

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025

2705

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 67) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Gowler and V Joyce.

### 68) 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 Murphy declared an interest in all planning matters, the Museum and the KEC; Cllr Unwin in In Bloom and Festival; Cllr Selman in Festival and the Community Car Scheme; Cllr Fuller-Gray in a planning application and Festival, Cllr Siggee in the KEC; Cllr Hay in the Museum and KEC; Cllr Jones in the KEC and Cllr Carney in FLAPP.

### 69) Open Forum

Cllr D Divine, County councillor for Chatteris, 5 members of the public, two police officers and a member of the press were all present at the start of the meeting.

The members of the public were all residents of West Street and Gibside Avenue concerned about events which had occurred since a parcel of land, north of 2-8 Gibside Avenue, had been sold for development. Members had a copy of a letter sent to residents in the area telling them to remove all vehicles, bins and personal belongings from the site or face a retrieval fee.

One of the residents explained that residents knew the land had been up for sale for sometime but had no idea it had been sold and they returned from work one day to find fencing had gone up around the site and their cars, refuse bins, etc, had been fenced in as had their back gate entrances. The residents then began to question the boundaries but the new owners allegedly refused to engage in talks and instead sent letters telling residents to remove everything from the site by a certain date. The residents took legal advice and now believed that some residents had a right of way over the land (an easement) giving them pedestrian and motor access to the rear of their properties.

Land Registry had been asked to look into the matter and a decision was awaited. The resident said she had asked the developers not to take further action until it had been

established if local people had rights. Cllr Hay suggested engaging a solicitor. The resident said the deeds of some of the houses showed pedestrian access over the land. Some of the homeowners had lived there for over 20 years and the latest letter which had been sent was threatening in nature.

The resident claimed the land was sold below its asking price at auction and she suggested that the residents might have put in an offer if they had realised a lower price was acceptable.

Cllr Unwin was concerned that cars normally parked on the site would now have to find parking spaces on small estate roads. The resident believed the outline plans for the site showed parking for existing cars on the site. Cllr Hay said she had been contacted by residents and had approached FDC suggesting residents should have been warned that the land had been sold.

Another resident (who had lost access to his back gate) said he was disappointed that the new owners were refusing to speak to local residents. Cllr Selman advised the residents to band together and prepare a case.

It was **agreed** the Council should write to FDC and express concerns that the behaviour of the developers was not acceptable.

#### **70) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

#### **71) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Min 58) Sportsman Field Project: The Clerk had received a reply to her email regarding the Fenland Inspire! Projects and the call for a grant to help with the Sportsman field project. The letter expressed concern that the plans for a new swimming pool in Chatteris had been put on the back burner. The Leader of FDC, Cllr Chris Boden, said the Town Council had been misinformed and the swimming pool had not been dropped from the Fenland Inspire! Projects list. He said he had spoken to the portfolio holder about the project which was the most ambitious, difficult and expensive of all the planned projects. He denied Chatteris was being left as the poor relation arguing the money projected to be spent on the swimming pool project meant Chatteris would get more than any other town. He said the projects would be delivered over 3 years. Cllr Murphy said the Inspire Project list had been split into two tranches and the swimming pool was in the second tranche.

Cllr Boden also said the condition survey works to the leisure centre had been prioritised ahead of the other leisure centres.

Cllr Boden said he was not aware of the Town Council's plans for the Sportsman field but it was unlikely any more expenditure would be allocated to Chatteris. He ended by warning

that the cost effectiveness of all suggested projects would be a determining factor on whether to substitute or add to the list of Fenland Inspire! Projects.

After receiving Cllr Boden's email the Clerk had checked on the progress of the request to transfer the land at the Sportsman to the Town Council. The officer responsible said he had met with the owner of the Sportsman to discuss an old covenant on the changing rooms, to reaffirm the boundary lines between the two areas and to discuss the erection of fencing to stop vehicles accessing the field. The officer said when all the issues with deeds/title information, covenants, etc. had been resolved he would put forward the request for the land transfer to FDC members.

Min 60) Midsummer Festival: Cllr Selman said the wash up meeting was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Min 40) Reservoir Working Group: A further email had been received from the Manea Parish Council Clerk who had confirmed that the idea of a joint working party between the parish councils and Chatteris Town Council was to discuss the infrastructure implications for the area arising from the reservoir. He said he would send out dates for a meeting of the joint group ahead of the next Anglian Water consultation meeting.

Cllr Selman said she and the Mayor had been interviewed by the BBC about the reservoir project. Cllr Selman had spoken about the roadways and safety and the Mayor gave the views of local people about the project and had stressed that she did not want to see Chatteris missing out on the promised leisure facilities and landscaping. She also said that access to the reservoir should be via footpaths and cycleways and that work should be carried out on the roads to make them safer. Cllr Selman had called for an underpass and for jobs for local people. The interviews were due to be broadcast on Look East on the 6<sup>th</sup> August.

## 72) Police Matters

PCs Chad Hall and Zoe Pell were welcomed to the meeting and asked councillors if they had any issues they wished to raise. PC Pell said one issue they had been looking into was lorries using Victoria Street despite the weight limit. Mick George had been talking to their drivers about not using the road but tractors were also using the route. Highways had been contacted about changing the road signs.

The other issue was loud exhausts. This was being investigated but the police needed to see the cars responsible in action. In addition a PCSO had been out in the town tackling parking issues.

Cllr Murphy was concerned that the speed humps through the High Street were being used as zebra crossings when their sole function was to slow the traffic. PC Pell offered to put out a notice on social media warning the humps were not crossings. The Mayor said parking in the High Street was awful. PC Hall said neighbourhood officers would do what they could but they were often pulled away to other jobs. He was hopeful that the new Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee would mean that the officers would be around more in future.

Cllr Selman reported a van obstructing motorists' vision in Eastwood and motorbikes racing through the street as there was a missing piece of street furniture which had previously obstructed access to Eastbourne Road.

Pc Pell said there had been problems with motorbikes at Wenny Recreation Ground. The police could not give chase if the motorists were not wearing helmets and there was the added problem that the CCTV camera in the Recreation Ground was not working. Cllr Carney offered to chase up the repair.

Cllr Unwin said motorcycles had accessed the bund at the Pocket Park and Cllr Ashley said a motorcycle was believed to have caused damage to a gravestone in Meeks Cemetery (which was very overgrown).

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

#### **‘Local Police**

Notification had been received from Sgt Chris Arnold that he was stepping down from the role of March Neighbourhood Police team Sergeant. He thanked those he had worked with. His new role was to head up the Peterborough City Centre Neighbourhood team.

Sgt Arnold’s replacement was A/PS Avid Zaferani, who had already introduced himself via email, offered assistance and said he would be arranging to meet people in person.

#### **Neighbourhood Alerts included:**

11/7/25: Notification that Neighbourhood officers went to Victoria Street, Chatteris, that day following complaints about parking on double yellow lines. Two tickets were issued.

11/7/25: Information about the free bike marking event to be held at Aldi on the 21<sup>st</sup> July.

26/7/25: Notification that evening patrols were carried out in Chatteris in response to complaints about vehicle nuisance. Drivers were stopped and spoken to, and one driver was issued with a section 59 warning; meaning if the driver was involved in anti-social behaviour again his vehicle could be seized.

29/7/25: Notification that 25 people had been charged as part of the ongoing investigation into the hare coursing and violent disorder which took place across the area in January.

31/7/25: Notification that speed checks were carried out in Doddington Road and London Road in Chatteris in response to community concerns. No speeding was identified.

31/7/25: Advice on how to protect your home while you are away on holiday.

1/8/25: Notification that there would be the opportunity to meet local neighbourhood officers and raise concerns at a meeting at Chatteris library on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August from 11am to 12 noon.’

### **73) FDC & Street Scene Updates**

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene reports (**copy attached**).

### **74) Financial Officer’s Report**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025 showing expenditure of £110,492.36 and income of £133,900.15 (included a half year’s precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

**National Pay Rise**

Members were advised that the national pay rise for Local Government Authority employees had been agreed at 3.2 % as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

**Youth Services**

Members were advised that the Senior Well Being Café had been well attended each week, averaging 70-100 youths stopping by for ice-cream, pastries, and various other refreshments and engaging in conversations. It had proved to be a much-appreciated service with many young people expressing how it made their day knowing that the Well Being Café would be running after school.

The young people had also been involved in painting display boards for Chatteris in Bloom and it was good to see the intergeneration of the different ages working together, along with partnership working with Youths of Fenland.

The Junior Youth Club had not had such a great attendance despite the service providers advertising it on social media, in schools, at the Children's Centre and on their website.

They advised that it clashed with other activities on the same night, the venue location might contribute to the lack of attendance along with the fact that the sessions were fortnightly and not weekly. Youths of Fenland had issues with staffing weekly sessions but were trying to bring in volunteers to help.

It was felt the large age gap of the users might also contribute to the lack of attendance. It was agreed the age gap should change to ages 7-11, and to push for weekly sessions when possible.

**Council Tax Bills**

Members were advised that the Financial Officer had received large council tax bills for the rates for 14 Church Lane, going back to the 23/24 financial year.

This was due to the Valuation Office Agency having changed the rateable value of the premises following the refurbishment of both 14 Church Lane and 2 Park Street. The VOA had not been out to look at the premises, but had more than doubled the rateable value.

The new rateable value was 14,250, the old rateable value was 2,000 for the Museum and 5,100 for the Town Council areas of 14 Church Lane. The Financial Officer had rung the VOA to dispute this and ask for a break-down of the new rateable value and was advised she would have to make the dispute online. The FO was warned the dispute procedure was very long winded and might take up to a year to fully resolve.

In the meantime, Fenland DC had put a hold on the bills until the complaint had been resolved.

The Financial Officer was then advised by Fenland DC that the Town Council could only claim small business rates relief on one property and the rateable value of the building must be below 12,000 to fit the criteria.

The Financial Officer had also received rate bills for the 2 Park Street ground floor meeting room. From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 the Museum had been occupying the room for storage, meetings and using it as an office so the room needed to be merged with the Museum's council tax/rates account for 2 Park Street.

The Financial Officer was in the process of updating Fenland DC with dates of occupancy of the room and occupiers' details, however, once again this was proving to be very time consuming.

Members would be updated on progress at each monthly full council meeting.

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

#### 75) Payment of Accounts

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

Payroll	August Payroll	7,413.93
Rose Fire	Call out Intruder alarm	291.79
Mayday Office Equipment	printing cost: Error DD claimed	59.80
Youths of Fenland	Well Being Café sessions	2,029.20
Youths of Fenland	Junior youth club sessions	661.05
B Gas	Elec Bill Park Street	330.12
4 COY Cambs ACF	Army Cadets Volunteering at Summer Festival	100.00
Laura Hodson LL Dance	Dance Exhibition Summer Festival	50.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services Inv. 14662	772.03
R J Warren	Little Acre gardening services Inv. 14656	275.04
T Payne	Invoice 14491 14A July Management Fee	72.00
T Payne	Invoice 14545 14B July Management Fee	72.00
Rural Cambs CAB	Q1 Faces to Face services	1,518.00
Wave	Church Lane water bill	27.42

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Zen Internet	Website Jul-Aug	13.79
B Gas	Gas Bill Church Lane	25.16
D Smith	Emma Smith Singer Summer Festival	30.00
G Singh	Dhol Drummers Entertainment Summer Festival	300.00
A Miller	Singers Summer Festival	120.00
Clerk	Reim sundries Summer Festival	60.00
FDC	Waste collection	89.50
KECCA	Hall Hire Summer Fun & ATM	128.00
David Richards	Printing Summer Festival programmes	1,116.00
Middle Level Commissioners	Allotments drainage rates	188.27
Warboys Somersham & Pidley	Allotments drainage rates	174.22
B Gas	Electricity Bill Church Lane	73.31
Wave	Water Bill LHS Allotments	361.38
Wave	Water Bill RHS Allotments	270.56
Housdens Caterers	April Boozy Afternoon Buffet	360.00
KES Power & Light	Electrical materials re Xmas lights upgrade	698.88
Hedley & Ellis	Electrical materials re Xmas lights upgrade	1,583.24
K Johnstone	KJ Folk Music Entertainer re Summer Festival	500.00
PEAC Solutions	Photocopier Lease	154.84
Mayday Office Equipment	Printing	63.47

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Clerk	Reim Memorial plaque, postages & batteries	118.49
T Payne	Inv. 14704 14A Aug Management fee	72.00
Sammy Magic Magic	Summer Fun Entertainer	195.00
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	41.39
CTS Security	Battery replacement Park Street Museum	2.70
R J Warren	Gardening services open spaces invoice 14682	772.03
R J Warren	Little Acre gardening services Invoice 14683	137.52
Festive Lighting	Ball Xmas Lights	558.00
UK Tool Hire	Hire of GK15 Ascendant Xmas Lights	390.00
Onecom	Phone Bill 7599009 Invoice 16/07	134.51
Community Car Scheme	Grant to Voluntary Organisation	500.00
British gas	Electricity Bill 14 Church Lane	82.72
FDC	Non-Domestic rates Park Street meeting room 01/09/23-31/03/24	471.90
<b>Total</b>		<b>23,459.26</b>

#### 76) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the Council's full council meetings. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability. The approved budget for Voluntary Organisation grants in **2025/26 was £5,000.**

Applications for consideration by Members at this meeting were scheduled, with recommendations:

**Cambridgeshire Police Shrievally Trust-The Bobby scheme:** - £2,053 grant application towards helping vulnerable residents in Chatteris by installing security devices, increasing home safety, providing reassurance, and promoting wellbeing.

**£500 Approved.**

(Cllr Carney declared an interest and took no part in the decision. Cllr Selman asked the Financial Officer to invite the group to attend the over 75's Xmas party in December, and to see if they would book a stall at the 2026 Summer Festival, to make their presence known in the town and hopefully help more residents.)

**Chatteris Foodbank delivered by Ely Foodbank: -**

A £1,000 grant application towards food, fuel, and hardship fund to support Chatteris families, had been received and discussed at July's full council meeting. Councillors requested additional information; therefore, the application had been deferred.

Although additional information was given, Councillors were still not happy at the idea of Ely Foodbank delivering a service by (they believed) paid staff. The foodbank was originally started and staffed by volunteers in Chatteris and it was known that all the food from the foodbank went to Chatteris residents.

Councillors were not convinced that the grant money would be used solely for Chatteris residents and were not prepared to pay towards staff wages or admin costs.

**No grant was approved.**

#### **77) To Consider Purchasing Former Mayor Badges**

Cllr Selman had asked for the matter to go on the agenda. She said speaking to others at civic events they had explained that badges were given to former Mayors in recognition of their duty. She said seven would need to be purchased by Chatteris Town Council.

Former Mayors' views were sought. Cllrs Hay and Carney did not agree with the suggestion and said they did not need validation of their time as Mayors. Cllr Carney asked when the opportunity would arise to wear the badges. Cllr Murphy had no feelings either way and Cllr Unwin supported Cllr Selman's suggestion.

In view of the split decision, it was agreed to take no action at present.

#### **78) To Consider Water Permits for the Allotments**

This item was brought forward on the agenda. Members had a copy of the following report from the Clerk:

'Background

This summer's long dry periods have resulted in above average usage of water by the allotment holders at Honeysome Road Allotments.

Many attempts have been made to encourage allotment holders not to use so much water and a rule has been brought in that hosepipes can only be attached for 15 minutes. Unfortunately, a number of allotment holders have not been abiding by the rules and have been either filling

up large water storage containers or using hosepipes for lengthy periods of time. This has led to arguments and I have sent out letters warning people to restrict their usage. In turn they have argued that they have paid a lot of money for plants which they wish to see thrive and they are prepared to pay extra to use the water.

#### Proposal

One idea that has been suggested is issuing a water permit to those who wish to use more water.

After careful consideration I would suggest that I advertise that permits will be available and make a charge for them of £30 per annum. This will allow an allotment holder to attach a hosepipe for up to one hour at a time, sufficient time to fill a water container or water a greenhouse, poly tunnel or large vegetable patch but will not allow hosepipes to be left on over night. The £30 charge will cover the cost of 12,000 litres of water and with most water tanks holding about 1,000 litres will enable them to be filled on a regular basis.

I am aware that the new system will be difficult to police and may encourage some people to use even more water but I believe it is the fairest way to try and tackle the problem. Turning off the water supply completely is unfair on everyone and only turning it on at certain times is not fair on those who can only visit at certain times of the day/week.

#### Recommendation

Information about the water permit scheme goes out with the rental letter in September with the aim of bringing in the permits in spring 2026. The cost of a permit will be £30 a year.'

Members were not in favour of permits which they felt would be difficult to police and could lead to some allotment holders using even more water. They suggested either putting up the allotment rents or encouraging people to bring water from home by shutting off the water supply for periods of time. It was suggested allotment holders should be encouraged to get water containers and harvest rainwater (a practice the Clerk assured them was already encouraged). It was also suggested giving allotment holders warning that the water would be turned off for a certain period of time, giving them time to fill up containers and then water using watering cans.

### **79) Planning**

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered four further applications. It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Will only support if fencing is of industrial grade, 2 metres high and set into ground and there is a double gate system at the entrance to each fields. These conditions should be imposed on safety grounds due to the fields' close proximity to the A142.

- c) Support
- d) Noted
- e) Support
- f) Noted (Cllr Fuller-Gray declared an interest)
- g) Support
- h) Recommend Refusal & strongly object to the proposal. This development is not popular and it is believed there are no section 106 agreements which will benefit the town (despite the fact that the land was sold by FDC for a profit). Affordable housing, which is badly needed for the young people of the town, was to be the only benefit for the community from this development and the proposal is now to remove that one element. The Town Council disputes the viability report and believes this FDC application should be determined by another authority, such as the County Council.
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support

Street Naming: The Clerk had been advised by the FDC officer responsible for street naming that the Town Council's suggestions for the development on land west and south of 74 West Street needed an amendment. The emergency services were not happy with the word The in front of Lilies. It was, therefore, agreed that the main road should be called Lilies Avenue. The officer also queried Binder Way and said it would be necessary to get the permission of any living relative. Members were keen to go with that name and the Clerk said she would seek permission from the gentleman's only close relative still living, his grandson. It was, therefore, **agreed** that the two street names should be: Lilies Avenue and Binder Way.

Councillors' views were also sought on names put forward by the developer of the houses on land south of 8-59 Fairbairn Way. The following had been suggested: Little Acre Way, Scouts Road and Cubs Lane. Members pointed out that there was already Little Acre Fen Drive leading to the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park, which were some distance from the development, so that would be confusing.

They suggested instead Foxes Way (for the main road), Badger Lane and Muntjac Close.

### **80) To Consider Alternative Suggestion for Local Government Re-Organisation**

Members were asked to consider a proposal put forward by two Labour MPs for Peterborough that under re-organisation Cambridgeshire should be split into three unitary authorities – Greater Peterborough, Greater Cambridge and Mid Cambridgeshire (Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and parts of Huntingdonshire).

Cllrs Carney, Hay and Murphy said Fenland would have to go in with Peterborough to achieve the desired numbers for the new councils. Other councillors argued that Fenland and Chatteris would be swallowed up by Peterborough and Mid Cambridgeshire would be fairer for the smaller councils including Chatteris.

It was suggested the councillors submit their own views on re-organisation.

### **81) VJ Day 80 Commemorations – Request to Light Beacon**

The Clerk had received a request from the Royal British Legion to light the beacon on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day on the 15<sup>th</sup> August. It had been pointed out that there were a number of servicemen from Chatteris whose war did not end until the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945.

The RBL was planning a two minutes silence at the war memorial at 12 noon, a service at the war memorial at 2pm followed by afternoon tea in the Bricstan Hall.

The Clerk was concerned that sparks from lighting the beacon would cause damage to the floral display below the beacon which was now at its best. In addition to the danger of setting the dry plants and dry bark on fire, it was inevitable that the plants would be damaged by those extinguishing the sparks and small pieces of burning wood which fell from the beacon. There had been no national call for beacons to be lit and it was, therefore, agreed that the beacon should not be lit.

The Clerk said she was still trying to get a replacement for the interpretation board below the beacon which had been set on fire on a previous occasion. The sign was beyond repair and it was accepted it needed to be replaced but she was struggling to find the design for the original board so it could be reproduced. It was suggested the Clerk consult Mr Phil Hughes at FDC.

### **82) Traffic Issues**

Forty Foot Bank Road: Cllr Divine had kindly passed on correspondence he had received regarding the Forty Foot Bank road after he asked about the safety of the road following three fatalities. The County officer had pointed out the fatalities were either a deliberate act or due to poor driving. The officer pointed out the road was subject to average speed cameras and was a soil affected road, hence the dips and movement but was subject to an enhanced monthly safety inspection. Major resurfacing works were planned for 2025. The letter also said it was not possible to install barriers along the river as they would collapse if hit by a vehicle.

King Edwards Road: Cllr Divine had received a complaint about vehicles driving the wrong way down King Edwards Road and exiting on to the High Street. Highways had agreed to refresh the lining at the junction. Councillors were surprised there was a problem.

Highways Issues: An overgrown tree on New Road had been reported and the owner asked to cut it back; uneven paving in East Park Street had been reported and was being investigated; a request to plant a laurel hedge on Highways land opposite 1 Clare Street (to reduce the noise from the bypass) was likely to be refused and those complaining about lorries using Victoria Street had been advised to report problems online. Graffiti on the underpass had been cleaned.

Traffic Orders: There had been notification that the works to Mepal Bridge were complete. A temporary traffic order had been granted to stop vehicles progressing along Rosemary Lane during working hours to facilitate telecommunications works scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August. There had also been an application for a temporary traffic order to allow for carriageway resurfacing works in High Street, Railway Lane, Furrowfields Road, Ash Grove and Bridge Street in September.

New System: Members had received correspondence about a new highways asset management system being introduced.

Roadworks: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received, along with the TMC report for July and the Highways events diary for July.

### **83) Correspondence**

Members had a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**). Cllr Selman queried why Safety Zone events were held at Wisbech, March and Whittlesey fire stations but not Chatteris. Cllr Carney explained that the events were organised by the Fenland Safety Partnership and he believed the Chatteris fire station was not large enough to hold an event but he assured councillors that Year 6 children had been bussed in from all over the district and thoroughly enjoyed the fun sessions.

### **84) Reports**

Cllr Unwin reported that the judging day for In Bloom had gone well and the results would be announced on the 4<sup>th</sup> September.

### **85) Items for the Next Agenda**

Cllr Carney gave apologies for the next meeting.

