

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 6th May 2025

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Minutes of the annual meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6th May 2025 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs L Ashley, J Fuller-Gray, A Hay, A Jones, V Joyce, P Murphy, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

Before taking nominations for Mayor, outgoing Mayor Cllr Hay said it had been an honour to serve the residents of Chatteris for the past two years. She said she had thoroughly enjoyed her time as Mayor and thanked the council's officers and fellow councillors.

1) Election of Mayor

Cllr Siggee proposed Cllr Ashley be elected Mayor, seconded by Cllr Jones. There were no further nominations, the proposal was agreed by all and Cllr Ashley was duly elected as Mayor.

Cllr Ashley paid tribute to Cllr Hay thanking her and saying it had been a pleasure to work with her.

2) Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3) Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Unwin nominated Cllr Selman as Deputy Mayor, seconded by Cllr Jones. There were no further nominations, the proposal was agreed by all and Cllr Selman was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.

4) To Confirm Registers of Members' Interests are correct and Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

The Clerk reminded members that they should keep their Register of Members' Interests up to date and notify her of any amendments.

Cllr Hay declared an interest in the Museum and the King Edward Centre. Cllr Murphy declared an interest in planning, the KEC and the Museum; 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 Fuller-Gray in Festival and Cllr Joyce the KEC.

5) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and A Gowler and Cllr C Marks (FDC councillor).

6) Open Forum

There were no members of the public present so it was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

7) Appointments to Outside Bodies & Election of Working Groups

Members were reminded of the outside bodies and working groups they had agreed to serve on in May 2024 (and since in the case of Cllr Fuller-Gray). The Clerk asked members to confirm if they were still willing to continue in those positions and members agreed to the following:

King Edward Centre Trustees – Cllrs Siggee and Jones
Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Carney and Gowler (?)
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay
Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllrs Joyce and Unwin
Fenvision – Cllr Murphy
Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley, Hay & Murphy
Midsummer Festival – Cllrs Ashley, Fuller-Gray, Selman and Unwin
Fenland Transport Advisory Group – Cllrs Benney (?) & Gowler (?)
Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Ashley and Selman
Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay and substitute Cllr Benney (?)
Chatteris Bowls Club Trustee – Cllr Benney (?)
FACT liaison group – Cllrs Ashley, Jones and Selman
Reservoir Liaison Group – Cllrs Gowler (?) and Selman
George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group – Cllrs Benney (?), Gowler (?) and Hay

Members agreed to serve on the working groups as follows:

Planning – Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Fuller-Gray, Hay, Joyce, Siggee and Unwin.

Leisure – Cllrs Ashley, Fuller-Gray, Hay, Jones, Joyce, Selman and Unwin.

8) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members were reminded that at the January 2025 Council meeting, members had agreed the Mayors Allowance budget of £1,000 as part of the final 25/26 budget. At the May meeting it was required to confirm the previously agreed Mayor's budget for the newly elected Mayor. The budget was agreed.

9) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 1st April 2025 and the Annual Town Meeting held on Friday 25th April 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as correct records.

10) Matters Arising from the Minutes

All matters arising from the Minutes were on the agenda.

11) Police Matters

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

Local Police: Councillors had been notified that the monthly police surgery in Chatteris would be held at Chatteris Library on Wednesday May 14th between 1pm and 2pm.

Neighbourhood Alerts included:

17/4/25: Notification that weapons and class C drugs were seized when Fenland neighbourhood officers carried out a drugs warrant in Chatteris.

28/4/25: Notification that a major county lines police operation had resulted in 51 arrests and 35 individuals charged with more than 100 offences. Operation Hypernova saw officers carrying out more than 30 dawn raids across Cambridgeshire and out of county.

2/5/25: Notification about parent webinars on county lines and criminal exploitation which would be broadcast in June.

4/5/25: Notification that four arrests have been made in connection with a serious assault on a teenage boy in Papworth Everard. Those arrested include two teenagers from Chatteris.

Cllr Ashley was concerned that the police surgery had once again received little advertising. Cllr Hay said she had been told by the police sergeant that Victoria Street would be a priority but that had been cut back due to other pressures. However, a PC had visited the street and seen a lorry using the road. The weight limit sign at the top of the road was faded and the officer was, therefore, going to contact the County Council and ask them to replace it. Cllr Hay suggested approaching the new county councillor for Chatteris, Cllr Daniel Divine, and ask for his help in sorting the problem. Cllr Siggee said information about possible drug dealing at Cmpole Drove had been passed to the police.

12) FDC & Street Scene Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene reports.

Cllr Selman confirmed that the bin had been re-installed under the sign in Eastwood. Cllr Ashley stated that dogs fouling of footpaths was still a particular problem. Cllr Murphy said FDC would respond to requests to clean footpaths. They had quickly cleared broken glass from the disabled parking bay in the High Street.

Cllr Carney had reported that he had spoken to the Street Scene officer about the tyre and rubbish fire at Nightlayers Drove and had been told the fire was on private land (despite being next to the road). The land had reportedly recently changed ownership and FDC were unable to trace the owner. In the past FDC had cleared fly tipping from the land but this was an expensive option.

Cllr Unwin asked when the contractors employed by FDC would be tackling the gardens and open spaces which were under FDC's responsibility. Cllr Murphy said they were due to go out the following day. He admitted the Market Hill and Jubilee Gardens were in a state. Members agreed it was good to see more stalls at the weekly market. They particularly welcomed the jacket potatoes van and the plant stall.

13) Financial Officer's Report

The Financial Officer gave a verbal report to Members.

She advised Members that she had balanced and completed the end of year accounts for 24/25 and all documents were ready to be collected by the Internal Auditor.

The Internal Audit would be completed and on the agenda for approval by Members at the June full council meeting.

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return would be announced on the 8th June 2025 with the dates of inspection.

Members were advised that the new financial year 25/26 spreadsheets had been completed and balanced as at the 22nd April 2025 and a full financial report for the new year would be reported at the June meeting.

The Clerk advised members that the roof of 2 Park Street had been leaking, tiles were missing or had slipped, gullies were blocked and a membrane had been pierced. She had contacted a roofing contractor who had been to look at the roof and was returning on Wednesday 9th May to carry out all essential repairs. He had advised that the roof was not in a good state of repair due to its age but the repairs should fix the current problems.

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

14) Payment of Accounts

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

Payroll	May Payroll	7,930.05
RJ Warren	April gardening services	772.03
RJ Warren	April Little Acre gardening services	412.56
FDC	Election Costs February 25	3,808.74

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Clerk	Reim Sundry items Afternoon Tea March 25	64.92
Fiveash M	Fit 2 locks at Council community rooms	120.00
F/O	Petty Cash Reim	90.00
Mayday 233118	Additional copying	54.92
Peac Solutions	Photocopier lease	154.84
T Payne	Management fee 14A Church Lane invoice date 28/03/25	72.00
T Payne	Management fee 14B Church Lane invoice date 02/04/25	72.00
Rose Fire & Security	Servicing Smoke vent Extinguishers	90.00
Project Timber	Shed KEC	1,679.30
Barclays	Bank Charges	11.10
Bgas	Gas Bill Church Lane	226.30
Army Cadets	Donation re: delivery Town Guide	50.00
Onecom	Phone Bill Invoice date 15/04/25	134.51
T Payne	Extension to Lease 14B Church Lane	30.00
T Payne	Management fee 14A Church Lane invoice date 29/04/25	72.00
T Payne	Management fee 14B Church Lane invoice date 02/05/25	72.00
British Gas	Elec Bill Park Street ground floor	161.19
British Gas	Elec Bill 14 Church Lane	59.78
Zen Internet	Website May-June	13.79
Total		16,152.03

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15) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

The Financial Officer reminded members that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at 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**

There were separate approved budgets set in 2025/26 for the following: -

	£
Chatteris King Edward Centre-Staffing contribution	12,500
Chatteris Museum Trust	3,500
Chatteris Christmas Lights Committee	11,500
Chatteris Christmas Lights Contractors Costs	10,000
Chatteris Town in Bloom	7,100
Chatteris Youth Service Provision	4,500
Chatteris Town in Bloom Paid Watering Service	1,500
Summer Children's Fun	1,300
Summer Festival Contribution	7,500
Senior Youth Service Provision	5,500
Rural Citizen's Advice Bureau Face to Face Service	6,900
Over 75's Xmas Party	2,000

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

Peter Pan Pre-school: - Grant application towards a new storage shed. Members were advised that Peter Pan would match fund and it was agreed that the maximum amount of grant would be £500, if the shed came in cheaper then the grant would be reduced accordingly.

£500 maximum approved.

Chatteris Morning WI - Grant requested towards the cost of a bus with a tail lift for a day trip for the Members. WI Members to pay towards the trip which would cost between £650-£850.

£500 grant approved (two members abstained).

16) Letters from Christmas Lights Committee Member

The Clerk had received emails from a member of the Christmas Lights Committee updating her on the electrical works to be undertaken to ensure the lights met current standards. The works were scheduled to take three years and in the first year it was proposed that the power supply outlet attached to 2 Park Street would be upgraded, along with others. The Clerk had also spoken to an officer at Cambridgeshire County Council and assured him that the Town

Council supported the works and by contributing financially would ensure that the works were completed in the 3 year time frame.

The lights committee member had also stated that as part of the 40th anniversary of the lights the committee was hoping to get together as many of the people who had turned on the lights as possible but did not have records going back 40 years. It was suggested that an appeal should go out on social media asking anyone who turned on the lights to get in contact. Cllr Murphy, a founding member of the Christmas Lights committee, said Mr Alan Melton had copies of the early minutes.

Cllr Unwin said the lights committee was planning two major fund-raising events. Christmas in July with bingo, crafts, afternoon tea and a pantomime performance by the Anglian Players and a beach party in September. She asked if the group could have an information table in the marquee at the Midsummer Festival and an advert in the Festival programme.

17) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2025 (copy **attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to j) (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) Already determined. Cllr Unwin warned that by removing the condition requiring another vehicular access to the site (meaning all traffic would have to enter the site via St Martins Road, Birch Avenue and The Elms) there would be accidents and possibly even a death. She said this would be on the heads of FDC and FDC should have listened to the concerns of local people.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support. The Town Council wishes to point out that a statement in the Planning , Design and Access Statement under the heading 'pre-application discussions' is not entirely correct. The meeting did take place but the council did not conclude that the proposed development would be a welcome addition to the area. Councillors listened to the proposals and asked questions but did not express an opinion as this would be seen as pre-determination ahead of the application. (The minutes of the meeting are available on the Council's website).
- g) Recommend Refusal. This application should have been two separate applications. The Town Council has no objections to the proposed extension to 20 The Hawthorns but does object to the new side window proposed at 18 The Hawthorns which will

overlook 17 The Grove and affect the owners privacy/amenity. As a result of this objection the Council has to recommend refusal on the plans for both properties.

- h) Support
- i) Recommend Refusal. The Town Council agrees with Highways concerns that the application is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway. Councillors believe infrastructure should go in before house building begins, including the access from the A142, to support the construction phase.
- j) Support
- k) Support

18) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Joyce (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 15th April 2025 (**copy attached**).

L64) Mural: Cllr Unwin confirmed that the mural was now complete and looked really good. The youths of the town were loving it and the mural had perfectly captured the three famous boxers from the town Dave 'Boy' Green, Eric Boon and Jordan Gill

L65) Defibrillator: Cllr Joyce confirmed the defibrillator was now in place and ready to use. It had been fully registered. The Mayor thanked Cllr Joyce and a friend for their work on the project.

L69) Circus: FDC officer Ms Isabel Edgington said the parks team had raised some good points about the suitability of Furrowfields Recreation ground as a venue for a circus. Their main concern was that while those living near the recreation ground were accepting of the Midsummer Festival, to use the ground for a circus might reflect badly on the festival and they suggested another site might be more suitable. Cllr Murphy said Wenny Recreation Ground was not suitable as it could not be used if there was any rain. It was agreed to suggest the recreation ground behind The Sportsman as a possible venue.

19) To Agree Recommendation to Request Transfer of Land

Councillors considered the following recommendation put forward by the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group:

‘It is recommended that Chatteris Town Council approaches Fenland District Council asking them to gift the parcel of land they own at the Sportsman/Fairway to Chatteris Town Council to ensure it stays as a playing field; ahead of local government reorganisation.’

Members agreed to the recommendation (Cllr Murphy declared an interest as the portfolio holder at FDC and Cllr Hay declared an interest as an FDC councillor).

20) Request from Fenland Citizen

The Clerk had received an email from the Fenland Citizen asking if the Council would nominate someone to write about 500 to 600 words every four weeks about the goings-on of

the council. As a reporter from the Fenland Citizen was present it was agreed there was no requirement to submit a monthly report and any press releases would be written by the Clerk.

21) Traffic Issues

Emails: Two emails from members of the public had been received. The first said that motorists were still travelling at more than 30mph along Doddington Road and asked about a speed advisor sign. The Clerk pointed out the Council owned such a sign but the difficulty was getting someone to replace the battery on a regular basis. Councillors queried if a member of the public would be allowed to replace the battery.

The second email asked if the 30mph speed limit on London Road, which is to be extended to beyond the Tithe development, could be extended further to Ferry Hill (or at a minimum be reduced from 50mph to 40mph) for safety reasons. The email also asked if traffic-calming measures could be installed and a pathway constructed to Seasons Garden Centre. The Clerk said the Council would have to decide if extending the 30mph/40mph zone should be their next LHI scheme application. There had been numerous requests to construct a pathway but all had been ignored.

DTSA Scheme Updates: 20mph school zone: The 20mph signs and wig-wags had been installed in Station Street and Burnsfield Street but the design was being reviewed following complaints about the positioning of one of the signs in Station Street.

Footpath along Dock Road to Prospect Way: A feasibility study had been completed and the project was due to be delivered in Q2 of the funding year 2026/27.

Improved cycling from Chatteris to Doddington Road: Options had been considered by a feasibility study but the ambitious scheme was considered too expensive so further feasibility works were being undertaken.

Traffic Orders: Notification had been received that the planned closure of Mepal bridge for four consecutive weekends had been put back a week due to Ely's Eel Festival. The closure was necessary for essential drainage improvements.

Notification had also been received that: the A141 Fenland Way would be closed from 8pm on the 31st May to 1st June for resurfacing works, white lining and street lighting connections; the Forty Foot Bank road would be closed between the 19th and 21st May for water connection and associated works; King Edwards Road would be closed between the 21st and 23rd May to facilitate electrical link-box works; part of Wood Street would be closed during the day on the 2nd and 3rd June for telecommunications works.

LHI: Costs were now being sought for the LHI scheme on Fenland Way.

Highways Maintenance Investment: All the locations put forward by the Council and Cllr Carney to be considered as part of the Highway Maintenance Investment 2025/26 Capital Programme had been compiled by Highways and a report had been submitted. All the schemes would be assessed and scored along with other projects throughout the county and if successful would be published in the forwards works programme for approval by the County Council. However, the footpath along the A141 Fenland Way was not a maintenance scheme and the Council was advised it would require an LHI submission.

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

22) Correspondence

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

23) Reports & Items for the Next Agenda

There were no reports or items put forward for the next agenda.