

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

2683

1 of 13

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 24) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Hay, V Joyce and P Murphy.

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

Cllr Benney declared an interest in all planning matters. Cllr Unwin in In Bloom and Festival; Cllr Selman in Festival and the Community Car Scheme; Cllr Ashley in the KEC, Museum and Festival; Cllrs Jones and Siggee in the KEC; Cllr Carney in FLAPP; Cllr Fuller-Gray in Festival.

### 26) Open Forum

The Mayor welcomed Cllrs Daniel Divine and Charlie Marks to the meeting. Cllr Divine was the newly elected County Councillor for Chatteris. He said he had nothing to report at present as he had only been to a couple of meetings but he promised to keep the Council updated on anything of note and had already started to update the Clerk on highways issues. Cllr Marks, District Councillor for Chatteris, declined an invitation to talk at this point. The Mayor invited Cllr Marks to speak under item 17 (min 40).

### 27) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the annual meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 28) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 16) Christmas Lights: The Clerk had been in further correspondence with the Christmas Lights Committee's publicity co-ordinator and he had submitted a report to the Council which the Clerk read out. He said after months of planning, work had begun on the electrical system upgrade with two work weekends in May and further weekends planned in June, July, August and September. Thanks to media reports six new volunteers had come forward. The additional funding from the Town Council had allowed the committee to purchase all the

equipment needed for phase one of the project and he passed on the committee's deepest gratitude.

The co-ordinator also said that the lights display would begin to go up on the 11<sup>th</sup> October and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary switch on would be on the 29<sup>th</sup> November. A Christmas in July fundraising event was scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July, which it was hoped would be well supported, and the AGM would be on the 24<sup>th</sup> June.

The co-ordinator stated that support from Councillors would be welcomed.

## **29) Police Matters**

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

### Local Police:

The Mayor had been notified that PCs Chad Hall and Zoe Pell were the local officers for Chatteris and Manea and she had invited them along to Council meetings.

Sgt Chris Arnold had promised that there would be clear communication lines between councillors and the police, which was likely to include updates from one of the PCs, and Sgt Arnold stated he was only a phone call or email away.

He also gave details of a drugs warrant at Furrowfields which resulted in one individual being remanded and another released on bail. The offences they faced were possession with intent to supply class A and class B drugs and acquiring/using/possessing criminal property.

### Neighbourhood Alerts included:

9/5/25: Notification that three people were arrested when officers carried out drugs warrants in Chatteris. The first two were in Furrowfields (as above) and the second warrant was carried out in Railway Lane and a woman was arrested.

14, 19, 22 & 23/5/25: Information about a weapons amnesty which took place from the 19<sup>th</sup> May and the likely consequences (in terms of prison sentence) for someone caught carrying a knife.

16, 21 & 25/5/25: Information about the launch of a dementia safeguarding scheme which would see members of the public in Cambridgeshire living with dementia being offered a yellow wristband which contained their next of kin's contact name and number.

28/5/25: Notification that 98 weapons or knives were handed in during the amnesty.

29/5/25: Notification that a cannabis factory was found in New Road, Chatteris, and two people were arrested.

The Mayor said she believed the PCs would be coming to the August council meeting and she offered to pass on any reports or complaints from councillors to the police.

### 30) FDC & Street Scene Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene reports. They noted the Street Scene officer's comments about dumping of waste at Campole Drove and Horseway Drove.

### 31) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 showing expenditure of £51,058.17 and income of £115,905.45 (which 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.

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

### 32) Internal Auditor's Report

Members had before them the completed Internal Auditor's report for year ending 2024/25.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the auditor had no issues to report to the Council for that financial year and that all financial matters were dealt with effectively in accordance with the accounts and audit regulations 2015.

However, he did advise that the Council should not deplete the reserve balances any further by transferring funds into the general fund revenue account, other than any earmarked funds remaining from the Growing Fenland match funding.

Members were advised that there were approx. £17,880.00 match funding balances remaining.

Also, Members were advised that to mitigate future liabilities on both premises, it was recommended that a new premises reserve account should be opened and any surplus funds or part thereof, that were showing at the end of the year, should be transferred into this new reserve account.

Members agreed this was a good idea, however they advised that some of the income should remain in the revenue account to go towards keeping the Precept down, as this was set out in the original agreement for the Growing Fenland project.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the purpose of the Growing Fenland project was to not only help to keep the precept as low as possible, but also to offer Community rooms and to have additional funds to be used in the community without significant impact on the precept.

Members were advised that the Notice of Public Rights and publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return should be published during a period of 30 working days to include the first 10 working days of July.

The Financial Officer confirmed that the Notice would be published on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 25 and the unaudited accounts would be available for inspection by any person interested from 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025-21<sup>st</sup> July 2025.

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

### **33) Consideration & Approval of the Annual Governance Statement Part 1 (AGAR 2024/25)**

Members were reminded that the Annual Governance Statement set out the assurances that Members were required to attest to in Section 1 of the AGAR 2024/25, together with qualification of each section to enable the Council to provide the required assurance over the signatures of the Mayor and the Clerk.

This was considered and approved by Members in advance of the Accounting Statements (section 2 of the AGAR and minuted accordingly).

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

### **34) Accounting Statements & Annual Return (Part 2 AGAR 2023/24/25)**

#### [1] Introduction

Members were advised that the purpose of the report was to recommend approval of the Final Accounts for 2024/25 and to deal with the content of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, otherwise referred to as the AGAR, for the year to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 due to be submitted to the External Auditors (Littlejohn) and published on the Town Council's website by the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025.

#### [2] Type of Audit

The Financial Officer advised Members that the audit for 24/25 was a section 4 Intermediate Review. This type of review included additional documents to be completed and checked by the Internal and External Auditors.

The section 4 intermediate review was required because the total income and total expenditure for 2024/25 exceeded £200,000. This was due to the Growing Fenland Project. The Financial Officer advised that now that the Growing Fenland project had been completed the income/expenditure figures would reflect the type of audit required going forward.

#### [3] Annual Governance Statement

This set out the assurances that Members were required to attest to in Section 1 of the AGAR, together with qualification of each section to enable the Council to provide the required assurance over the signatures of the Mayor and the Clerk.

This was considered and approved (Min 33) in advance of the Accounting Statements.

[4] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2024/25)

Members were advised that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Financial Officer certified and signed the document in advance of the Council meeting. The Mayor signed the document after approval by Council at the said meeting as required (Min 034) The Accounting Statement was required to be approved after the approval of the Annual Governance Statement. The minute reference recorded for both reflected this accordingly.

[5] Statement of Accounts

Members had before them the detailed Statement of Accounts. The Financial Officer advised Members that the **Reserves & Holding Accounts** (as detailed in the statement of Reserves and funds) were showing a combined balance of £138,285.66, however, this included a balance of approx. £17,880 of earmarked funds for the Growing Fenland match funding which would be taken from the Leisure Facilities Reserve account. The internal auditor had advised that any holding accounts with nil or small balances should be closed.

Members had a copy of the year end bank reconciliation included in the statement of accounts.

[6] Internal Auditor's Report

The Internal Auditor's Report (See separately under min 32).

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

**34) Payment of Accounts**

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

Payroll	June Payroll	6,258.13
RJ Warren	Nov gardening Services	756.84
RJ Warren	Nov Little Acre gardening services	134.83
MEMO	Summer Festival Entertainment	1,980.00
Bricstan Band	Summer Festival Entertainment	200.00
Mark E Saunders	Internal Audit	350.00
Comic Book Entertainer	Summer Festival Entertainment 2nd Deposit	80.00

		<b>2688</b>
Barclays	Bank Charges	<b>6 of 13</b> 8.50
B Gas	Elec Bill Church Lane	47.25
B Gas	Elec Bill 2 Park Street	155.79
JT Chambers	KEC Mezzanine Floor	2,023.20
Onecom	Phone Bill Invoice date 16/05/25	134.51
Cambs County Council	LHI scheme Doddington Rd	1,848.37
BKC Roofing	2 Park Street roof repairs	624.00
Hedley & Ellis	Xmas Lights upgrade electrical equipment	2,904.20
David J Richards	Cllrs photos printing	32.07
Street Art	Bus stop mural complete final payment	820.00
T Payne	Management Fee 14a 28/5-27/06 INV; 14250	72.00
Clerk	FLAPP Reim: Ladder	283.03
Cllr Ashley	Reim: VE Day RBL Tea	10.00
Ward Gethin & Archer	Museum Lease	1,206.00
Hedley & Ellis	Xmas Lights upgrade electrical equipment	832.27
B Gas	Creditor Elec bill Church Lane	52.37
Wave	Creditor Water bill RHS Allotments	73.64
Wave	Creditor Water bill LHS Allotments	58.08
Wave	Water bill Church Lane	84.56
R Tibbetts	Reim Sundries Summer Fest	290.86

TVS t/a Rose Fire & Sec	Fire Alarm Service & Associated works	<b>2689</b> <b>7 of 13</b> 290.89
S Gibb	Cleaning Offices April	35.00
Clerk	Reim Summer Fest & Agenda postage	196.41
J T Chambers	Release of Retention Growing Fenland	7,920.00
Art on Glass	Replace cracked glass in window 14A Church Lane	102.00
S Gibb	Cleaning Offices May/Jun	42.00
Warren Access	Scaffold Tower Xmas Lights	480.00
FDC	Trade waste removal	45.50
RJ Warren	Little Acre Gardening Services May	275.04
Wisbech Town Council	Mayors Afternoon Tea charity x 2 tickets	50.00
RJ Warren	Gardening Services May	772.03
<b>Total</b>		<b>31,529.37</b>

### 35) Re-investment of Council Assets

#### Nationwide Building Society Business 1 Year Fixed Rate Saver Maturity

Members were advised that the Council's investment with Nationwide Building Society (£85,000 at 4.25%) would mature on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Nationwide had advised a new reinvestment interest rate of 3.6% for a 1-year fixed term (estimated interest for the year £3,060.00) and 3.9% for a 6 months fixed term (estimated interest for the 6 months £1,658).

The Financial Officer advised Members that interest rates had fallen in the last 6 months, and wished to make Members aware when making their decision that there was a possibility that interest rates might fall again in the coming year.

The short-term fixed account was offering a higher interest rate, this would appear to indicate that there would be a fall in interest rates.

The rates offered by Nationwide were very comparable to other high street financial institutions (rates offered ranged from 1.50%, 2.11%, 2.25% to 3.30%).

The Financial Officer recommended that the full £85,000 should be reinvested with Nationwide for 12 months fixed at a rate of 3.60%.

Members were advised that by rolling over the investment at Nationwide, administration costs would be kept to a minimum.

Members were advised that the funds were protected under the FSCS whilst earning interest. The Financial Officer also advised Members that there might surplus funds in the bank account which would allow for an additional £85,000 to be invested in a higher interest account and it was something she would look into towards the end of the year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the £85,000 be reinvested on maturity with the Nationwide Building Society Business 1 year fixed at 3.6%. The report was noted and approved.

### **35) 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:

1) All Seasons Mums & Toddlers: - Grant application towards Craft sensory equipment, food for the families and running costs.

Members were advised that The All Seasons group was a community interest company whose sessions provide a warm safe space for many parents and toddlers/babies within the community of Chatteris. The group provided a meal, mental health support and play. They group signposted parents to many external services such as food banks, events, dentists and healthy living. There were approx. 40-50 families attending the sessions each week. All Seasons had been successful in applying for a National Lottery grant which had paid for the sessions and all the expenses that went with it. The funds had now been depleted and they were in the process of applying for another grant. Unfortunately, there was a shortfall of 6 weeks before the next lot of funding would be available. T

The group had asked CTC for a grant towards the cost of the 6 weeks shortfall. Cllrs agreed a grant of £1,230 to cover the full costs for the 6 weeks as they were so impressed by All Seasons and what they did for the community. They did not want the sessions to be put on hold because there was no funding left.

A grant of £500 was recommended but Cllrs asked if the additional funds to cover the full costs could be found.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she would be able to source the funds from other budgets.

**£1,230 grant was approved.**

- 2) Cambridgeshire County Council ,Chatteris Library Summer Reading Challenge: Grant to help support the Summer Reading Challenge in Chatteris, to include additional family activities, staffing the events and visiting schools. Members were reminded that the scheme was always very well supported with dozens of children taking part.

**£500 grant was approved.**

### **38) Growing Fenland Project Update**

The Clerk reported that the roof at 2 Park Street had been fully repaired. A critical gulley had been cleared and resealed and tiles which were missing, broken or slipped had been replaced. The roofer had stated that a membrane put down along the gully had been pierced and had failed which had resulted in water getting through to the accountants' offices. He said for the age of the roof it was in good condition but it was advisable to check it every 5 years.

The Clerk also reported that a few councillors and organisations in the town had been contacted by the research consultant evaluating the Combined Authority's Market Town's Programme (Growing Fenland). The consultant wished to have a chat about the benefits of the scheme and she urged those who had been contacted to get back to the consultant and answer a short series of questions.

Finally, the Clerk said the Road Victims Trust were now using one of the community rooms one day a week for an hour to counsel those who had been involved in very serious road accidents. As the Trust was a charity and only required the room for an hour it had been agreed there would be no charge as the service was for the benefit of the community.

### **39) Planning**

Cllr Siggee, vice chairman, presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to e) (as shown on the **appended list**). There were no further applications and it was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support, request £1,500 per market dwelling for the benefit of the people of Chatteris.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Rec Refusal, access to Clare Street totally unacceptable, splay suggestion not possible; this will exacerbate existing parking problems in Clare Street and will have an adverse effect on other residents; over intensification (development) of site, for example there is insufficient room for 8 refuse bins. Noise from bypass will also be an issue.
- e) Support

The Clerk explained the plan to approach developers, who were not the subject of a Section 106 agreement, and ask them for small works which would benefit the community. She asked if members had any ideas in addition to the footpath along London Road and fencing the field at the Sportsman.

Cllr Unwin said In Bloom would like to run arts and culture workshops, such as making willow sculptures, but did not have the time or the funding to run them so would appreciate help with a project to encourage people to learn a new skill.

She also suggested new signs were needed at the entrances to the town. Cllr Carney said he had spent many months trying to convince the County Council of this but they were firmly against all his designs for new signs. Cllr Divine said he might be able to help with signs.

Cllr Carney suggested seeking funds to continue the footpath between the training centre and Stainless Metalcraft so students could reach Tesco's and the underpass and Cllr Selman suggested funding for an adult, outdoor gym.

#### **40) Letter from Manea Parish Council re: Reservoir Working Group**

Members had received a copy of a letter from the Clerk to Manea Parish Church asking if the Council would be interested in forming a joint working party on the proposed reservoir, to ensure the concerns of all local councils were well presented and coherent. The letter pointed out that during any public inquiry or judicial review it was important to be a united group. Copies of the letter had also been sent to Doddington, Wimblington, Benwick and Christchurch Parish Councils.

Members of Manea Parish Council had expressed concerns about the quality of presentations about the project and the fact that worries about infrastructure and local amenities were not being taken seriously. The suggested areas for consideration were: roads, housing, medical facilities, emergency services, local disruption of industry (particularly the agricultural community), Section 106 and other contributions to local amenities and working/ haulage hours.

Cllr Selman, the Town Council's representative on the reservoir liaison group, fully supported the idea of a joint working party and standing together.

Cllr Marks was invited to join the discussion and said the liaison group had been warned there were plans to bring in large amounts of aggregates but more information was needed. It seemed likely they would be using March railhead but would they be putting in another bridge over the river? Cllr Marks said the consultants did not like to be pressed on the likely impact on the area, especially during construction. Cllr Marks said he was also worried that the area would not be getting all the leisure facilities they had been promised. Cllr Marks said the Councils did not wish to stop the project but needed to be clear what benefits they wanted from it.

Cllr Benney warned that the project was being pushed through by the Government. The PR company was going through the tick boxes and there was little pressure local councils could

put on them as ultimately the Government would get what they wanted as they made the made the final decision.

Cllr Unwin pointed out councillors were elected by the local people and it was their responsibility to do the best for them and make a stand. She insisted people power talked. She also said it was important to keep a record of what had been promised to remind the consultants of those promises and not accept what was eventually offered.

Cllr Marks said if the councils had a united voice they could keep local people up to date and show they were passionate about their towns and villages. Councillors needed to gain what they could from the project and minimise the impact of 7 years of building on such things as housing and rental prices, roads and the effect on local farmers' land and reservoirs. They also needed to ensure the roads were restored when the works came to an end. He suggested going to the Combined Authority for funds to pay the administration costs of the joint working party.

Members had also been sent updates from the Reservoir Liaison team and replies to some of the concerns raised at the meeting between the team and the Town Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Members agreed to the idea of a joint working group with local parish councils and Cllr Unwin offered to be the Council's other representative on the reservoir liaison group.

#### 41) Midsummer Festival Update

Members had a copy of the full line-up for the weekend which would appear in the Festival programme. The Clerk said the page of information was the result of many months work in planning the Festival. The full line-up was as follows:

##### Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June

7pm Concert by Chatteris Community Choir in Marquee at Furrowfields. Ticket price £10, includes cheese and wine. For tickets email: [clerk@chatteristowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@chatteristowncouncil.gov.uk) or contact choir members.

##### Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June

10am Festival Opens to the Public  
10.30am Parade Assembles at Church Lane Car Park  
11am Parade departs from Church Lane  
11.30am Parade Arrives at Furrowfields Recreation Ground  
Followed by Fancy Dress Competition Judging  
11.45am Batman Meet & Greet  
12pm Army Cadets Corps of Drums  
12.30pm Indian Dohl Drummers  
12.50pm Arco Iris  
1.30pm Pedal Power vs Parkour  
2pm BRiLL Performing Arts Group

2.20pm	Chatteris Bikers
2.50pm	Emily's Maraca's Class
3.10pm	Bricstan Concert Band
4pm	Pedal Power vs Parkour
4.30pm	DJ David 'Sir Reggae' Freestone
5.15pm	Singer & Musician Abi & Aarron
6pm	Singer Emma-Louise
6.20pm	DJ set with Laura Dennis
7.30pm	Top of the Pops Band
9.15pm	DJ set with Laura Dennis
10.30pm	Event Closes

### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

10am	Festival Opens to the Public
10am	Registration for Dog Show
10.30am	Dog Show or Children's Sports (depending on weather)
11am	Registration for Colour Fun Run & Tug of War
12 noon	Warm Up for Colour Fun Run
12.15pm	Colour Fun run Toddlers/Family
12.30pm	Colour Fun Run 4-10-year-olds
12.45pm	Colour Fun Run for Everyone aged 11 years and over
1pm-3.30pm	Strawberry Cream Teas in the Marquee
1.15pm	Tug of War Competition
2pm	Water Fights
2.30pm	Family Disco with Foam Cannon hosted by Laura Dennis
4pm	Event Closes

Cllr Selman appealed for help over the weekend from councillors not on the Festival committee and Cllr Jones offered to help on the gate.

### **42) Traffic Issues**

LHI: Members had received a copy of the letter outlining the works which were to be undertaken on the A141 Fenland Way to deliver the approved LHI project. The work was underway and was due to be completed the following day.

The Clerk said the applications for funding for 2025/2026 schemes had yet to be determined and it looked like there would be no decision until 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Traffic Orders & Works: The works to Mepal bridge were now due to start on the 6<sup>th</sup> June and were expected to take four weekends (a 5<sup>th</sup> had been set aside if required). The bridge would be closed from 8pm on Fridays to 5am on Mondays.

The Forty Foot Bank road was due to be closed at various locations from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June to facilitate carriageway resurfacing works.

Doddington Road would be closed between Albert Way and the Chatteris sign between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July to allow for carriageway patching.

Parking bays outside the George pub would be suspended on the 1<sup>st</sup> July to allow for the drains to be cleared.

Tiger Bus: Notification had been received of a new Tiger bus route between Wisbech and Chatteris (via Manea). The full timetable had been posted on the public noticeboard.

Roadworks: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received, along with the June list of events affecting the Highways in the County and the TMC (Traffic Management Centre) report for April.

#### **43) Correspondence**

Members had a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**). The Clerk gave everyone a copy of the minutes of the George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> May and a list of practice statistics and explained that the new chairman of the PPG group would be attending the next meeting of the Leisure Working Group to chat to councillors.

#### **44) Reports**

Cllr Unwin said In Bloom were well underway with their summer planting and the hanging baskets had gone up. To celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chatteris In Bloom some extra pieces of artwork were going in and the flower festival in the parish church would be on the same theme 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'. Cllr Unwin said the small area of land at The Old Auction Yard would be turned into a lounge.

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

No items were put forward for the next agenda.