

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes 2nd December 2025

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 2nd December 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, V Joyce, P Murphy and S Unwin.

154) Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr M Siggee. Cllr C Marks (FDC councillor) also sent his apologies.

155) 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 Unwin declared an interest in In Bloom and Festival; Cllr Selman in Festival, the WI and the Community Car Scheme; Cllr Joyce in the KEC; Cllr Hay in the Museum, the KEC and the Combined Authority; Cllr Murphy in the museum, KEC and planning, Cllr Carney in FLAPP and Cllr Fuller-Gray in Festival.

156) Open Forum

One member of the Chatteris Allotments Association was welcomed to the meeting. She began by thanking the Clerk and other members of the Allotments Association for their help with the dip tank project. She said costs had been sought and received to carry out the replacement works for the south side of the allotments and she was pleased that those costs could be covered by the rental surplus.

157) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

158) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 147) Citizens Advice: The Clerk said she had been approached by Citizens Advice asking if they could use another room at 14 Church Lane for a new community-focused project aimed at people who were experiencing, or at risk of, fuel poverty. CARC would offer free and impartial energy advice. The Clerk had offered the use of room 4 for the sessions which would run at the same time as the current advice drop-in sessions on

Wednesday mornings. It had been agreed the new service would begin on the 7th January.

Min 134) Local Government Reorganisation: There was confirmation that Cambridgeshire County Council would be supporting Option A in the local government reorganisation, Fenland District Council had called on the Government to halt the reorganisation process. They had also indicated that, if reorganisation went ahead, their preferred option was D - three unitary authorities comprising: Greater Peterborough (Peterborough and northern Huntingdonshire), Cambridgeshire Fens (Fenland, East Cambs and eastern and southern Huntingdonshire) and Greater Cambridge (Cambridge City and South Cambs).

Min 134) Lights: In response to Cllr Carney's request for a new light at Wenny Recreation Ground, FDC had stated they did not have the budget for an upgrade and asked if there would be an opportunity through CTC's precept. Cllr Carney said he would be raising the question when the budget was discussed (min 163). Cllr Selman said she had also been contacted about the light.

159) Police Matters

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

Local Police

No information had been received.

Neighbourhood Alert

10/11/25: Notification that one person was arrested for breaching a hare coursing notice.

21 & 28/11/25: Notification of community meetings at Chatteris library on the 28th November and the 13th December from 10am to 11am.

24/11/25: Notification about the launch of annual crime and community survey and an invitation to complete survey.

25/11/25: Notification that officers carried out speed checks along London Road in Chatteris. Fortunately no speeding was identified.

28/11/25: Message from Sgt Tom Nuttall, Constabulary lead for rural crime, promising that the police would protect rural communities and giving details of their commitment during the coursing season.

1/12/25: Warning not to buy an e-scooter as a Christmas present as it is illegal to use them on a road or in public spaces.

1/12/25: Invitation to have your say on the priorities for the neighbourhood team in the upcoming quarter (January to March 2026). There is an online event on the 23rd December from 7pm to 8.30pm.

The Mayor said she had seen no police officers on duty at the Christmas Lights switch on and she asked the Clerk to enquire if they had been present.

160) FDC & Street Scene Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene reports (**copy attached**). The Mayor had passed on complaints that a bin in Meeks Cemetery had not been emptied to the Street Scene officer at FDC.

161) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 23rd November 2025 showing expenditure of £190,845.35 and income of £247,395.98 (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.

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

162) Payment of Accounts

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

Payroll	Payroll December 25	7,068.84
Barclays	Debit Charges	18.94
British Gas	Elec Bill Church Lane	85.42
British Gas	Elec Bill Park Street	241.93
British Gas	Elec Bill Church Lane	103.67
British Gas	Gas Bill Church Lane	211.43
Anglia water	Water Bill Park Street	83.42
The Lock Shop	New cylinder & fitting Re: back door lock	136.00
KECCA	Remaining balance annual grant money CTC	5251.58
Cambs Acre	Annual Membership Renewal	72.00
S Gibb	Cleaner council offices 03,14 & 24/11 & 01/12	56.00
UK Tool Hire	Xmas Lights Cherry picker hire Inv. 366652-22/11	660.00
UK Tool Hire	Xmas L Cherry Picker hire Inv. 366148-15/11	456.00
R J Warren	Supply & install shrubs & gravel at 14 Church Lane	354.00

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Snowboy Systems	Snow machine hire Xmas Lights switch on	1,152.00
R J Warren	Gardening services	772.03
R J Warren	Clearing allotment	24.00
PC Ok	Supply & install new pc for Clerk's office	673.00
Clerk	Reim. Various	95.18
RFO	Reim. Petty cash	87.09
RFO	Reim. Xmas party sundries	275.35
T Payne	Management Fee Flat 14B Dec 25	72.00
T Payne	Management Fee Flat 14A Dec 25	72.00
Total		18,021.88

163) Draft Precept & Budget 26/27

The Financial Officer presented Members with a proposed draft precept budgetary control sheet for their consideration, comments, and approval.

Members were advised that the draft budget proposed an increase of £20,000 to the precept, making the precept £209,500, an increase of 9.55%.

The impact this had on a band D household was an increase of £ 4.80 per year (8.18%) based on the estimated tax base of 3570.

The annual precept for a Band D household was estimated at £58.68 - currently £53.88

The proposed budget was made up of reduced expenditure in some budgets and small increases in others.

The annual income from the rental of the two flats at 14 Church Lane, the rental of two community rooms used by the NHS at Church Lane and the rental of the 1st floor at 2 Park Street allowed the budget to reflect many benefits to the residents of Chatteris without significantly impacting the household precept.

The difference in the budget to the precept amount was £4,830. This would come from the general fund without taking it below the required level.

Members were advised that there was one new expenditure budget as listed below:

(1) Financial Statement

Members were reminded that as per SLCC advice, they needed to consider projects which might require funding in the next financial year to ensure sufficient provision was included in the Precept budget. Under the Local Government financial regulations any new project to be included in the Precept budget normally required a written report.

(2) New Budgets

New budget proposed for the new financial year- The Friday Fact Bus service around Chatteris. Members were reminded that there were only enough funds in the current pot to keep this service running until July 2026. It was a popular service used by many residents.

Councillors had agreed to include a new budget for this service at the November full council meeting. It cost £200 to run the service each week. It was agreed a budget of £10,000 would be sufficient to keep the weekly service running for the new financial year.

Cllr Carney asked if officers could look into costs of putting up a light at the cut through to Wenny Recreation Ground. The Mayor supported the request pointing out it was a very dark route for children making their way home from school following an after school clubs.

It was proposed that solar lights would probably be the most cost effective, Cllr Hay advised that solar lights would meet the criteria of Red Tile and the Council could apply to Red Tile for a grant.

The Financial officer advised that she would look into this and update members at the January full council meeting.

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

164) To Consider Quotations for Tree Works & Decide on Contractor

Councillors had received the following report from the Clerk:

‘Background

In October 2024 a tree survey and risk assessment of all the trees on Town Council-owned land was carried out by Eden Tree Specialists.

The report recommended urgent work to four trees and this work was carried out last winter.

It also recommended that works should be carried out within a year to several other trees, mainly Willows, which required re-pollarding. It was necessary to carry out all the works outlined in the report to satisfy the Council’s insurers.

Quotations

The Clerk had received two quotations to carry out the necessary works, as follows:

Company A - £2,170 plus VAT

Company B - £3,500 plus VAT

Recommendation

The Clerk recommended accepting the quotation from Company A.

Members agreed and **resolved to accept the quotation from Company A** at a cost of £2,170 plus VAT.

165) To Consider Quotations for Works at the Allotments

Members had received the following report from the Clerk:

“Background

Members will recall that at the October Town Council meeting the problem of allotment holders using excessive amounts of water was discussed.

The Allotments Association had discussed ways to cut down on water usage on many occasions and at their last meeting members had put forward suggestions which they asked councillors to consider, as follows:

- 1) Install dip tank troughs (initially plastic was suggested and this was later changed to galvanised tanks) with ballcock units which would allow gardeners to fill up their watering cans but hosepipes could not be attached.
- 2) For those less able (blue badge holders) plastic water containers with taps to be issued and these would be positioned on their allotments. A few taps would also be retained but these would be covered by lockable caps with padlocks. These would be used to fill up the water butts once or twice a month.
- 3) All allotment holders to be encouraged to collect rainwater in water butts on their plots and to install guttering where possible.

Costings

The Clerk was asked to look into the costs of the scheme and has carefully done so. The cost of installation of the troughs scheme is a major factor and when the Clerk began to look at costs it became apparent that there were insufficient funds to pay for the scheme to be installed on both the south and north sides at this moment in time. It was decided to initially concentrate on the south side (where water usage was slightly higher). Allotment holders said the number of dip tanks needed was 7 on each side.

Exploratory works were carried out to locate the position and depth of the pipework feeding the existing taps (3 feet down) and it was agreed this would need to be extended the length of the roadway. It would then be necessary to tap into that pipework at regular intervals to enable the installation of new pipes to the dip tanks.

The cost of supplying the 7 dip tanks on the south side is £1,165.29 plus VAT.

Two companies have quoted to install the pipework and bases for the dip tanks.

Company A quoted £2,640 to install the pipework and stone bases. There would then be the additional cost of plumbing in the dip tanks and installing isolating valves estimated at £450.

Company B quoted £2,300 to install the pipework and shingle bases, connect up the dip tanks and floats and install the isolating valves.

Four tap locks would also have to be purchased at an estimated cost of £47.96 and an unknown number of water butts (for blue badge holders) at a cost of £38 each.

Budget

There has been a surplus of income over expenditure for the allotments in the past three years and under the rules this money should be invested back into the allotments. The total income over expenditure for the three years was £3,878 and it is anticipated that there will be another surplus in the current year, although repairs to the roadway on the north side are urgently required and the cost will be £350 plus VAT. The Clerk is also paying the Council's contractors to take away the rubbish removed by Community Payback as they clean up vacant allotments.

Members views are sought.”

The Financial Officer said she was unsure how much water the save in the long run. She appreciated the work which had gone into designing the scheme but said it was a considerable sum to spend without knowing the savings.

Cllr Selman suggested Anglian Water's Thriving Communities Fund could possibly help to fund the works. If they could match fund the cost of the works it would be less onerous on the Town Council's budget. Anglian Water were looking at schemes costing £10,000 and above. The Clerk said FLAPP were also looking at the fund to finance a water supply at the Pocket Park and it was suggested putting in a joint bid, to include both sides of the allotments.

It was **agreed** to look into the possibility of the Anglian Water fund financing the works and if this was not possible the scheme would be revisited.

The Clerk said she had also received a quote to carry out essential repairs to the north side roadway at the allotments. The cost was £350 plus VAT and members **agreed** this should go ahead.

166) Planning

Cllr Joyce (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2025 (**copy attached**).

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

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

- a) Recommend Refusal and strongly object to the proposal. There are no section 106 agreements which will benefit the town, despite the fact that the land was sold by FDC for a profit. The town will gain nothing from this development. Affordable housing, which is badly needed for the young people of the town was to be the only benefit for the community and the proposal is now to remove that element. The Town Council continues to dispute the viability report and notes that it appears that FDC keeps on getting viability reports until it gets the answer it wants. The Council

believes this FDC application should be determined by another authority, such as the County Council, as there is clearly a conflict of interest.

- b) Support
- c) Recommend Refusal, loss of residential amenity, height and windows have created privacy and overshadowing issues for existing dwellings. Dwelling constructed has an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- d) Support (Cllr Unwin declared an interest)
- e) Support

167) To Agree Response to Latest Reservoir Consultation

Members considered the responses to the third phase of consultations on the proposed reservoir put forward by the Planning Working Group.

The comments were ratified and it was **agreed** the Clerk should submit them on-line ahead of the deadline of the 10th December.

Members had also received the following report of a meeting between parishes to discuss Reservoir Project, held on 18th November at KEC.

Present: Cllrs Linda Ashley (Mayor), Sharon Selman (Deputy Mayor), Vic Joyce and Clerk Joanna Melton from CTC; Clerk Alan Melton from Manea Parish Council; Cllr Ruth Hufton Chair of Doddington Parish Council.

Mr Melton pointed out all the towns and parishes in Fenland had been let down by FDC in the past 10 years as they had failed to secure Section 106 funding from developers. Fenland was the only authority in the region that did not secure Section 106 or Cil funding.

Mr Melton said the Reservoir should attract Section 106 funding and suggested the parishes get in first and write a joint letter to Anglian Water and the Government stating that Section 106 funding was expected for local community projects.

Mrs Melton asked if every parish/town affected by the scheme (Chatteris, Manea, Doddington, Wimblington, Christchurch and Benwick) should put forward their wish list of community projects but it was agreed this was not required. It was agreed that the letter should simply refer to community projects and put forward general examples such as community buildings and recreation grounds. The letter would also point out the area would be suffering 10 years of disruption while the reservoir was constructed and it was parishes to the south of the county that would benefit most from the additional water supply.

It was agreed Mr Melton should write the letter, which would then be circulated to the affected parishes and Chatteris for approval. A deadline would be set for replies and it would be stated that if no replies had been received the assumption would be that there were no objections to the letter.

Members **agreed the letter should be sent.**

Cllr Joyce said he had never seen any section 106 funding or benefits paid developer, even if they were included in planning approvals they were always cut out later. Cllr Carney said

when he emailed the portfolio holder for planning, Cllr Dee Laws, about section 106 funding he was assured that FDC was doing everything it could to sort the problem. He pointed out Fenland was an island as every other district attracted Section 106 funding. Developers pleaded poverty in Fenland but it was known that was not correct. He suggested contacting the head of planning and the portfolio holder but the Clerk pointed out this had been tried on several occasions in the past. Cllr Carney said South Cambs, East Cambs, Hunts and Peterborough did not allow developers to lay a brick before the infrastructure was in place. In Chatteris community facilities had to be provided by the Town Council. He suggested the towns and parishes needed to get together to write a joint letter demanding action.

Cllr Unwin suggested talking directly with the developers and said growth needed to be supported by infrastructure.

168) LHI Schemes

The Clerk had attended a meeting regarding the delivery of an LHI scheme for warning signs on the A141 near the New Road/Manea Road junctions. She had been told it was expected a draft design would be drawn up, for Council comments, by March/April 2026.

The Clerk said she would apply for an LHI for the footpath along London Road but warned it would be a complex application which would require a greater financial contribution from the Town Council.

She had received a request for a zebra crossing in London Road, following an accident involving a school pupil, but Councillors pointed out there were already build outs in the road which allowed safe crossing of the road.

169) Traffic Issues

Capitally Funded Schemes: The Council had been invited to submit schemes for the County Council's Capitally Funded Highway Maintenance project for 2025/26.

It was agreed to apply for the footpaths along London Road and the A142 from the Training Centre to the existing footpath outside Stainless Metalcraft. The Clerk reported the Council had received notification that although the Forty Foot Bank Road was "significantly uneven" it would not be carrying out trials to investigate ways to repair soil affected roads until summer 2026 having secured £1.5m of external funding. It was agreed this was unacceptable. The Mayor said the former High Sherrif had stated he had never seen the road in such poor repair and suggested heavy traffic should be banned from using the road. The Clerk said she would also apply for repairs to the road pointing out the County Council was playing Russian Roulette with people's lives as one mistake and cars either ended up in a river or plunging down a steep slope to a water-filled dyke.

Interestingly the invitation to apply for schemes was accompanied by a report which stated that £58m had been spent on highways maintenance in 2024/25.

Cllr Divine: Cllr Daniel Divine had updated the Clerk on local highways problems. He said nothing could be done to stop buses using Victoria Street and the only solution for parking problems at Glebelands School was double yellow lines but if they were not policed it was even more frustrating and costly.

20mph: The Clerk had received further correspondence from a resident of Cricketers Way, complaining about the Council's refusal to apply for 20mph speed limits in the town. Councillors again pointed out cars did not stick to the limit and asked who would police the road.

Parking on paths: Councillors had also received a complaint from a resident about motorists parking on the path outside the museum and the Salvation Army building. Although not a Town Council matter, it was pointed out those parking were working in the buildings and were not obstructing the footpaths. The areas were also cobbled so they could take the weight of the cars.

TTROs: Notification had been received of plans to shut part of the Forty Foot Bank road on the 10th December to carry out emergency carriageway repairs and surface treatment works were due to be carried out in Birch Close and Birch Avenue on the 17th and 18th December.

Roadworks: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received, along with notification that there were now Facebook and Instagram accounts giving out information. The Highways events diary for December had also been received.

170) Correspondence

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

Adult Cycle Training: Members suggested the only place training could take place was Furrowfields car park.

Exploring Perspectives: Councillors who had attended the workshop that day had found it extremely interesting. A number of stakeholders had been present and had discussed the future of the Fens and how the views expressed could impact the survey being undertaken by the researcher.

171) Reports

In Bloom: Cllr Unwin reported that Chatteris In Bloom had been nominated to represent the region in the Britian In Bloom competition in 2026 having once again won gold in Anglia in Bloom. They had also received an RHS award for the Old Auction Yard display. Cllr Unwin said in 2026 In Bloom would link with the Festival theme of Around the World in 80 Days and had a number of innovative ideas

Remembrance: Cllrs Ashley, Carney and Selman had all attended the Remembrance Service at Cromwell Community College and had been impressed by the students.

Fens Reservoir Community Liaison: Councillors had received a copy of a written report by Cllr Selman on the Community Liaison Group meeting she and Cllrs Ashley and Hay had attended on the 20th November.

172) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward.

Exclusion of public and press. Under the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 (2) it was **resolved** that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the **confidential nature of the business about to be transacted**. The following item was considered **In Committee**:

173) CCTV Cameras Funding