

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 3rd December 2019

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd December 2019 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), A Charrier, A Gowler, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy, F Newell, M Petrou, J Smith and I Taylor

160) Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr J Carney.

161) Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

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

162) Open Forum

The only members of the public present did not wish to speak so it was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

163) Cyril Haigh Trust Draw

Trustees Mrs Ann Grainger and Mr Jeff Dawson were welcomed to the meeting. Mrs Grainger asked Councillors to draw 10 names from those who had entered the draw and said each would receive £30. Councillors drew out the names and agreed to distribute the money.

164) Speakers: Ms Carol Pilson & Ms Annabel Tighe from FDC on Kingdom Enforcement Contract

FDC Officers Ms Carol Pilson and Ms Annabel Tighe were welcomed to the meeting and began by explaining they wished to speak about the Kingdom Environmental Enforcement contract which began as a pilot scheme for a cost neutral service to stop littering in town centres. FDC worked closely with Peterborough City Council to introduce the scheme but Peterborough had now decided to draw back from the service and deliver it in-house and FDC was being forced to look at different delivery models if the service was to continue in Fenland.

Ms Pilson said FDC was looking at a range of options and was asking if members thought it was a valued service which should be retained. She also asked what would be the priorities for any future service and if the service was highly valued would the Town Council be prepared to contribute to it in the future?

Cllr Haggata asked about any likely costs the Town Council would face. Ms Pilson said FDC could give some costings based on the number of officers required, the number of hours employed, etc.

Councillors pointed out Kingdom did not appear to have visited Chatteris on many occasions (just one fine was issued in Chatteris in the past month according to the FDC report) and it was, therefore, difficult to judge if the service would be cost effective. Ms Pilson acknowledged the vast majority of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) were issued in Wisbech but she said if Chatteris Town Council was funding part of the service it would be in the driving seat. Since February 15 notices had been issued in Chatteris. Councillors pointed out they would not make a contribution if officers spent all their time in Wisbech. Ms Pilson assured members that the level of service would be proportionate to the money spent.

Ms Pilson said 65% of FPNs for littering were settled with the remaining either being cancelled or proceeding to court for non-payment. It was not, however, viable for FDC to deliver the service just in Fenland; Peterborough City Council was subsidising the service.

Cllr Petrou asked about the offences Kingdom could tackle and these were listed as littering (including spitting), public space protection, dog fouling, dogs in play areas and dogs not under control. Ms Pilson explained that FDC gave Kingdom the powers to act on these offences and they could only issue tickets to anyone aged over 18. The officers were given guidance on how to act. Ms Pilson explained that Kingdom dealt with littering but FDC Street Scene officers dealt with dumped rubbish.

Cllr Benney said FDC was working on costings for parking enforcement and if Kingdom officers could be multi-skilled and deal with littering, dogs and parking enforcement it would make it a viable service. He said members recognised there was a growing problem of illegal parking in Fenland but it was a complex legislative area and FDC was not ready to launch a parking enforcement scheme. Cllr Murphy warned that a parking enforcement scheme had been introduced in Cambridge years ago but people got fed up with being fined so stopped parking illegally leading to a loss of revenue and the loss of the service.

Cllr Gowler asked why the town councils were being asked to contribute if it was a cost neutral scheme. Ms Pilson said for FDC to deliver the service in-house it would be more expensive. At the moment the risk was on Kingdom if they failed to issue enough notices. Cllr Gowler also asked about the burden of proof needed to catch someone littering and Ms Pilson explained how evidence was gathered. Ms Tighe said cigarette littering was a problem across the district and Cllr Murphy said he collected up to 1,000 butts daily in Chatteris.

Cllr Benney asked if the officers would be able to tackle anti-social behaviour, particularly in Furrowfields Car Park, and if they would be able to enforce exclusion zones. Cllr Charrier asked if they would work in the early hours of the morning. Ms Pilson admitted working anti-social hours would be expensive and said it would be necessary to decide if it was a policing issue or an enforcement issue.

Cllr Smith spoke about problems with quad bikes at the Pocket Park and asked if the enforcement officer would have any powers to take action.

Cllr Gowler said he was uncomfortable with the idea of a private police force and suggested the police should be doing their job.

Ms Pilson said they would be speaking to all four town councils and would continue to look at all options. Cllr Hay asked if it would be possible to have the feedback from all 4 towns.

Ms Pilson and Ms Tighe were thanked for attending.

165) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the full council meeting held on 5th November 2019 and the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 11th November 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

166) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 151) Connections Bus: Following the Council's decision not to fund the Connections Bus the project Manager, Mr Alan Webb, had been in contact to say it was a real shame as there appeared to be no services for those over 13 in Chatteris and the young people had enjoyed and benefitted from the service.

Mr Webb had confirmed the Council's calculations that the service would cost £2,400 a term but had pointed out smaller villages funded the service and the cost per household in Chatteris would be £1.65 a year. Mr Webb asked if the Council would reconsider its decision. The Mayor said she had been talking to PCSO Dawn Rae, who had been alerted to thefts from Jacks supermarket and Poundstretcher and criminal damage in the underpass. PCSO Rae said the Connections Bus appeared to make matters worse as youths hung around the bus waiting for those inside to leave. PCSO Rae suggested the bus should have been located in the centre of town (the Mayor explained FDC had opposed the bus using Furrowfields car park).

Councillors **agreed** to stand by their original decision and not to fund the Connection's Bus.

Min 154) Circus: FDC had agreed to allow a circus to use the Wenny Recreation Ground site but only if it did so before or during September as the ground became water logged from October onwards and was unsuitable for heavy vehicles. FDC had outlined the cost of hiring the ground and the Clerk had relayed the message to the circus owners.

Min 159) Local Plan: The Mayor had received a letter from a resident of Chatteris pointing out that the football and cricket teams pitches were based on clay soil which meant they were either water logged or rock-hard while nearby there was well-drained soil which would be better suited to sports pitches. The resident had suggested land on the Tithe development site was well-drained and could be used for sports pitches and according to his map there was also better soil in the Langwood Fen area. It was pointed out the Tithe site had already been

set aside for housing development but part of the Langwood Fen area had been suggested by the Town Council as an area which should be used for open space, in particular a country park. It was agreed to relay this information to the resident.

167) Police Matters

Members had received the following report on information received from the police in the past month:

Local Police

Please see attached the confidential report from PCSO Dawn Rae and Sgt Richard Lugg on the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team's work over the past month.

Neighbourhood Alerts

11/11/19: Residents urged to encourage local pubs to sign up to the Designated Driver Scheme – a month-long campaign targeting drink drivers in December. Under the 'I'm DES scheme' participating venues would give free soft drinks to designated drivers.

18/11/19: November edition of Our News, the e-newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters.

20/11/19: Information about the Burglary Day of Action held on the 26th November.

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

Members had a copy of the latest updates (**copy attached**).

CCTV: Members had received a copy of an update from Mr Aarron Locks, the CCTV Manager, on the Fens CCTV merger with Peterborough City Council. He said the new 'state of the art' control room in Peterborough was now complete and the Fens CCTV cameras would be upgraded to new digital IP cameras. Other equipment would also be replaced (with the funding coming from the service level agreement pot) and when the work was complete Councillors would be invited to visit the new control room and view the new camera system.

Furrowfields: The resident who had complained about the hedge cutting work at Furrowfields Recreation Ground had (after chasing by Cllr Smith) received a reply and apology from Mr Phil Hughes at FDC. Mr Hughes had admitted the tractor mounted flail was not the correct machinery to use and the work may have impacted on the wildlife. He confirmed the Council would not be trimming the hedge again in the future and said the tractor tyre marks would be addressed. The resident had replied thanking Mr Hughes and asking that the loose and damaged pieces of hedging which remained under the hedge be left in situ as they were being used as ground cover by wildlife.

Section 106: The Clerk agreed to chase up how much Section 106 money was owed as a result of the money being spent on tree works in the cemeteries.

166) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 26th November 2019 showing expenditure of £208,078.18 and income of £252,342.68 (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. It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

168) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll December	1,058.92
Clerk	Payroll December	1,538.01
Pension Fund	Payroll December	1,365.37
HMRC	Payroll December	629.90
Zen Internet	Website Nov-Dec	10.79
Zen Internet	Website Dec-Jan	10.79
Onecom	Phone Bill November	77.16
Viking	Stationery Order	138.16
RBL Poppy Appeal	Remembrance wreath	17.00
Iris Business Software	Payroll Software license	384.00
Barclays Bank	Charges	40.10
cash	Petty Cash	61.15
Financial Officer	Mileage, Pension Forum & HR course	40.05
King Edward Centre	Remaining Grant Money	2,971.99
Clerk	Mileage, PCs Conference & HR course	21.60
Fran Orridge	Reim. Stationery Summer Fest	22.08
Clerk	Switch on lights expenses	26.00

Clerk	Reim. warning signs Pocket Park	2001 6 of 11 9.47
Clerk	Reim. re mulled wine ingredients Summer Fest	49.38
Clerk	Bullguard Renewal	111.99
SP Services	Defibrillator	1,675.62
CfCorporate	Initial payment & set up fee new photocopier lease	437.95
Cambridgeshire Acre	Renewal of Membership	57.00
Ethos Walters	Additional Printing	6.34
Total		10,760.82

The Financial Officer reminded Members that at the last council meeting they had agreed to buy a Defibrillator and Cabinet to be installed in the town. She advised that the payment was listed on the schedule for approval.

She told Members that the Chatteris Defibrillator Charity, on the recommendation of the Heart Foundation, advised the purchase of an unlocked Cabinet but the company selling the equipment recommended a locked cabinet as the defibrillator could easily be stolen. In the event of an emergency, the locked cabinet had a number on the front to call, a code would be given to unlock the cabinet to enable access to the defibrillator. The Financial Officer voiced her concerns on both suggestions; however, she felt it would be very risky to buy an unlocked cabinet and risk the defibrillator being stolen but she accepted the defibrillator needed to be easily accessible. A member advised that he had completed training to use a defibrillator housed in a locked cabinet and it took just 8 seconds from the call to access the equipment.

Members unanimously voted to buy a locked cabinet as the risk of the defibrillator being stolen outweighed the risk of accessing a defibrillator from a locked cabinet.

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

169) Final Budget & Precept Report 2019/2020

Members had before them the final proposed Budget and Precept report for 2020/21 (**copy attached**).

The report included variations on additional costs and savings that were not included in the original 2019/20 budget. Members also received a budget spend to the end of October 19, a budget forecast to the end of the 2019/20 financial year and the final 2020/21 budget figures.

Recommended funding of the 2020/21 budget was as follows: -

Final Proposed Budget	172,805
From Balances (includes rounding)	-21,805
Net Precept 2020/21	151,000

The Financial Officer advised Members that by transferring the above balances from the general fund the recommended Precept of £151,000 would remain the same as the last two years' Precept. The uncommitted general fund balances would still be considered adequate to carry forward into the next financial year.

The effect of the Net Precept (i.e. the figure recovered through Council Tax) was as follows: -

	Net Precept	Tax Base	Band D Effect
2020/21	£151,000	3,345	£45.14 Estimated

The comparison of Net precept (i.e. the figure recovered through council tax) is as follows: -

	Net Precept	%	Tax Base	Band D Effect	%
2020/21	£151,000	0%	3,345	45.14	
2019/20	£151,000		3,326	45.39	
			19	-25p	-0.55%

Members were also advised that it was appropriate, as part of the budget preparation exercise, to remind them of the forecast balances at the 31st March 2020 on the Council's other reserves and funds: -

	£
Old Railway Line Development Fund	896
General Capital Reserve	22,763
Leisure Capital Reserve	94,530
Closed Circuit Television Reserve	21,108

It was **RESOLVED** that

- [i] Probable savings & additional expenditure in 2019/20 be noted;
- [ii] A Net Budget for 2020/21 of £172,805 be approved;
- [iii] A Precept of £151,000 be approved for 2020/21;
- [iv] Estimated Reserves and fund balances at the 31st March 2020 be noted.

170) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to f)) (as shown on the **appended list**). These were ratified by the full council who also considered one further application and a request to raise concerns about asbestos under application F/YR19/0982/F.

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

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support, Councillors wish to ensure that planning conditions are imposed which will result in the safe removal of any asbestos discovered when the shed is demolished.
- e) Support
- f) Recommend Refusal, over-development in the open countryside, poor design, not sustainable as in an isolated position too far from facilities, adverse effect on neighbouring property, business and livestock, concerns about possible flooding and effects of a non-mains drainage system and the foul water soak-away.
- g) Support

171) To Consider Appointing an HR Working Group

The Mayor asked for permission to bring this item forward on the agenda as Cllr Petrou had to leave the meeting.

The Financial Officer explained that the Clerk had not received an annual appraisal in the 20 years she had been working for the Council and she had also not been appraised since her appointment over 4 years ago. Both officers had attended HR training where it had been suggested that a review should be carried out by a committee of councillors as the officers were employed by the whole council.

In order to carry out an appraisal it was necessary for councillors to understand the roles of the Clerk and Financial Officer and how a review should be conducted. It would be necessary for those on the committee to undertake some form of training so they could decide how the jobs were evolving and identify any training needs, etc.

The Financial Officer said it would also be necessary for the committee to look at the pay scales and decide which level equated to the job. She suggested those who had been responsible for dealing with employees would be best placed to join the committee.

Cllrs Benney, Gowler, Haggata, Hay, Petrou (and later Cllr Newell) expressed an interest in forming the committee.

172) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 12th November (**copy attached**).

L39 Good Neighbour: Mrs Brine had been informed of the working group's decision not to pursue the idea of a Good Neighbour scheme as it duplicated existing schemes. She had agreed that Chatteris had a number of services to offer the community.

L40 Wenny: Cllr Murphy confirmed the new play area at Wenny Recreation Ground was now complete but warned the wet weather had turned the ground boggy.

L40 Churchyard: Wooden bollards had been installed to stop motorists parking on the grassed areas in the parish church grounds but there was a gap where bollards appeared to be missing. Cllr Murphy agreed to chase up the missing bollards.

L40 Cemeteries: Cllr Murphy reported there were plans to establish a 'Friends of' group for Meeks cemetery in 2020.

L41 EVC: Cllr Murphy suggested contacting Mr Justin Wingfield about an EVC.

L42 Pocket Park: Cllr Smith reported FLAPP had successfully applied to Jacks and Stainless Metalcraft for funding for the Park.

L43 VE Day: Lighting the beacon was suggested as an appropriate way to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

L45 Biosphere: Cllr Murphy warned FDC were not interested in being involved in the Fens Biosphere project.

173) To Consider Joining the Rural Market Towns Group

Councillors had received information about the proposed group and the Clerk had made further investigations and had discovered that to date no towns in Cambridgeshire had agreed to join. Cllr Hay pointed out that the Combined Authority received money from the Government to support rural towns.

It was, therefore, **agreed** not to join the group.

174) County Council Climate Change and Environment Strategy & Action Plan

Members were advised that the County Council would be running a public consultation on their draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy from the 20th December 2019 to 31st January 2020 and they were keen to hear the Council's views on the strategy.

It was agreed the document should be discussed at the next Leisure & General Purposes Working Group meeting. Cllr Smith suggested inviting along someone from the County Council to speak on the strategy.

175) Revisions to Code of Conduct Procedure Rules

The Council had been informed that Fenland District Council had agreed to revisions to the Member Conduct Procedure regarding the complaints procedure. The Clerk advised members that the Town Council would need to adopt the revisions as the FDC Monitoring Officer also covered Town and Parish Councils.

FDC members had received training on the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards which was available to the Town Council should members wish to view it. The Clerk had printed out the conclusions of the training as she felt it was a good reminder to members that they should be aware of the requirements of the Code, they should use social media sensibly and they should not participate in Council business if they had a pecuniary interest, there was a chance they could be biased, they had a closed mind or they could not avoid being influenced by something which was not relevant. The training also advised members to seek advice if they were unsure about what they should do or declare.

The Clerk was advised to contact Ms Carol Pilson at FDC if she had any queries about the changes.

176) Traffic Issues

TRO Huntingdon Road: The Clerk had finally received a costing for the new Traffic Regulation Orders for Huntingdon Road. The cost would be £2,476.80 to include the cost of the linings (road markings) and the TRO advertisement. There would be no officer costs. Members **agreed** to order the works at a cost of £2,476.80.

LHI Application: Following the recommendation of the Leisure Working Group that the Council should offer £6,000 towards the cost of an LHI scheme (traffic calming and school time 20mph speed limit) for Wenny Road, the Clerk had sent an email requesting members vote in favour or against offering £6,000. The majority of members voted in favour of offering £6,000 and the offer had, therefore, been made.

Letter of Complaint: The Council had received a letter from a resident of Huntingdon Road complaining about tractors carting chopped maize along Huntingdon Road from early in the morning until late in the evening seven days a week. The complainant stated the contractors should be more considerate to local residents on working times. He was also concerned that the trailers were not covered so the maize was flowing all over the road, into gardens and on to parked cars. The Mayor agreed the tractors were a problem in London Road as well as Huntingdon Road. Members argued the contractors were legally obliged to cover the maize but failed to do so. However the maize carting had stopped and it was agreed the police should be alerted to the problem ahead of the carting season in 2020 and if problems persisted the council should write in complaint to the owners of the AD plant. The resident was also

worried about the proposed TRO for Huntingdon Road arguing that the removal of double yellow lines outside his house would be unsafe as it would restrict his view. The Clerk was confident the resident would be consulted as part of the TRO process and it was pointed out only part of the lines were to be removed.

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

177) Correspondence

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

Xmas Lights: The Clerk read out an email from the Chairman of the Christmas Lights Committee Mr Chris Savill thanking the Mayor and councillors for the gift presented to him at the Lights switch on event. The gift marked Mr Savill's 20 years on the committee and 10 years as Chairman. Councillors were full of praise for the lights describing them as fantastic and awesome and agreed the Clerk should write thanking the committee for such a wonderful display and pointing out they put displays in other towns to shame.

178) Reports

The Mayor gave a verbal report on the many events she and the Deputy Mayor had attended including the induction of a new minister at the Emmanuel Church and the Remembrance service and parade.

She and Cllr Haggata had attended the Remembrance service at Cromwell Community College and along with the Clerk she had attended a meeting with the new head of the primary phase at Cromwell Community College, Mrs Claire Macdonald, who had explained that the school would open in temporary buildings in September. In April 2021 the pupils would move into the new look school. Mrs Macdonald had outlined the work to be undertaken, how the new school would fit in with the college (she emphasised pupils would be kept separate) and had spoken about a wish to get involved in the community.

On lights switch on night the Mayor had presented prizes to the winners of the Ellis Winters Christmas card competition and had presented Mr Savill with a gift. She concluded by saying she and the Deputy Mayor would be attending a reception at RAF Alconbury and Fenland District Council Chairman's Carol Service.

179) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda. The next meeting would be 7th January 2020.

