

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 194) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Jones, M Siggee and S Unwin. Cllrs D Divine (County Councillor) and C Marks (District Councillor) also sent their apologies.

### 195) 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 Festival, the WI and the Community Car Scheme; Cllr Hay in the Museum, the KEC and Red Tile Wind Farm; Cllr Murphy in planning, the KEC and the Museum, Cllr Carney in FLAPP, Cllr Joyce in the KEC and Cllr Fuller-Gray in Festival.

### 196) Open Forum

Two members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and expressed a wish to speak.

The first said the town suffered terribly from cars rushing around making popping and banging noises. He claimed as a result of the noises one of his horses had been killed, two injured and his daughter had been injured. One horse had been impaled on a fence after being spooked. He called on the Council to take action.

He claimed the cars were being converted at two garages in town, one in London Road and the other off Prospect Way. He said the owners of the garages did not care about the town or the problems they were causing. He said his daughter had ended up in hospital after being kicked by a horse and when he had tackled one of the garage owners he did not want to know. As a result, he had reported the matter to the police, whom, he claimed, had received a lot of complaints about anti-social driving in the town centre.

The resident called on the Council to work with the police to try and resolve the problem. He claimed one of the owners had a converted car which “flew down London Road like a bat out of hell”. There had already been crashes. The resident said it was middle-aged people as well as young men who were having their cars converted.

The Mayor assured the resident that the Council was in contact with the police and would discuss the issue with them.

Mr Robert Windle of Radio Fenland also wished to speak. He said the radio was still going strong and asked anyone with a story they wished to share to get in touch. He also spoke about a scheme which had run in Whittlesey where local schoolchildren were invited to send a letter to Santa. These were read out on Radio Fenland and every child received a Christmas card from Santa. Mr Windle said it would be good to extend the scheme to other towns, especially if the cost of the cards could be covered by sponsorship. Mr Windle then gave out leaflets with a QR code which took users to a flip book giving details of all events going on in Whittlesey. His final mention was a tournament planned for the 16<sup>th</sup> August. It's a Fenland Knockout was inviting teams from around the Fens to compete in a competition to be held at Whittlesey.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

Min 178) Lights at Wenny Recreation Ground: Cllr Carney said the request had gone to FDC for funding for lights at Wenny Recreation Ground and Furrowfields but the reply had come back that at present Chatteris had no section 106 funding. The Clerk said she had spoken to an officer, who had confirmed that there was a £1.5m Pride in Place Fund. He had sent a link to an FDC cabinet report which showed one of the objectives of the fund was enhancement of public spaces. She argued that the lighting would enhance the play areas so met the objective. The officer said FDC members had to push for the funding with officers facilitating. Cllr Carney agreed to push the idea forward as it had been one of his constituents who had made the initial request. The Mayor pointed out that children used the footpaths at Wenny and Furrowfields Recreation Grounds as safer routes to school but were prevented from doing so when it was dark as the footpaths were unlit.

### **198) 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 Alerts**

8/1/26: Appeal for witnesses and dashcam footage after serious collision on the Isle of Ely Way near Doddington.

12/1/26: Notification that trucks and 4x4s had been stolen in Fenland and advice on how to protect vehicles.

17/1/26: Call for the public to report drug dealing concerns and information on signs of drug dealing.

26/1/26: Notification that multiple tickets for parking offences had been issued after patrols in Chatteris and Whittlesey.

27/1/26: Notification of policing priorities in Fenland as follows: i) Tackling vehicle-related anti-social behaviour and traffic offences; ii) Proactive targeting of known drug-dealing and drug use hotspots; iii) Providing a visible policing presence in town centres and other public spaces to offer community reassurance and address safety concerns.

31/1/26: Date of next police community meeting in Chatteris, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February from 2pm to 3pm in Chatteris Library.

2/2/26: Latest news from the courts affecting Fenland.

The Mayor reminded members that Sgt Moulton would be attending the next Council meeting.

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

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene reports (**copy attached**). The Mayor reported big dogs were going into the cemetery between 6 and 6.30 in the evening, as well as in the mornings.

### **200) Financial Officer's Report**

#### **(1) Budgetary Control Statement**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 showing expenditure of £222,379.50 and income of £254,468.94 (includes a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

#### **(2) Financial Services Compensation Scheme -Deposit Protection Limit Increase**

Members were advised that from the beginning of December 2025 the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) had confirmed that UK bank customers would benefit from an increase to the maximum amount they would be reimbursed if their bank was to fail.

The FSCS deposit protection limit had increased to £120,000 of a depositor's money should their bank, building society or credit union fail.

This increased the limit from £85,000 which was set in 2017. It was also more than the previous PRA proposal of £110,000. It had been changed in the light of consultation feedback and to reflect the latest inflation data.

The Financial Officer advised Members that this increased limit was something that would be considered when the Nationwide investment of £85,000 was due for renewal in June.

#### **(3) Cambridgeshire Pension Fund**

Members were advised that as from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 the Employers Contribution rates for the Cambridgeshire Pension fund would be 17.8%. This was a reduction of 3.7% from the current rate of 21.5%. This rate was set for 3 years and would be reviewed in January 2029.

**(4) Village Scene Advertisement**

Members were advised that the Fenland Village Scene diary dates advert subscription was up for renewal in February. The Financial Officer advised that the renewal cost was £887, an increase of £200 due to the adverts being in colour with no black and white option.

Members were advised that the Civic budget of £700 would pay for most of the cost and the remaining £187 could come out of the admin budget, as this was used for memberships and licenses as well as stationery and administration costs.

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

**201) Information about the Effect of Final Council Taxbase Figure on Precept**

The Financial Officer advised Members that since the full Council meeting held in January, she had received an email from the Chief Accountant at FDC confirming the 2026/27 final figure for the Band D Council taxbase.

The new amount was 3593, this was an increase of 23 from the estimated amount of 3570 stated in the Final Budget report in January 26.

The increase in the Band D taxbase had helped to keep the increase cost to a Band D household down to 7.58% instead of the expected 8.18%.

The overall Band D effect compared to the last year's Precept was an additional £4.42, instead of the expected £4.80 making the total annual cost of £58.30 for a Band D property.

Members were reminded that the funding of the 2026/27 budget was as follows: -

	£
Proposed Budget	214,130
From Balances (includes rounding)	- 4,630
<b>Net Precept 2026/27</b>	<b>209,500</b>

The new approved Precept of £209,500 was an increase of £20,000 from the 2025/26 Precept. The increase had been kept to a minimum by transferring funds from the general fund.

Also, the rental income for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of 2 Park Street and rental income from the two flats and two ground floor offices at 14 Church Lane, had made it possible for the Council to provide and fund more services for the residents of Chatteris without impacting heavily on the Council Tax.

An increase of £20,000 to the Precept meant that the uncommitted general fund balances on a full budget spend would still be considered adequate to carry forward into the next financial year.

The budget was made up of many services for the Chatteris Community which were funded by the Town Council including a new budget of £10,000 for the FACT round robin bus service through Chatteris.

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

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	Net Precept	Tax Base	Band D Effect
2026/27	£209,500	3593	£58.30

The comparison of Nett precept (i.e., the figure recovered through council tax) was as follows: -

Financial Year	Net Precept	%	Tax Base	Band D Effect	% Band D Effect Per Annum
2026/27	209,500	9.55% Inc	3,593	58.30	7.58% Inc
2025/26	189,500		3,517	53.88	
	<b>20,000</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>4.42 Inc</b>	

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

## 202) Payment of Accounts

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

Payroll	Payroll February 26	6,854.60
Barclays	Debit Charges	8.50
RFO	Reim. Petty Cash	145.93
Bgas	Gas Bill, 14 Church Lane	354.84
Bgas	Electricity Bill, 2 Park Street	335.49
S Gibb	CTC Office Clean-22/12-15/01/26-29/01/26	42.00
Youth of Fenland	Well Being café Refreshments	199.01

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Youth of Fenland	Well Being café Jan-Mar	1,807.00
FDC	Trade waste collection	94.50
FDC	Afternoon Tea, Chairman's Charity fund raising event	40.00
Chatteris Community Car Scheme	Xmas Party transport	100.00
Rural Cambs CAB	Q3 Face to face service	1,650.00
UK Tool Hire	Inv. 371556 Xmas lights, 17/01/26 cherry picker	660.00
UK Tool Hire	Inv. 371112 Xmas lights, 10/01/26 cherry picker	456.00
RJ Warren	Inv. 14831 Gardening services January	772.03
Macmillan Cancer Support	Mayors Charity Coffee Morning Funds Raised	467.65
Wave	Water Rates Allotments RHS	260.67
Wave	Water Rates Allotments LHS	517.98
Bgas	Gas Bill Church Lane	329.52
Bgas	Elec Bill Church Lane	73.56
Cllr Selman	Xmas Cards Re: Xmas party	10.00
Wave	Water rates Church Lane	84.53
RJ Warren	Inv. 14830 Signpost install & supply Railway Line	540.00
Mayday	Printing & Connectivity Re photocopier	53.25
Zen Internet	Jan-Feb website	13.79
Onecom	Inv. 7745797 15/01/26	134.51
T Payne	Management Fee Flat 14B Feb 26 Inv. 16143	72.00

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T Payne	Management Fee Flat 14A Feb 26 Inv. 16120	72.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>16,149.36</b>

### **203) Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received two grant applications which would be deferred to the full council meeting in March as she was in the process of gathering more information.

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

### **204) Youth Service Provision Ideas**

Members had received a copy of the following report from the Clerk of a meeting she and the Mayor had attended with Ms Debbie King and Lydia from Youths of Fenland CIC:

#### **Senior Youth Service Provision & Budget**

Debbie confirmed Well Being Café was very popular with around 100 youths popping by every Wednesday after school to pick up a cup of hot chocolate and chat to the youth workers. Most of the visitors were from Cromwell Community College but a few were younger and with their families.

The costs of running the Well Being Café sessions for senior youths in 26/27 was above the agreed budget of £5,500 but the Financial Officer had advised that there would be underspend in Junior Youth Service budget for 25/26 so money from that budget could be used to purchase food and drink items for the café, as long as items were purchased before the end of the financial year. This would bring down the cost of the sessions in 26/27 and allow more sessions to take place.

It was agreed that Debbie and Lydia would purchase tins of hot chocolate and marshmallows from Bookers and Joanna would purchase disposable cups from Amazon.

Debbie and Lydia were also advised to approach Tesco's for contributions of perishable items needed such as milk and biscuits.

#### **Junior Youth Service Provision**

It had not been possible to run the junior youth club (for 7-11 year olds) because there were issues with finding enough staff and the numbers of those attending was very low.

Linda pointed out the children's centre was not the best location, and this was agreed as it was too far out and too small. Linda also pointed out there were already a number of activities for children on Wednesday afternoons/evenings. Debbie explained they did not have availability on other evenings and she did not believe there was sufficient demand for a junior club to make it viable.

#### **Alternative Provision**

Debbie and Lydia explained that they had been undertaking detached youth work with outreach sessions at the skatepark at Wenny Recreation Ground. This had been funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner but that funding was coming to an end.

The sessions had been very helpful and the youth workers had met with groups of 16 to 20 youngsters of all different ages. They had taken along footballs and football goals and chatted to the young people while they played. They had called the sessions Kick and Chips as they had also supplied chips, which were shared out at the end.

Debbie and Lydia were keen to resume the sessions when the light evenings started as they had been able to engage with young people who did not usually engage with other services and were in danger of anti-social behaviour. The sessions had run once a fortnight and had continued during the summer holidays.

Joanna and Linda asked for the costs of running the sessions so they could seek the Town Council's approval to fund the sessions in place of the junior youth club.

Debbie also asked if there could be an extension to the run-off at the skatepark, as requested by the youngsters, and if the graffiti could be removed. Joanna and Linda agreed to pass the requests to Fenland and said the Town Council had a small sum of money to spend on the skatepark which had been raised by youngsters in the past. They also stated they were battling to get lights installed near the skatepark.'

The cost of running the outreach sessions had been received and each session would cost £87.75. The Financial Officer said there were sufficient funds to run 34 sessions in a year. She also said the Council would be purchasing the hot chocolate, marshmallows and paper cups and this would enable the Well Being Café to deliver 35 sessions instead of the 30 which were covered by the budget.

Members **agreed** to fund the outreach sessions instead of the junior youth club. It was hoped these sessions would begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and run every week, including the school holidays, until the dark nights began.

## 205) Planning

Cllr Joyce (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (**copy attached**).

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

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

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Withdrawn
- d) Request a report from the Tree Officer. If he is in agreement the Town Council will support the application but there should be two replacement trees, not the one

proposed. The Conservation Officer's comments are difficult to understand as they refer to Wisbech.

- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Noted
- i) Having seen the other comments, the Town Council now recommends refusal on the grounds of over-development of the site, impact on neighbouring property and concerns over access.
- j) Support
- k) Support

## **206) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Cllr Fuller-Gray (Vice-Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (**copy attached**).

L28) Nature Recovery: The Clerk confirmed she and Cllr Unwin had attended the meeting and the slides were available if anyone wished to see them.

L29) Pocket Park: The directional sign at the end of the Old Railway Line footpath had been replaced.

L30) Reading Workshops: Ms Katherine Nightingale had confirmed she had organised a reading workshop at the Midsummer Festival in the past and had agreed to look at the idea again if an application for Lottery Funding for the Festival was successful.

L33) Open Spaces: It had been reported that the In Bloom team had met with Ms Gemma Newell from FDC and it had been a fruitful meeting. It was hoped Cllr Unwin would give a full update at the next Leisure meeting.

L33) Grot Spots: Cllr Murphy said the 'grot spots' mentioned by Cllr Unwin were nothing to do with the Town Council or FDC as they were all in private ownership. He said the owner of Mrs Wools shop would love to take it down but every time he had applied to carry out some work, conservation officers had prevented him because he was supposed to preserve a door and a cupboard. Cllr Murphy said the owner would not do anything until conservation agreed to his wishes. Cllr Carney said the building was too far gone to be refurbished but conservation had wanted the roof replaced even though the existing brickwork was not strong enough to take a new roof!

## **207) Public Toilets Update**

The Clerk had passed on a complaint from a member of the public about the disgusting state of the only open public toilet in Chatteris. The FDC officer had responded with photographs and a note that the toilet had toilet paper in it and apparently smelt of cleaning fluids when it was inspected. However, the photograph, which was passed around the room, showed a toilet

which most councillors agreed they would not wish to use, with ground in dirt, a missing toilet seat and a rusty grab rail.

The officer did admit that the toilet needed a deep clean, but said he was awaiting resources. A toilet seat had been ordered. He also said no capital budget had been set aside for the renewal or improvement of the Fenland toilet facilities. Portfolio holders at FDC had requested a condition report for all the Fenland facilities, including the cost of replacement door mechanisms, and this was being undertaken.

The Clerk argued that the toilet needed updating as a matter of urgency along with the re-opening of the other toilets and a deep clean was a priority.

Members agreed the toilet was unhygienic and should be replaced. The Mayor said the Chairman of FDC had tried to use the public toilets on Remembrance Sunday but none were open. She pointed out the town tried to promote tourism but didn't even have proper public toilets. Other towns looked after their toilets but in Chatteris all but one was closed and that was in a terrible state.

Cllr Murphy pointed out that the public did not respect the toilets but if they were properly maintained they could be acceptable. FDC had not kept up with repairs.

It was agreed to keep pursuing the deep clean of the disabled toilet and the re-opening of the other public toilets.

## 208) Traffic Issues

Crossing: The Clerk had been approached by two residents calling for a zebra crossing over London Road on safety grounds. One resident had also written to MP Mr Steve Barclay, who had asked for an assessment of the points raised. The Clerk had explained the LHI scheme – one opportunity, once a year – and had pointed out it would be almost a year before the Council could apply again for LHI funding. She had suggested to the resident that, in the meantime, she could gather evidence that there was a demand for a crossing. The Mayor agreed a crossing was needed as there was now a large number of children crossing the busy road to access Wood Street and the back entrance to the Cromwell Community College site. She also pointed out significant building work was taking place in that part of town which would lead to even more children crossing London Road and they needed a safe route to school. The Mayor suggested asking County Highways to approach the developers and seek a contribution towards the cost of a crossing near the Wood Street junction. This was **agreed**.

Crossing 2: The Clerk apologised to members as she said she had unwittingly misled them at the previous meeting when she reported that the proposed crossing over the A141 near Slade End roundabout would not be controlled by lights. She was pleased to report that the Toucan crossing would be controlled by lights. Cllr Divine had been approached about a safer crossing at the Slade End roundabout and had informed the resident that the County Council was looking at ideas.

Dock Road/Prospect Way: Further to a meeting held with a highways officer and Cllr Divine in the autumn, the Clerk said plans had now been received to improve the footpath along Dock Road and Prospect Way. Unfortunately, the plans did not appear to show any lighting for the area. They did show the pathway would narrow the road on the corner and the Clerk and Cllr Divine had suggested Highways should approach businesses in the area to see if the proposal would lead to any problems.

LHI: The Clerk confirmed she had submitted the LHI application for the footpath along London Road.

TROs: Official orders to impose a temporary 40mph speed limit along Fenland Way, from the 1<sup>st</sup> February to the 31<sup>st</sup> July (at the latest), had already come into force, as had a temporary order to close part of Huntingdon Road (necessitated by a burst water main). The works were carried out between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and notification of the order came through on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. A temporary traffic order to prohibit traffic on Blackmill Road was due to come into force the following day.

20mph: The Council had been informed that the 2026/27 20mph funding programme was open for applications. Councillors firmly rejected the idea.

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

## 209) Correspondence

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

Cllr Hay said she hoped to attend the George Clare Surgery PPG meeting the following day. A discussion took place on the new Patches booking system.

## 210) Reports

Cllr Carney said he and Cllr Marks had attended a drainage board meeting and the Environment Agency had given a report on the Ouse Washes. They were looking at using the reclaimed pits at Block Fen to retain water which would then be fed into the Bedford Rivers. There had been a claim that the water quality in the Old Bedford River was not good but this had been disputed by fishermen.

## 211) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

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**:

## 212) CCTV Cameras Funding

