

# **CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Minutes Dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**2808**

**1 of 10**

Minutes of the annual meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at The Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### **1) Election of Mayor**

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

### **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 Ashley. There were no further nominations, the proposal was agreed 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. Cllrs Ashley, Hay, Jones and Unwin mentioned minor 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 Carney in FLAPP.

### **5) To Accept Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr V Joyce.

## 6) Open Forum

There was one member of the public, Cllr C Marks and Cllr D Divine present. Mr Mike Steward expressed a wish to speak having previously written to the Council about the need for a 20mph speed limit in New Road.

Mr Steward said New Road was more like a racetrack and something needed to be done before someone got hurt or even killed. He claimed cars were far exceeding the 30mph speed limit and went by his house in a blur.

The Mayor said she lived in St Peter's Drive off New Road and insisted cars could not exceed the 30mph speed limit as there were always cars parked on both sides of the road and speed humps slowing the traffic. She said she had nothing against a 20mph speed limit in the area at school times.

Cllr Unwin pointed out that a Safer Routes to School application had resulted in the speed humps and the pedestrian crossing being installed. She suggested writing to the school and asking them to request parents slow down.

Mr Steward said one of the problems was contractors with trailers whose wheels went either side of the speed humps so there was no need to slow down. He suggested the speed humps should be replaced with cushions across the road.

Cllr Divine suggested one solution was an LHI application but that was not a guaranteed or fast solution. He agreed to ask about speed cushions. Cllr Hay asked who would police a 20mph speed limit.

The Mayor suggested another solution could be Speedwatch as this would provide proof of speeding. Mr Steward said he was prepared to help with a Speedwatch campaign and it was agreed to liaise with the police on the matter.

## 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 2025. The Clerk asked members to confirm if they were still willing to continue in those positions and members agreed to serve as follows:

King Edward Centre Trustees – Cllrs Siggee and Jones

Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Carney, Joyce and Unwin

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 (Clerk to check if willing to continue)

Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Ashley and Selman

Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay and substitute Cllr Benney (?)  
Chatteris Bowls Club Trustee – Cllr Hay to enquire if representative required.  
FACT Liaison group – Cllrs Ashley, Jones and Selman  
Reservoir Liaison Group – Cllrs Selman and Unwin  
George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group – Cllrs Ashley & Hay (Cllr Unwin also agreed to attend if meetings were not on a Wednesday)

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 2026 Council meeting, they had agreed a Mayor's Allowance of £1,000 as part of the final 26/27 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 Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

Min 237) Misuse of Bins: The Clerk had received an answer from the Street Scene officer to the query about misuse of bins in the High Street. The officer had explained that the bins were being filled with household waste, resulting in them overflowing. The rubbish included cat litter, dog waste and bags of wine bottles and beer cans. Cllr Murphy was concerned the problem would only get worse in June when new restrictions would be introduced on what could be put in each of the bins. There was a continued problem with people putting the wrong items in the wrong bins and the refuse collectors were now checking bins as they got in trouble if bins were contaminated.

Min 246) Permissive Footpath: The Clerk reported that the Rotary Club had been contacted by Bidwells estate agents regarding the permissive footpath along the Forty Foot river and the footbridge over the drain near Carters Bridge Farm. Bidwells said the previous owners (Winchester College) had agreed to the permissive footpath but the new owners had withdrawn the permission and closed the bridge due to its poor condition. When the Rotary president had asked when the bridge would be repaired and the footpath re-opened he had been informed that the bridge would be removed and the footpath would remain shut. The Rights of Way officer at the County Council had said there was nothing he could do as the new landowner could decide whether to keep the footpath open or close it. The Clerk said by

all accounts the footbridge appeared to be in good order and the closure of the bridge and footpath would be very problematic to anglers. Cllr Marks kindly offered to make enquiries about the new owners of the land.

## 11) Police Matters

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

### Local Police

Notification had been received that there would be another day of action in Chatteris to tackle any anti-social driving on Sunday 19th April from 2pm to 11pm.

### Neighbourhood Alert

8/4/26: Latest news from the courts for Fenland. Two men found guilty of attending a hare coursing event and convicted murderer attacked prison officer.

10/4/26: Warning about investment scams after a man from Cambridgeshire lost more than £60,000.

14/4/26: Notification that the Neighbourhood Policing Team in the March area had been working on their priorities: vehicle-related anti-social behaviour and traffic offences in Chatteris, March and Whittlesey town centres; targeting drug dealing hotspots and ensuring a visible policing presence in town centres and other public spaces. The team had decided to keep the same priorities for April to June to continue the good work.

30/4/26: Dates of the next community meetings. The Chatteris meeting will be held at the library on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May from 10am to 11am.

## 12) FDC & Street Scene Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest 3-monthly FDC and Street Scene report.

## 13) Financial Officer's Report

### (1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 05<sup>th</sup> May 2026 showing expenditure of £41,440.08 and income of £154,395.65 (includes 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.

### (2) Payroll Changes

Members were advised that the payroll software the Council had used for many years had now changed to a cloud base software called Staffology. The new software was more expensive and cumbersome to use. The help desk was non-existent and the migration team initially transferred the incorrect figures and information over and when the Financial Officer

tried to contact them numerous times for help to sort it out, they just logged the query number and never acted on the actual inquiry.

On this basis the Financial Officer advised that she had now cancelled the license and had set the payroll up on the HMRC PAYE tools system which was a free download.

The Financial Officer advised that by making the changes the Council would make savings of over £520 per annum.

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	Payroll April 26 - Basic payroll listed on April schedule as software not working, actual payroll £7,509.16 basic listed on April Schedule was £6,462.78 difference to be added on May Schedule £1,046.38	1,046.38
Payroll	May's payroll	6,901.26
T Payne	14A Church Lane, May Management Fee	72.00
T Payne	14B Church Lane, May Management Fee	72.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services Outdoor areas	795.19
R J Warren	Pocket Park Gardening service with additional cut April	323.76
Youth of Fenland	Detached Sessions (creditors)	263.25
Youth of Fenland	Detached Sessions (creditors)	438.75
RFO	Reim Microsoft Cloud storage	19.99
March Stationery& Print	Stationery re: 20Twenty Productions Summer Fest	103.31
Cllr Ashley	Reim: Civic Chain Collar repair	40.00
Cllr Ashley	Reim: Annual Town Meeting refreshments	7.10

Chris Panks t/a CP Property Maintenance	Replacement bath panel & associated works 14B Church Lane	<b>2813</b> <b>6 of 10</b> 234.48
Cambs CC	Chatteris Library Summer Reading Challenge Grant	500.00
Cllr Ashley	Reim: Prizes for Charity coffee morning	34.68
V Joyce	Caretaking Coffee Morning & Summer Festival Boozy Afternoon	152.25
S Gibb	Cleaning	63.00
Housden's Catering	Boozy Afternoon Buffet Summer Festival	420.00
Clerk	Reim: Reading glasses lenses	99.00
Barclays	Charges Mar-Apr	8.50
Marian Savill	20Twenty Productions Summer Fest, Mask making workshop	630.00
RFO	Mileage & Reim Hot Chocolate for well-being café	118.43
Wave	LHS Allotments (creditor)	207.82
Wave	RHS Allotments (creditor)	174.93
Wave	Council Offices (creditor)	60.07
Onecom	Phone bill (creditor)	146.40
British gas	Gas bill Church Lane (creditor)	205.95
EC Harte	Reim: Boozy afternoon ticket	25.00
Clerk	Reim: Sundries Summer Festival for children's sports day	39.26
Cllr Unwin	Reim: Cocktails Boozy Afternoon Summer Fest	50.00
Clerk	Reim: Alcohol for Boozy afternoon Summer Fest	326.06
Zen Internet	Website Apr-May	13.79

<b>Total</b>		<b>2814</b> 7 of 10 13,592.61
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### 15) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded 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 grants in **2026/27** was **£5,000**.

There were separate approved budgets set in 2026/27 for the following: -

	£
Chatteris King Edward Centre – Staffing contribution	15,000
Chatteris Museum Trust	4,000
Chatteris Christmas Lights Committee	12,000
Chatteris Christmas Lights Contractors Costs	10,000
Chatteris Town in Bloom	8,000
Chatteris Junior Youth Service Provision	3,000
Chatteris Town in Bloom Paid Watering service	1,500
Summer Festival Contribution	8,500
Senior Youth Service Provision	5,500
Rural Citizen’s Advice Bureau Face to Face Service	7,000
Fact Bus Circular service round Chatteris	10,000

Applications for consideration by Members at this meeting were scheduled as below: -

	Organisation	Grant Application	Decision
<b>1.</b>	<b>Peter Pan</b>	Grant request of £500 towards replacing/refurbish iPads that are used to record children’s observations, videos and photos to upload to a learning journal for the parents and the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum. It costs £120 per iPad.	<b>Not approved</b>

2.	<b>Fact Community Transport &amp; Local Befriending Service</b>	Grant request of £500 towards the hire of the King Edward Centre to run a befriending service in Chatteris, to help remove the social isolation barrier by creating a friendly, welcoming and safe space	<b>2815</b> <b>8 of 10</b> <b>£250 Approved.</b> <b>The grant agreed will pay for the first few sessions to establish if it will be used enough by the residents for it to continue as a regular booking. Councillors agreed to pay another £250 if the service was successful.</b>
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## 16) Planning

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 (**copy attached**).

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

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Recommend Refusal. Councillors believe 7 properties could be accommodated with the correct mitigating factors but 9 represents an overdevelopment of the site and will exacerbate existing surface water drainage and flooding issues. There are also concerns about the access, particularly as the number of vehicles entering and leaving the site will increase.
- d) & k) Support but do not think the developer should be liable for the full costs of reinstating the footpath along London Road. This is penalising one developer when there have been many other developments in the area and the County Council have failed to upkeep the path. The developer is willing to make a contribution to the costs of the path but expecting him to pay the full price could make the development unviable. (Cllr Unwin declared an interest).
- e) Support
- f) Support (Cllr Siggee declared an interest)
- g) Support
- h) Recommend Refusal. Strongly object to this application which will result in the loss of the last open space in The Elms. The recreation ground at The Elms is to be built on and this will be the only green space left. The design and access statement is inaccurate; the area is not un-used land. The space is used for recreation and always has been, especially in the wintertime when the recreation ground is water-logged. It has long been acknowledged that Chatteris is short of open spaces and this is another area that will be lost for the sake of just one house when hundreds of houses

are being built elsewhere in the town. The proposed house is out of keeping with the rest of the houses in the area.

- i) Noted
- j) Support

The Clerk also reported that the application to build 54 dwellings at land east of The Elms would be determined by FDC's planning committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> May with a recommendation to approve. The Town Council had supported the application and requested the trees to be planted be native species.

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

Cllr Jones (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 (**copy attached**).

Members **agreed** that the area of public space allocated at Wenny "Meadow" should be put forward as the town's Nature Recovery from the Ground Up project.

### **18) New Street Lighting Notification**

Notification had been received that the County Council was upgrading its streetlighting with new, more efficient LED lights as part of a project to reduce the Council's carbon emissions. The lanterns were due to be replaced in Chatteris within the next four months.

The statement said that the new lights would provide a similar level of brightness on the road but verges and driveways, which were previously lit, would now appear darker as light pollution would be reduced. In rural areas a softer white light would be used which was better for wildlife.

Councillors were concerned that the level of lighting was already insufficient, especially in areas where there were many elderly people, such as St Peters Drive. The number of lampposts had been reduced and this had led to dark patches.

Members said the County Council appeared to care more for the wildlife than elderly people! Cllr Marks said solar lights gave out a reading of 10, the LED could give out 8 but were set at 5. This was not satisfactory, especially where elderly people and their carers had to use dark footpaths.

Cllr Marks said the County Council did not do night surveys to see how dark areas were. He also said that developers were required to put in lighting to a different specification than existing lights. Once those lights were adopted the bulbs were changed or the brightness turned down!.

It was agreed to complain about the proposed changes and the existing level of street lighting in dark areas.

## 19) Traffic Issues

LHI: The Clerk reported that she would be speaking to the County Council officer responsible for delivering LHI schemes in Chatteris on the 7<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the extension of the footpath along London Road. She would explain that the developer of four properties on London Road had been asked to provide most of the footpath, which he said was unviable. He was, however, prepared to contribute towards the footpath. A timetable for deciding on schemes had been received. Feasibility reports were being prepared, in June and July panels would score the schemes and the prioritised funding lists would be decided in August to September.

In the meantime, a designer had been allocated for the junction warning signs on the A142 and was likely to begin work in July to September.

Disabled Persons Parking Bay: The Clerk reported that County Councillor Divine had also objected to the proposal to introduce another disabled parking bay in Victoria Street due to the problem with parking spaces along the road.

Traffic Order: Notification had been received that King Edwards Road would be temporarily closed between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May to allow water connection works. Whilst the order was underway the one-way system would be suspended.

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.

## 20) Correspondence

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

New Bin: The Clerk said she had been very cross when she discovered the new bin had yet to be installed at Queensway. She had contacted the responsible officer at FDC who was also under the impression the bin had gone in. He immediately got on to the contractors and the bin went in the following day!

Airfield Meeting: Members requested a copy of the minutes of the meeting organised by the Fens Reservoir team to discuss the future of Chatteris Airfield. The Clerk warned it was a confidential report.

## 21) Reports

There were no reports but Cllr Selman asked if there was any news on the transfer of the Sportsman field. The Clerk said she was still chasing a decision.

## 22) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

