

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes 7th April 2026

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 7th April 2026 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs L Ashley (Mayor), S Selman (Deputy Mayor), I Benney, J Fuller-Gray, A Gowler, A Hay, A Jones, P Murphy, and S Unwin.

233) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney, V Joyce and M Siggee. Cllr Carney had submitted comments on some items.

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

The Mayor declared an interest in the Festival, Museum and KEC; Cllr Selman in the Festival and Community Car Scheme; Cllr Hay in the Museum, KEC and Red Tile Wind Farm; Cllr Murphy in planning, the KEC and Museum, Cllr Benney in planning, Cllr Unwin in In Bloom and the Festival, Cllr Jones in the KEC.

235) Open Forum

There were no members of the public or press present so the Mayor moved on to the next item on the agenda.

236) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd March 2026 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

237) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 216) Recording Names: Cllr Murphy said he had sought advice about naming members of the public in the minutes and had been told there was nothing to stop the names being recorded unless the person specifically asked for their name not to be recorded.

Min 218) Misuse of Bins: The Clerk admitted she had still to enquire how bins in the High Street were being misused.

Min 218) Rubbish & Dog Fouling: The rubbish at the side of 1 Wenny Road had been inspected by an FDC environmental officer, who had found no evidence of rats but he did admit the area was untidy and had asked a member of staff to tidy it. This had been done. The Clerk had received a complaint about dog fouling on the footpath, particularly near the

museum and the Old Bakery. It was agreed to pass the complaint to the Street Scene officer along with reports about dog fouling in the High Street, New Road and Eastwood.

Min 217) Persimmon building site: Cllr Unwin said there were still ongoing issues on the Persimmon site.

Public Toilet: The Clerk had been informed that the disabled toilet in Chatteris had been vandalised over the bank holiday weekend and a support bar was broken. She had been assured by FDC officer Mr Mark Mathews that the bar had been ordered and would be replaced as soon as possible.

238) Police Matters

Members had a report of information received from the police in the past month which included the following:

Local Police

Members had received a copy of a report on the weekend of action in relation to ASB driving held on the 7th and 8th March, from Pc Lovitt. Patrols and speed checks were carried out, warnings were issued for ASB driving and a motorbike and an electric scooter were seized. Pc Lovitt sent assurances that the two parking issues mentioned at the last Town Council meeting had been checked out.

Neighbourhood Alerts

4/3/26: Notification of priorities for the March neighbourhood team: i) tackling vehicle-related ASB; ii) proactive targeting of known drug dealing and drug use hotspots; iii) providing a visible police presence in town centres and other public spaces.

11/3/26: Information about the weekend of action to tackle anti-social driving.

16/3/26: Information about a free cyber security workshop.

18/3/26: Notification of new legislation to better protect livestock and support farmers.

20/3/26: Latest news from the March neighbourhood policing team including the seizure of a car with no licence or insurance, the recovery of a stolen JCB in Chatteris, speeding patrols in Chatteris and other areas and parking patrols.

23/3/26: Information about Older Driver workshops.

25/3/26: Introduction to new PCSO Rubens who has joined the March neighbourhood policing team.

28/3/26: Advice on how to keep your oil tank protected from thieves.

31/3/26: Details about April community meetings including a meeting at Chatteris Library on Wednesday 29th April from 10am to 11am.

1/4/26: Appeal for witnesses after a motorcyclist died following a collision with a tractor on the A142 near Block Fen.

2/4/26: Information about a drink and drug driving hotline – 0800 0320845 – which allows the public to anonymously report someone they suspect of drink or drug driving.

239) Financial Officer's Report

The Financial Officer advised Members that she was busy preparing the 2025/26 financial end of year accounts, therefore she had not produced a written report.

She advised Members that they would receive a written report in May with the new financial year figures and a verbal update on the 25/26 end of year accounts.

Members were advised that the first half of the Precept payment had been received from FDC.

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

240) Payment of Accounts

Members were advised that there were two payments of accounts to be approved, one for the end of March payments and one for April's payments.

The Financial Officer advised Members that they should look at the schedules carefully and question anything on the schedule before approving, she advised that once approved the payments could be questioned later.

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

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS End of March 2026 for April's meeting

Payee	Description	Amount
UK Tool Hire	Credit note against invoice 371112 Re faulty machinery	- 228.00
Clerk	Sweets for Summer Festival	18.41
Plastecowood Ltd	Board for Pocket Park Pond	57.86
Rose Fire & Security	Fire Alarm Service	466.80
Rose Fire & Security	Intruder Alarm service	120.00
R J Warren	Concrete base and associated works re bench at Pocket Park	360.00
Chatteris & Manea Silver band	Vol Org Grant towards storage unit for band equipment	1,000.00
EEAS Chatteris Community First Responders	Grant towards equipment and medical kit for an additional CFR	2,000.00
EAAA	Grant towards equipment and medical kit	1,000.00
Wave	2 Park Street Water bill	78.20
Mayday	Inv. 239687, photocopier printing and connectivity support Admin	67.03
Clerk	Reim Mileage	9.00

		2800
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		220.00
DL Stimson	Office window cleaning	
PC OK	IT and website repair	200.00
RJ Warren	Bollard supply and install at Old Railway Line Footpath	60.00
RJ Warren	Tree Pollarding service	2,604.00
Viking	Stationery	213.50
RFO	Reim: Beverages for Well Being Café	733.17
Zen Internet	Website	13.79
Chatteris Christmas Lights	Final payment re vol org grant	681.94
KES Power & Light	Xmas Lights upgrade materials	1,466.88
Essex & Cambridge Event	Xmas Lights upgrade materials	216.00
S Gibb	Cleaning offices	42.00
First Rescue Training & Supplies	Defib pads x 7 twin packs	882.00
Thomas Quinn	Elec. side room, 2 Park Street	620.19
Rural CAB	Face to face sessions Q 4	1,650.00
Onecom	Phone bill Inv 7780838	135.19
British Gas	Elec Bill 14 Church Lane	78.63
British Gas	Gas Bill 14 Church Lane	259.07
British Gas	Elec Bill 2 Park Street	253.01
British Gas	Elec Bill 14 Church Lane	95.20
Rose Fire & Security	Security system service	240.00
British Gas	Gas Bill Church Lane	462.85
T Payne	14A Flat Management Fee	72.00
Total		16,148.72

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS 7th April 2026

Payee	Description	Amount
Payroll	Payroll April 26	6,462.78
British Gas	Elec 2 Park Street	210.01
British Gas	Elec Church Lane	68.02

Iris Software	April software	2801 5 of 11 46.80
2020Productions	Project management Summer Festival Around the World in 80 Days Project	8,800.00
FDC	Non-Dom Rates Museum	0.52
Seriously Funny Productions	Summer Festival Entertainer	412.50
March Stationery & Print	Summer Festival Project	236.00
Mayday	Printing, readings and connectivity support	50.85
Zurich Insurance	Renewal Council Insurance	2,993.15
Barclays	Debit Charges CREDITOR	8.50
PEAC	Photocopier Lease CREDITOR	154.84
FDC	Summer Festival Contribution CREDITOR	11,500.00
R Warren	Gardening Services CREDITOR	772.02
T Payne	Management Fee Flat 14B Apr 26 Inv. 16626	72.00
Total		31,787.99

241) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, with recommendations as listed below:

1.	Chatteris Library Summer Reading Challenge	Grant towards materials, activities, incentive kit bags, and additional staffing	£500
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Members fully supported the above application, which had previously always been a very successful annual project.

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

242) Planning

The Mayor presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held on the 31st March 2026 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to m) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered three further applications.

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

- a) Support if the Tree Officer has no concerns.
- b) Noted
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Recommend Refusal. Concerns have been raised by Anglian Water about the sewer which crosses the site and the proposed surface water drainage plan. The Town Council upholds those concerns. Why wasn't the site surveyed? If the plan is approved, request Section 106 contribution for facilities in the town in addition to the sum already pledged for education, NHS and libraries (is this required for Chatteris library?).
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Noted
- k) Recommend Refusal, strongly object. The trees are healthy and should not be felled. The trees were there when the bungalows were built and they should have been taken into consideration. Part of the issue is that FDC have not maintained the trees. Removing the trees is likely to cause even more problems as the land shrinks.
- l) Support, request trees planted are native.
- m) Support
- n) Support
- o) Strongly recommend refusal. This is an enormous extension to a facility which already causes major problems with traffic congestion and filthy roads, which adds to the dangers of a red route. Roads are subsiding under the weight of the large vehicles. The congestion on the roads is also likely to increase when work begins on the reservoir. There are continuing problems with odours which are very obnoxious at certain times of the year. This extension brings the development even closer to Chatteris so more homes will be affected by the smell. Current measures to reduce the odours (as promised with the last planning application) do not work and this problem will also be exacerbated with the extension. Have methods to alleviate the smell problems improved since the last application? However, the Town Council recognises that this application is likely to be approved and sees no reason why an obviously very successful business should not make a contribution to the communities it affects. There should be significant Section 106 contributions for the communities of Chatteris, Mepal and Manea and mitigation in the form of safety measures on the A142, including more regular cleaning of the road, average speed cameras and a footpath/cycleway. The tractors make their way through Chatteris on many occasions so there should also be contributions to road safety measures in the town, in particular improvements to the Slade End roundabout.

p) Noted

243) To Agree Response to Fenland 50 Consultation

Members were asked to agree a response to the Fenland 50 Local Plan call for sites and local green space designation consultation.

Members had a copy of the map showing suggested areas for development in Chatteris and green spaces to be protected which had been submitted during consultation on the previous draft Local Plan.

The Clerk asked if members wished to submit the same map. Cllrs Benney and Gowler were not in favour of submitting the map pointing out that part of the proposed development areas were in Flood zones 2 and 3, which were not suitable for building, and Flood zone 1 land had been submitted as suitable for a country park.

After discussion it was agreed that land to the east of the town in Flood zone 1 should be allocated for development and land to the west of the town in Flood zones 2 and 3 should be used for leisure.

The green spaces list was approved as follows:

The Little Acre Fen Pocket Park and the land off Wenny Road.

Recreation Grounds and play areas at Wenny Road, Furrowfields, Huntingdon Road, Larham Way, St Pauls Drive, Cricketers Way, Lancaster Way, Willey Terrace and Hunters Close.

Green areas at: Tithe, Queensway, Heronshaw, Treeway, Whitemill (including the pond area), Burnsfield estate, Eastwood, the rear of the Parish Church, Huntingdon Road (adjacent the A141), St Stephens Drive, Ash Grove, Harold Heading Close and Southampton Place, junction of Blackmill and Fairway, Slade Way, Fenview, Westbourne Road, Fairview Avenue, Lindsells Walk, New Road, Green Park, between Tesco's and the drain, Wood Farm (London Road), junction of Station Street and Station Road. The Old Railway Line Footpath and Bridleway.

Sports Venues: football ground at West Street, football ground at Peacocks Paddock (Wenny Road), football field behind the Sportsman (Fairway), Cricket Club ground (Wenny Road), Bowls Club ground (Wood Street).

School Playing Fields at Cromwell, Kingsfield and Glebelands.

Public Gardens & Cemeteries: Jubilee Gardens, Market Hill Gardens, garden at the top of Huntingdon Road. Two cemeteries (New Road).

It was also agreed to add to the list new green spaces being created on planning developments in Chatteris, in particular the extension to The Elms.

244) Proposed Improvements to Recreation Grounds & Play Areas

Cllr Murphy reported that he had met with FDC officers to discuss requirements for play area and open space improvements in Chatteris. All Fenland towns had each been allocated £250k to spend on improvements, with the villages sharing a total sum of £500k.

Cllr Murphy confirmed he had applied for lighting at Furrowfields Recreation Ground and Wenny Recreation Ground. This would include lighting the skatepark in the winter but there would be a cut off time for the lights and the lights would be directed down to protect nearby residents. Cllr Murphy said a consultation exercise had been carried out and everyone spoken to was in favour of the scheme.

The ideas had gone to FDC's cabinet who had approved the lighting schemes and had asked for costs to be sought. If the schemes came in below £250k the rest of the money would be spent on minor improvements to the play areas in the town.

Cllr Unwin asked if an outside gym would be provided but Cllr Murphy said outside gyms did not meet the criteria for spending the money. Cllr Hay explained that the criteria was tight and originally lighting had not been considered as appropriate but as the lighting was imperative it was agreed to change the wording of the criteria.

245) Midsummer Festival Update

Members had a copy of the press release which had been issued regarding the Around the World in 80 Days creative programme which was going ahead in the lead-up to the Midsummer Festival.

The Clerk said 20Twenty Productions had helped to put in a bid for funding from the Arts Council and the National Lottery to fund workshops and cultural experiences inspired by countries around the world. That bid was successful and the first workshops would be held on the 8th and 9th April. In the run-up to the Festival participants would collaborate with professional artists to create masks, headdresses, costumes etc, which they could wear in the parade. They would also be exploring new music and dance styles.

Members from the Midsummer Festival organising committee agreed it was a very exciting project.

246) Permissive Footpath Problem

Mr Ian Mason had asked if the Council was aware of the closure of a permissive footpath along the Forty Foot Riverbank from Carters Bridge to opposite the Happy Anywhere farmhouse. He said signage and barriers at the footbridge over Fillenham's Drain looked quite new and the closure of the footbridge was worrying as the bank was regularly used by walkers, dog walkers and anglers. Mr Mason had contacted the County Rights of Way officer Mr Mark Peck about the issue and had been told that landowners could withdraw permission to use an identified route across their land at any time as it was not a Public Right of Way. Cllr Carney had looked into the issue and had also found the owner could shut a permissive footpath although the Country Landowners Association encouraged landowners and farmers to keep permissive footpaths open. Members asked if it was worth approaching the new owners of the land about the issue, if the owners could be traced, but admitted it looked as though little could be done.

247) Request to Contact Anglian Water

The Mayor had been contacted by a member of the public asking her to write to Anglian Water following the recent failures in the water supply. The member of the public asked the Mayor to enquire about the causes of the repeated failures, press for a timetable for permanent repairs, ensure that Anglian Water corresponded with those affected when failures occurred, and pursue appropriate compensation as service standards had not been met. Councillors pointed out that the author was able to contact Anglian Water himself. Cllr Benney said the water had been turned off to fix a problem and Cllr Ashley said those affected had been notified.

248) To Agree Risk Assessment for Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Working Parties

The Clerk said in order to satisfy the auditors all risk assessments she drew up had to be approved by the council. She had drawn up a risk assessment to cover public events at the Pocket Park organised by either the Council or the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park. Members had a copy of the risk assessment and **approved** the document.

249) Call for New Road to be 20mph

The Council and Cllr Daniel Divine had been contacted by a resident complaining about speeding traffic at the town end of New Road. He claimed most traffic, including buses, were travelling at more than the speed limit of 30mph and called for the speed limit to be reduced to 20mph before someone was killed or hurt for life.

Members pointed out it was almost impossible to travel at more than 30mph on that part of New Road due to the parked traffic and the speed humps. They were firmly against a 20mph speed limit.

250) Traffic Issues

LHI Funding: The Clerk had been informed that a new officer had been tasked with delivering the successful LHI scheme for the A142. He was awaiting confirmation of dates for the design work to begin.

Crossing in London Road: The Clerk had received a reply to her query, which asked if developers could help to pay for a pedestrian crossing in London Road. As expected, Highways assistant project manager Mr Ross Lewis said such a requirement had to be agreed at the planning stage. He said there were two options to deliver the scheme, either LHI funding or including the scheme in the Transport Proposals database in case any DTSA funding became available. He had asked for the scheme to be included on that database but warned it was a lengthy process.

Disabled Parking Bay: The Clerk had been informed that the disabled parking bay in West Street was still required and in use and would not be removed.

TROs: Notification had been received that King Edwards Road would be temporarily closed between the 19th and 21st May to facilitate a water connection; part of Station Street would be closed for emergency pothole repairs on the 8th April and Ramsey Road, Benwick, would be closed for three weeks (work should have started on the 23rd March) to allow for works to a culvert.

Damage to Property: Cllr Ashley's son's complaint about damage to his property in New Road, due to the poor road surface, had now been escalated to stage 2 of the County Highways complaints procedure.

Close Pass Campaign: Information had been received about County Highways Close Pass Campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the need for drivers to leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph.

Surface Dressing: The planned retread of the roadway at Stocking Drove was due to take place on the 23rd April.

Roadworks: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received along with the Highways Events diary for April.

251) Correspondence

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

Chatteris Leisure Centre: The Mayor had written to a manager of Freedom Leisure following complaints that the company would not be renewing its music licenses for its leisure centres due to the costs. The proposal was to move to licence-free music but the instructors, who ran classes such as maracas, dance and spin, said the loss of the licensed music would badly affect their classes. Cllr Hay said she had spoken to the portfolio holder at FDC about the

issue and had warned her that FDC was in danger of losing gym/leisure centre members due to the change because many people only joined to take part in the dance classes and did not use the gym.

252) Reports

Nature Recovery: Cllr Unwin said she, the Clerk and Mr Ian Mason had attended the latest Nature Recovery from the Ground Up Project meeting which had been far more interesting as there had been a talk on how to use the Parish On-line mapping system to plan and put forward nature schemes. The mapping system would be free for a year for those involved in the project. It was now a case of deciding which scheme to put forward for Chatteris.

In Bloom: Cllr Unwin also reported that the In Bloom team had met with an FDC officer to discuss the Chatteris In Bloom entry for the national competition, when they would be competing against towns including Henley-on-Thames and Glastonbury. FDC had agreed to work closely with the Chatteris volunteers as Chatteris was the only town in the Fens still involved with In Bloom. There had been issues with FDC's contractors on occasions in the past so an action plan was now being drawn up for a closer working relationship. Cllr Unwin admitted FDC's help was needed as Chatteris was part of the national competition. In Bloom had working parties about the town every Tuesday morning and this had helped to recruit more volunteers, so the number was now in double figures. One of the projects being undertaken was the development of a Mediterranean garden.

253) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda but Cllr Selman gave her apologies for the leisure working group meeting on the 21st April.