

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 1st April 2025

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1st April 2025 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs A Hay (Mayor), L Ashley, J Carney, J Fuller-Gray, A Jones, V Joyce, P Murphy, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

223) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs I Benney and A Gowler.

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

Cllr Hay declared an interest in the Museum and the King Edward Centre. Cllr Murphy declared an interest in planning, the KEC and the Museum; Cllr Unwin in In Bloom and Festival; Cllr Selman in Festival and the Community Car Scheme; Cllr Ashley in the KEC, Museum and Festival; Cllrs Jones and Siggee in the KEC; Cllr Carney in FLAPP; Cllr Fuller-Gray in Festival and planning application F/YR25/0185/RM.

225) Open Forum

There were three members of the public and Cllr Charlie Marks present.

One member of the public said he was there on behalf of the other two. He said he had written to the monitoring officer at FDC as the other two residents were concerned about a development next to land they owned at Campole Drove. The resident explained that there was planning permission for two containers on the land with a domed roof between but the building constructed had an apex roof supported by steel girders attached to the containers. He suggested those constructing the building had abused their planning permission and he queried if it was a stand-alone, self-sufficiency venture. The resident was concerned that neither he or the other residents had received a reply to the concerns raised with the monitoring officer.

The Clerk informed him that the best course of action would be to raise the concerns with planning enforcement at FDC and passed on the contact details.

The Mayor pointed out the Town Council was just a consultee and had to abide by planning authority rules. FDC made the decisions on planning applications.

The two other residents had attended the March meeting and once again raised the issue of CCTV cameras directed towards a public byway (Campole Drove). The Clerk said she had raised the matter with the County Council and the Rights of Way Officer had referred her to information about CCTV systems on the Information Commissioner Office's website. She had downloaded the information and passed it to the resident. There was nothing else the

Town Council could do. The Mayor confirmed it was the responsibility of the County Council and the Town Council could only pass on information to guide the public.

At this point two of the members of the public made accusatory comments about councillors and were asked, by the Mayor, to leave the meeting. All three residents left the meeting.

226) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th March 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

227) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 209) Clothing Bank & Bins: Cllr Murphy had looked into the issues and discovered the clothing bank was the responsibility of the church, not FDC. He said the waste bin at Eastwood should have been secured.

Min 218) Street Lights: Cllr Marks agreed to forward details of the best person to contact to complain about the new street light bulbs.

Min 220) Swimming Pool: The Mayor said she had spoken to a member of the family responsible for the Empress Swimming Pool, who had asked if a new swimming pool for the town was likely. She explained that any repairs made to the Empress Pool would only be short term fix.

228) Police Matters

Members had before them a report summarising Neighbourhood Alerts received in the past month. They were also notified that there would be the opportunity to meet local neighbourhood police officers on Wednesday 16th April in Chatteris Library between 1pm and 2pm.

Cllr Ashley said the meeting should be better advertised and Cllr Hay said the meetings between Council Chairmen and Sgt Arnold were no longer as regular.

229) FDC and Street Scene Updates

Cllr Carney told members that there had been a large fire on land off Fenton Way on the previous Sunday. He understood that details of a vehicle number plate had been forwarded to FDC and the police but no action was taken so he would be looking into the matter. Cllr Unwin confirmed the fire was definitely on highways land as she and Cllr Selman had spotted the pile of furniture, tyres, etc, dumped on the land a month before the incident.

230) Financial Officer's Report

Cllr Murphy asked if the Council received any benefit from the £21,220 it paid for CCTV monitoring and maintenance and suggested it did not.

The Financial Officer pointed out the costs had remained the same in recent years and the budget for 2025/26 had been agreed. The Mayor said the major advantage was that it was a deterrent and she believed there would be an uproar if the Council refused to pay for the cameras to be monitored. Cllr Unwin suggested it would leave the town very vulnerable, especially as there was no police station.

Those councillors who had visited the CCTV control room had found it impressive. Cllrs Fuller-Gray and Unwin expressed an interest in visiting the control room and the Clerk agreed to organise a visit. She also pointed out that there were quarterly updates from the CCTV team and the Mayor requested information from the last 4 quarters for the next meeting. Members agreed that the police and the CCTV controllers should make more use of social media to let the public know how information from CCTV had been useful.

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 25th March 2025 showing expenditure of £528,397.38 and income of £497,986.93 (which included a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

Members were reminded that they had agreed not to renew the CAPALC Affiliation Membership for 25/26.

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

231) Payment of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** that the payment of the accounts below be noted and approved

Payments made at the end of March for year end 2024/25

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------|
| Mayday | Nov 24 printing | 30.00 |
| Mayday | Dec 24 printing | 85.22 |
| British Gas | Gas Bill Church Lane offices | 375.69 |
| British Gas | Elec Bill Church Lane offices | 52.67 |
| Onecom | Phone bill 14/02/25 | 127.69 |
| Onecom | Phone bill 17/03/25 | 127.14 |
| F/O | Lenses for glasses | 200.00 |
| Maxey Grounds | Professional Reinstatement Valuation of 14 Church Lane for insurance purposes | 900.00 |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Maxey Grounds | Professional Reinstatement Valuation of 2 Park Street for insurance purposes | 2667 4 of 9 900.00 |
| Mayday | Jan 25 printing | 52.96 |
| Viking | Stationary order | 297.30 |
| Youths of Fenland | Well Being Café Jan- Mar | 1,345.50 |
| Rural Cambs CAB | Q3 Face to Face | 1,587.25 |
| Cambs CC | Hire of Chatteris Library for CAB | 135.00 |
| Cambs CC | Hire of Chatteris Library for CAB | 292.50 |
| Cambs CC | Hire of Chatteris Library for CAB | 292.50 |
| Running Imp | Summer Festival fun run paint | 10.00 |
| Thomas Quinn | Elec Bill Reim 2 Park Street, spur for ground floor office | 770.57 |
| Mayday | Feb 25 printing | 60.34 |
| FDC | Non Dom Rates, Museum | 0.49 |
| R J Warren | Pollarding of trees at Bridge Street and removal of rubbish | 480.00 |
| R J Warren | Supply & Install 2 x benches replacement benches at Old Railway Line | 240.00 |
| S Gibb | Cleaning offices | 48.00 |
| Clerk | Reim: Summer Festival sundries & other | 428.03 |
| | | |
| Total | | 8,838.85 |

Payments made on or after the 1st April 2025 to include creditors as listed below.

| | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Mayday | Printing Mar (Creditor) | 57.90 |
|--------|----------------------------------|-------|

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|--|--|--|
| Rural Cambs CAB | Q4 Face to Face (Creditor) | 2668 5 of 9 1,587.25 |
| S Gibb | Cleaning Offices underpaid (Creditor) | 8.00 |
| R J Warren | Gardening Services (Creditor) | 772.03 |
| Thomas Quinn | March Elec Bill ground floor office 2 Park Street (Creditor) | 40.93 |
| Barclays | Bank Charges (Creditor) | 8.50 |
| B Gas | Gas Bill (Creditor) Church Lane offices | 270.83 |
| Payroll | April's Payroll | 6,258.13 |
| C A Chubbock | Annual Allotment Rent | 275.00 |
| Zen Internet | Apr-May Website | 13.79 |
| FDC | Museum non domestic rates | 0.50 |
| Zurich Insurance | Annual renewal insurance policy | 2,155.37 |
| Zurich Insurance | Additional insurance premium to cover professional property reinstatement valuation. | 867.87 |
| Royal Society of Saint George Huntingdon | Charity Church Service Mayors civic tickets | 66.00 |
| | | |
| Total | | 12,382.10 |

232) To Agree Renewal of Youth Service Contracts

Members were advised that the renewal costs for the Youth Services had increased from last year's costs due to the rise of the minimum wage and the increase costs of the refreshments and arts and crafts, etc.

The Well Being Café had proved to be very popular and the attendance of students had increased dramatically, therefore more refreshments were required, which had also added to the increase in costs.

Cllr Selman suggested that the youth leader could approach Tesco's to ask if they would be able to provide some refreshments, which would help towards reducing the overall cost of the service. The Financial Officer advised that she would suggest this to the Youth Leader, however, it would be difficult to monitor and manage the financial side of this with regards to deducting the cost of the refreshments off as donations could be on an ad hoc basis.

Members were advised that the junior youth service could only be provided every other week due to a shortage of staff. The Financial Officer advised that she would speak to the Youth Leaders to see if this could eventually be increased to every week as it was an important service and again was very popular with the younger children.

The combined budget for the Youth services was £10,000 and the combined cost of providing both the Well Being Café and the Junior Youth Club came in at £8,940.

There was room in the budget to have additional sessions for the junior youth service, if it could be covered by the service provider.

Members agreed it would be good to get more sessions for the junior youth club if possible.

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

233) Growing Fenland Update

The Clerk and the Financial Officer gave the following update on the Growing Fenland project:

Valuations – The two buildings owned by the Council (14 Church Lane and 2 Park Street) had been valued for insurance purposes and the officers were delighted to announce that Chatteris Town Council now owned two buildings valued at a total of £2.4m!

Tenants - Both tenants had renewed their contracts for another 12 months.

Retention – In consultation with the architect, a list would be drawn up of snagging issues at 14 Church Lane and these would be put right by the contractor ahead of the release of his retention money.

Community Rooms - The camera club, which had only a few members, had asked to hold its meetings in the small meeting room at 14 Church Lane. The club had been meeting at the museum but this had meant moving furniture every time so it was not convenient. The group had booked every other month on a Wednesday evening.

CAB continued to hold weekly meetings on a Wednesday but Specsavers were still looking for NHS funding before continuing their hearing services. The local doctors' surgery had booked in one Tuesday to hold diabetes clinics.

The really good news was that the local immunisation team, which goes into schools, old people's homes, etc, was looking to re-locate from Doddington Hospital. The government was driving forward an immunisation/vaccination programme (to stave off another pandemic), so the team was very busy. They would be using the two inter-linked rooms at the

rear of 14 Church Lane and would operate every working day and sometimes on Saturdays. The rooms would have to be locked off and dedicated to the team but they were willing to pay £5,000 a year towards costs, as they had a budget. Members agreed it would be a great use of the rooms.

Finally the Clerk reported that she had given a report on the Growing Fenland project to a consultancy firm which had been commissioned by the Combined Authority (CPCA) to prepare an impact evaluation of the first phase of the Market Towns programme. Chatteris had been chosen as just one of three case study towns. The consultants had also asked to speak to representatives of groups who had benefited from the Growing Fenland project (such as the Museum and Christmas Lights), businesses which had received grants and councillors who had been involved in the project. The Clerk was in the process of putting the parties in touch but the interviews were on hold, due to purdah ahead of the May elections.

234) Planning

Cllr Ashley took the chair while the planning applications (a) to i) (**as shown on the appended list**) were considered. Members ratified that decisions made on applications a) to c) at the Leisure Working Group meeting and considered the additional applications. (Cllr Fuller-Gray left the room while d) was considered). It was agreed to return the plans to FDC marked as follows:

- a) Rec Refusal, out of keeping with the conservation area. When planning permission was granted one of the conditions was that all joinery should be softwood painted dark oak and NOT metal or plastic to safeguard the character of the building listed as being of local interest and to preserve the character of the conservation area. Another condition was to retain an original timber window from the stables building which the new building replaced.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Noted
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support (on a majority vote)
- i) Support

Cllr Selman said the new entrance to the Womb Farm site off the A141 Fenland Way had been developed but there was still no sign of the extension to the footpath along Fenland Way, which was a condition of the planning permission. It was agreed to check that the developers would be adhering to the planning conditions.

Notification had been received that the application for 20 dwellings south of 116-122 New Road would be considered by FDC's planning committee the following day and the recommendation was to approve. There were a number of objections to the plans and it appeared that the Town Council's recommendation that the development should be single

storey dwellings was not being upheld. The Town Council had also pointed out drainage issues and possible contamination of the site should be carefully managed.

235) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Joyce (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 11th March 2025 (**copy attached**).

Sportsman Field: Cllr Ashley said the group had recommended that the Town Council should look at taking back the playing fields at the Sportsman, which had originally belonged to the town and were currently only being used by a dog walking group on a Sunday. Cllr Murphy warned that the land was in numerous ownerships, including Clarion Housing, and the land registry was very complicated. FDC looked after the actual playing fields having taken them over from Chatteris Urban District Council, who were left the land by Mr Fairbairn. Cllr Ashley said if FDC could gift the field to the Town Council, the Council could make use of it and the Mayor suggested it would be better to gift the land to the Town Council than lose it to the new unitary authority. It was agreed to consider how to proceed at the Leisure Working Group meeting. It was also agreed to consider further Mrs Louise Unwin's offer to run a youth group.

Dean Drove: Cllr Fuller-Gray had sent through information about problems with Dean Drove, which the Clerk had passed to the Rights of Way Officer at the County Council and he was now looking into the issues.

236) Midsummer Festival Update

Cllr Selman, Chairman of the Midsummer Festival organising committee, said the Festival would be held on the 28th and 29th June and plans were well advanced. The theme would be TV Cartoon Characters. Adverts would soon be sought for the programme. A boozy afternoon tea and sing-a-long to the film Grease was planned for the 26th April to raise funds for the Festival. Previous boozy afternoons had been very successful. Acts were being booked for the arena and the usual popular events were planned for the Sunday, including the colour fun run. The Clerk confirmed she had successfully applied to FDC's arts fund for a grant of £2,000 towards the cost of entertainment at the Festival.

237) Traffic Issues

Disabled Persons Parking Bay: Another application for the installation of a disabled persons parking bay had been received by the County Council, this time for Victoria Street. Members had no objections to the application.

Highways Projects Updates: The Mayor had received reports of schemes being considered by County Highways. One was to investigate the provision of new footpaths in Dock Road and Short Nightlayers Drove, widen the existing footpath and provide a pedestrian/cycle crossing of the A142 to connect with the business park at Fenton Way. The Mayor had welcomed the initiative but had insisted it was necessary to install streetlights in the area if people were to

be encouraged to walk or cycle. The other schemes looked at the potential for new and improved travel routes and crossings around Chatteris.

Capital Highway Maintenance Programme: The programme, outlining which roadworks would be undertaken in 2025/26, had been received. A number of schemes for Chatteris were listed.

Temporary Traffic Orders: Information had been received about 3 temporary traffic orders; one to close St Martin's Close, another to shut Railway Lane between The Hawthorns and the High Street and the third to close King Edwards Road to allow for a 4-way link box replacement on the 21st to 23rd May.

Byway: Notification had been received that the consultation on the order to record a legal width for Public Byway 22 (West Street) had closed without any objections.

LHI: Members were reminded that at the Leisure Working Group meeting the suggested new warning signs and verge marker bollards for the LHI scheme for Fenland Way had been approved.

Roadworks: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received, along with the April list of events affecting the Highways in the County and the TMC report for March. Cllr Unwin said the road in Wenny Estate had just been resurfaced and the workmanship was not good. However, Cllr Joyce said they made a good job of the roads in the Fairviews and Cllr Fuller-Gray said it was the same for Stocking Drove.

238) Correspondence

Members had a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**). They had received a copy of the update on the Sons of the Fens Project, which had received a grant from the Town Council.

239) Reports

There were no reports.

240) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

