noted (Cllr Patterson declared an interest and left the room while the matter was discussed)
- i) Support
- j) Support

Overgrown: The Clerk had passed on complaints about overgrown open spaces, recreation grounds and verges. Cllr Taylor said Furrowfields Recreation Ground had been cut and Cllr Murphy said it would be cut again before the Festival. He admitted the contractors were behind because they were attempting to cut open spaces with ordinary mowers as their large specialist equipment had been stolen.

42) **Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 8th May 2018 (**copy attached**).

Cllr Carney gave apologies for the next meeting.

L4) Little Acre Fen Pocket Park: Cllr Smith said she did not suggest that volunteers should empty the bins.

L3) In Bloom: Cllr Smith reported In Bloom would be planting out the bed in front of the Parish Church. A contractor had been appointed to water the planters and hanging baskets. The judging date was the 6th July 2018.

43) **Market Towns Masterplan – Project Team Representative**

A letter had been received from FDC Corporate Director Mr Gary Garford explaining that the Market Towns Masterplan for Growth project in Chatteris would be known as ‘Growing Fenland – Chatteris’. A consultant would be appointed to help produce the town’s bespoke growth plan.

A stakeholder group would be appointed for each town and the Town Council was asked to nominate a representative to sit on the Chatteris group along with District and County Council representatives and representatives from the local community and local business. The role of the stakeholder group would be to support the process and help define 5 or 6 interventions which would be deliverable within the next 5 years. Once the Growing Fenland – Chatteris plan had been successfully used to attract more funding the intention was for the stakeholder group to become more of a steering group to help deliver the identified interventions. Lead officers from FDC had been appointed and they were Justin Wingfield and Jo Blackmore.

The Mayor was keen to be the Town Council’s representative on the stakeholder group and this was **agreed** by all.

44) **Update from Cllr Benney on Town Trade Group**

Cllr Benney said he and the Mayor had discussed the best way forward and had agreed it was important for the traders to form themselves into a group and to then approach the Council with their concerns and issues.

Cllr Patterson said current traders would not come forward with ideas on how to improve empty units in the town; she suggested the Council should contact potential businesses. The Clerk warned this was not advisable as the Council could be seen as favouring certain businesses. Cllr Patterson argued the Council should be able to promote its High Street.

Cllr Carney said the traders had already held one meeting, set up a Chatteris in Business Facebook page and a formal meeting was to be held on the 21st June. It was pointed out Cllr

Mason, FDC's portfolio holder for growth, had already offered to meet with business people from the town.

Cllr Taylor said he had been informed the Post Office was in danger of closing over a business rates issue. Cllr Newell said she had taken up the matter with officers at Fenland and had informed the owner about the possibility applying for small businesses' rate relief.

45) To Consider Privately Funding Highways Works at Wenny Road

Following the failure to secure LHI funding for road safety measures in Wenny Road, the Clerk had been advised by an officer at County Highways that there were three options for funding the works:

- 1) Applying again for LHI funding
- 2) Applying for money from the education budget
- 3) Privately funding the works.

The Clerk suggested option 2 was unlikely to work and advised the Council should consider option 3 as funds had been set aside by the Town Council as a contribution to LHI funding and this money could be used to privately fund the installation of a 20mph zone. This was a view supported by the Mayor.

Cllr Smith said she was unhappy about the Town Council funding something which should be provided by another authority and Cllr Murphy was worried it would set a precedent. Cllr Ashley said there were zebra crossings outside most of the secondary schools in the county and she favoured the Council applying for LHI funding in 2019/20 for a zebra crossing. Cllr Hay was concerned funding a 20mph limit might down grade the Council's plea for funding for a zebra crossing.

It was, however, agreed that the Clerk should enquire about the cost of privately funding a 20mph speed limit outside Cromwell Community College.

46) LHI Funding 2019/20

Members agreed their bid for LHI funding in 2019/20 should be for a zebra crossing on Wenny Road outside Cromwell Community College.

They rejected an approach from The Fenland Road Safety Campaign Chairman asking the Council to support a joint bid, with local parish councils, for LHI funding for safety barriers along a stretch of the Sixteen Foot Bank Road where two motorists had tragically drowned in the Sixteen Foot river.

47) Traffic Issues

Disabled Parking: The formal application to install a disabled parking bay outside 19 Burnsfield Street had been received. Councillors had no objections to the proposal.

Surface Dressing: A copy of the County Council's annual surface dressing programme for 2018 revealed that surface dressing works to the A142 between Chatteris and Ely would take place between the 12th and 14th June.

Bulletin: The latest road works & events affecting the highway bulletins had been received.

48) Correspondence

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

49) Reports

Cllr Murphy had attended a meeting of Chatteris Community Centre Association and the King Edward Centre management committee (as had Cllrs Ashley and Newell) when it was revealed the Centre administrator and caretaker would be retiring in September. In addition the current editor of Centrepoint, Committee Chairman Mr Chris Pope, was looking for someone to take on his role in spring 2019. Part of the responsibility could be undertaken by the administrator, as there were sufficient funds to increase the administrators hours, but volunteers were being sought to fill the roles of editor, advertising and billing organiser and distribution and delivery organiser.

It was agreed all the vacancies should be advertised on the public noticeboard.

50) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.