

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 1st May 2018

1807

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Minutes of the annual meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1st May 2018 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley, I Benney, A Carney, J Carney, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy, F Newell, K Patterson, J Smith and I Taylor.

1) Election of Mayor

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Haggata be re-elected as Mayor, seconded by Cllr A Carney and agreed by all. The Clerk explained the Standing Orders restricted the Mayoral term of office to two years but it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders and Cllr Haggata was duly elected to serve for a third term.

Cllr Haggata said it had been a real privilege to serve as Mayor for the past year and he looked forward to serving for another year especially as he believed the next year would be an exciting one with many projects on the horizon.

2) Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3) Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr J Carney be re-elected Deputy Mayor, seconded by Cllr Haggata and agreed by all.

4) Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs Hay, Murphy and Newell declared an interest in all planning matters as members of Fenland District Council's planning committee.

5) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllrs J Burrow sent apologies for absence. Cllr Carney sent his apologies but was able to join the meeting during item 11. Cllr Taylor sent apologies he would be late and joined the meeting during item 13.

6) Appointments to Outside Bodies

Members had before them a list of groups and the Councillors who represented the Council on those groups. The Clerk asked members to confirm they were happy to continue to

represent the Council and made amendments as advised. The revised list was agreed as follows:

King Edward Centre – Cllrs Ashley and Newell
Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Benney, Carney and Smith.
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay
Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllrs A Carney, Murphy and Smith
Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Taylor
Isle of Ely Blind Society – Cllr Murphy
Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley, Benney, Haggata and Newell
Midsummer Festival – Cllrs A or J Carney and Newell
Transport Committee – Cllrs Haggata and Newell
Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Murphy and Newell
Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay (Cllr Smith as substitute)

Two groups were no longer meeting – the Town Plan Working Group and the George Clare Commemorations - as their work was complete. The George Clare Patients Alliance had ceased to function and it was unsure if Sport Chatteris would continue but Cllrs Newell and Ashley agreed to continue to represent the Council if it was revived.

Cllr Patterson said she was happy to deputise on any committee/group which met in Chatteris.

7) Election of Working Groups

Members said they were willing to serve on the working groups as follows:

Leisure and General Purposes: Cllrs Ashley, Benney, J Burrow, J Carney, Haggata, Hay, Newell and Smith.

Planning: Cllrs Ashley, Benney, J Carney, Haggata, Murphy, Newell and Smith.

8) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members considered approving the Mayor's Allowance for 2016/17 as shown in the budget. It was **resolved** that an allowance of up to £1,550 be paid to the Mayor in respect of expenses incurred in the performance of official duties under the scheme approved by the Council on 11th January 2011 and in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Regulations. The Financial Officer reported the allowance was underspent in 2017/18.

9) Open Forum

A High Street trader attended the meeting and said he was disappointed that two more shop units would shortly be empty. Councillors explained that one shop owner had been forced to

close part of his shop as the lease was up but he was still trading from the other part of his shop and the clothing shop had been planning to shut for some time.

Cllr Patterson was concerned that some of the empty shops in the centre of town were not being advertised as available to let. It was agreed a list of leaseholders of shops would be helpful and it was agreed this should go on the agenda of the meeting for businesses. Cllr Hay suggested contacting Mr Gary Garford at FDC for a list of leaseholders.

The trader also complained about erratic and dangerous driving in Station Street near the fire station. He had dashcam evidence and was advised to forward it to the police.

10) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd April 2018 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

11) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 242) Stopping Up Order: The Clerk had received notification that the application for a stopping up order for the land adjacent 15 The Hawthorns had been granted by magistrates.

Min 262) Market Towns Masterplan: The Clerk had received confirmation that the Town Council's letter of support for the Masterplans for Growth project had been forwarded to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor's office. In addition Fenland District Council had issued a press release welcoming news of the Masterplan project.

L77 and Min 239) Retail Areas in Chatteris: The Mayor said he would be meeting with Cllr Benney to discuss the way forward and a date for a meeting about retail and business in Chatteris. But he stressed the Town Council was very limited in what it could do and could not get involved in telling people how to run their business. The Town Council could help to make the town more attractive for visitors and businesses. He pointed out many residents of the town did not use the retail facilities.

Cllr Hay said the Market Towns Masterplan for Growth Project would be looking at how to improve the town for businesses and residents. She said it was likely representatives of all the different councils, along with others would be asked to form a Partnership Team. The team would gather evidence and generate ideas. She suggested the Town Council might be replicating the work of the team but the Mayor said questions were likely to be asked at the Annual Town Meeting and he was keen to show the Town Council was taking action over concerns expressed in emails and on social media. He hoped the Council's findings could feed into the Partnership Team. Cllr Smith stressed the need to listen to what businesses had to say and to think of ways of promoting the town.

Cllr Murphy said Fenland District Council was continually trying to attract businesses to the town and lease space in the South Fens Business Centre. Cllr Carney said in Italy there were federations of local businesses and local councils worked to promote the town or village.

Cllr Patterson pointed out Rotary were trying to promote a Shop Locally First scheme and she had attended a workshop for women in business which had been well attended and very worthwhile. Cllr Hay pointed out there had been attempts to launch a Chatteris Business Women's Group.

Cllr Benney said if you were running a business you often did not have time to join a group and Cllr Murphy confirmed there had been no interest in a Chamber of Commerce in Chatteris although there was a thriving group in Wisbech.

The Mayor stressed there were 40 businesses within the town centre alone so the town was not dying, contrary to certain reports. Cllr Patterson said a thriving High Street was essential to give the impression of a successful town.

The Mayor invited all councillors with an interest in the subject to the meeting being organised by Cllr Benney.

12) Police Matters

Members had a copy of the police update from PCSO James Cox, which was noted. The police report also included a resume of Neighbourhood Alerts received in the last month.

13) FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV Updates

Members had before them the latest FDC, CCTV, Street Scene and Section 106 updates (**copy attached**).

Cllr Patterson said she hoped the spring floral displays around the town would not be removed in the near future as they were in full bloom. Cllr Murphy said they would have to be taken out in May to make way for the summer planting for the In Bloom competition.

14) Consideration & Approval of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2018

Members had before them Appendix A (see attached) which 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 to be considered and approved in advance of Section 2 of the AGAR- Accounting Statements.

The paragraph numbers shown and the headings in bold correspond to the individual parts of the Governance Statement contained in Section 1 of the AGAR. **(A full copy of the Appendix and signed section 1 of the annual return is appended to these Minutes).**

It was **RESOLVED** that:-

[i] The Annual Governance Statement as detailed in **Appendix A** was considered and approved by the Members as a whole and section 1 of the AGAR 2017/18 was signed by the Mayor and the Clerk prior to the approval of the accounting statements.

15) Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the AGAR 2017/18 & Annual Return

The Financial Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to recommend approval of the Accounting Statement- Section 2 of the AGAR 2017/18 (Appendix B of the Annual return) and the contents of the Annual Return for 2017/18 due to be submitted to the External Auditors (Littlejohn) by the 11th June 2018. **(A full copy of the report is appended to these Minutes).**

The Annual Governance Statement- Section 1 of AGAR) was referenced as Appendix A in the Annual Return for reference only as this was approved prior to the approval of the Accounting Statements.

The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2017/18) WERE attached as Appendix B in the Annual Return.

The Financial Officer was required to certify and sign the document in advance of the Council meeting. The Mayor was required to sign the document after approval by Council at the said meeting. There was a requirement to approve the Accounting Statement after the approval of the Annual Governance Statement. The minute reference would be recorded for both accordingly.

As neither the total income nor the total expenditure for 2017/18 exceeded £200,000 the Council's accounts for 2017/18 should attract a 'Basic' audit. A detailed Statement of Accounts was shown at Appendix C (Balance Sheet) to the report and the Financial Officer summarised the position.

The **Reserves** had increased to £202,172.49 through a revenue contribution of £2,000 to the CCTV Reserve, £6,200 to the Night Time Lighting Fund, £3,500 to a new Town Guide reprint holding account, £3036.00 into the Summer Festival Holding account, £2,500 into Honeysome Rd Solar Farm Fund from Red Tile Grant, accrued investment interest for the year of £817.47 and payment deductions of £3,867 from Honeysome Rd to pay towards Gas lamp project works, £300 from the Old Railway Line to replace vandalised benches, £1,662 from the Gas Lamps project for final payment for works completed, £21.00 from the Mayors Charity Suspense account to pay for an event license and £152.00 from the Town Plan Fund for goodwill participation rewards to the schools.

The **General Fund** balance increased by £7,423. The reasons for this were shown at **Appendix D** expressed as a comparison with the Budget 2017/18 Also contained in the full report was the year-end bank reconciliation (Appendix E).

Members noted that the Internal Auditor's Report would be presented to the June meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that:-

[i] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR) (**Appendix B**), to be certified by the Financial Officer and endorsed by the Mayor, be approved.

[ii] The detailed accounts and analyses of the Annual Return for 2017/18, as submitted, be approved.

16) Re-investment of Council Assets

The Financial Officer advised Members that the one year fixed term investment with Lloyds would mature on 21st May 2018. The one year fixed saver with Nationwide would mature on 16th June 2018.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she couldn't give them a reinvestment interest rate for either of the fixed term investments as they hadn't been issued at the time of the meeting. She advised Members to consider re-investing the full £160,000 as a split investment so it is remained protected under the FSCS.

She also advised Members that she was looking into a Bank called Unity Trust that many Town, Parish & District Council's used as it specialised in Local Authority banking.

She advised that she would have the reinvestment interest rates for Lloyds and Nationwide and would have more information on the Unity Trust Bank to compare rates and banking facilities for consideration and approval at the next council meeting in June.

Cllr Hay advised that she would speak to the Head of Finance at Fenland to see if he knew or had had any dealings with the Unity Trust bank. Cllr Hay said she would report back to the Financial Officer accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** that: - Members considered and approved the £160,000 investment should be reinvested as a split amount to ensure protection under the FSCS and that the Financial Officer should find out more information about the Unity Trust and report her findings to members at the June Council meeting.

17) Payments of Accounts

Payment of the following accounts was approved:-

		£
Financial Officer	Payroll May 2018	1,016.10
Town Clerk	Payroll May 2018	1,476.69
HMRC	Payroll May 2018	605.03
Cambs Pension	Payroll May 2018	1,260.12
Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee	10.79

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Ward G Archer	Reimbursement of ticket money re Mayors Charity event	45.00
K Robson	Reimbursement of ticket money re Mayors Charity event	30.00
JP Sports & Fitness	1 st Term payment for Youth Club provision	1071.66
Chatteris Community Centre Association	Hire of KEC re: Youth Club provision 22 sessions 2018/19	385.00
D Stimson	Window Cleaner Council Offices Building	165.00
R J Warren	Little Acre Fen Pocket Park footpath	9,989.40
Eclipse Decorating Services	Decorate external woodwork i.e. window frames protective grills & side doors plus additional works	540.00
British Gas	Quarterly Elec bill	280.41
British Gas	Quarterly Gas bill	799.18
King Edward Centre	CTC Annual Grant	6,500.00
Chatteris Museum Trust	CTC Annual Grant	4,250.00
Chatteris In Bloom	CTC Annual Grant	2,500.00
Chatteris Christmas Lights	CTC Annual Grant	9,000.00
Cambs CC	Summer Reading Challenge Grant	350.00
Chatterbox 0-5 Toddler group	Grant to Vol Organisation	200.00
Town Clerk	Mileage reimbursement FACT Meeting	9.00
Fen Regis Trophies	Summer festival trophies re: parade	43.98
Earth Anchors Ltd	Picnic bench church yard	688.80
Signs & Vehicle Graphics	Vinyl date banners re: Summer festival	156.00
S Payne	Grass cutting, less cost of equipment	300.00
Chatteris Army Cadets	Grant to Vol Organisations	350.00
Total		£42,022.16

The Financial Officer advised Members that she went along to the first session of the New Youth Club at the King Edward Centre. She advised that the new service deliverer had brought new ideas to the club to include some soft ball sport games and new game consoles. There were 21 participants and they all enjoyed the new games and activities. They all left the Youth Club at the end of the session happy and looking forward to the next session.

18) Planning

Cllr Ashley (chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on 24th April 2018 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on applications b) to d) (as shown on the **appended list**), these were approved and members considered one new application. Application a) had been withdrawn.

It was agreed to return applications a) to e) to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Withdrawn
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support

The Council also agreed to fully support Warboys Parish Council in their objections to plans for an incinerator at the Warboys landfill site and to point out to the County Council their particular concerns about the impact of the proposal on the A141 and pollution to the environment of Chatteris parish.

19) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 17th April 2018 (**copy attached**).

Cllr Hay pointed out there was an error in the addendum to the report. The 8% increase in the precept requested by Chatteris Town Council equated to a 6.6p increase per week for a household in a Band D property, not 66p a week as stated.

L84, Car Park: It was reported there was a large pothole in the car park at Eastwood on the approach to the gym and all weather pitch parking area. Both car parks were in need of attention. It was agreed to pass on concerns about the pothole to FDC.

L85, Little Acre: Members agreed to accept the quotation from a Chatteris company for the elephant gates at a cost of £2,850.00 plus VAT providing they were able to do the work quickly and on time. Cllr Benney said four weeks for the work had been quoted.

Cllr Carney reported that North East Cambs had been allocated a tree as part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy. MP Mr Steve Barclay had asked for suggestions about where the tree should be planted and Cllr Carney had written requesting it be planted in the Pocket Park explaining the history of the project and pointing out it would give the town civic pride.

Farmer Mr George Munns had also submitted a bid to plant the tree on his Chatteris farm. Cllr Carney was hopeful the two bids from the town would be seriously considered.

Cllr Smith said she had compiled a list of organisations and individuals who might help with the Pocket Park. The contractors had offered a litter bin but Cllr Murphy said FDC would not venture down that far to empty it. Cllr Smith suggested a volunteer force might empty it.

L84, Flower Beds: Cllr Smith was delighted to announce that In Bloom had come joint first in their bid for a grant from the Mick George Skips of Gold fund. The money would be used for the Station Street flower bed. Cllr Smith said In Bloom were still waiting for formal quotes from two businesses who had expressed an interest in the watering contract, which was being funded by the Town Council.

L85, Signs: The Clerk reported after consultation she had discovered FDC were responsible for the brown tourist signs. Cllr Carney asked if Section 106 funding could be used to improve them.

20) Annual Town Meeting

Members had an agenda for the annual town meeting to be held on Friday 11th May at the King Edward Centre.

21) Ely Shuttle Bus

Councillors had received the following report:

“The Mayor, Cllr Ashley and the Clerk held a successful meeting with FACT representatives on Tuesday 24th April to take forward the plans to run a bus to Ely Leisure Village and the railway station/Tesco’s in Ely.

Membership: It was agreed Chatteris Town Council would become a member of FACT.

Disclaimer Form: The disclaimer form suggested by Cromwell Community College (to cover the eventuality of a youth failing to catch the return bus home) was discussed and slight amendments were agreed upon. Drivers of the mini bus would be given a copy of the disclaimer (which parents of all youths aged 14 to 18 would have to sign) and would contact the parents to warn them their child had failed to catch the bus and they would be responsible for collecting them.

It was agreed to ask the school office to keep spare copies of the disclaimer.

Rules for Travel: Any child aged under 14 wishing to travel on the bus would have to be accompanied by an adult aged 18 and over. Any young person behaving inappropriately would be banned from using the service and the driver would reserve the right to refuse to carry passengers who were behaving inappropriately. Parents would be informed. The driver would have the right to ask for ID for those aged 18 and above, who would not have to sign a disclaimer form. There would be no eating or drinking on the bus. The £2 return charge for the service would be collected on the outward journey by the driver.

Bookings: FACT agreed to take telephone bookings for the service (01354 661234). All spaces would have to be booked by 12 noon on the Friday to travel the following day.

Start Date: It was agreed the service should start on Saturday 9th June and all disclaimer forms for that service would have to be submitted by Wednesday 6th June.

Journey Times & Route: The two outward journeys would begin at 1pm and 4pm at Knowles Transport depot in Wimblington and the return journeys at 5.15pm and 9pm at Ely Leisure Village. The bus would call at Doddington Clock Tower and Furrowfields Car Park and the Police Station in Chatteris, Ely leisure village and Tesco's in Ely for the railway station.

Length of Service: Mrs Jo Philpott said there should be sufficient funds to continue the service for at least two years, taking into account administration and operating costs. It was agreed the scheme should be piloted for six months.

Publicity: Cllr Ashley suggested asking heads of years at Cromwell to give information about the service and advising pupils to approach the school office for a letter and disclaimer form. The start date could also be announced in Centrepoint and via posters and the website."

The Mayor said he was really pleased the scheme was about to launch as it had taken a lot of time to come to fruition and he thanked Cllr Ashley for her support. The school had agreed to send out a letter about the service along with the timetable and disclaimer form to the parents of all pupils aged from 14 to 18. The Clerk said she would also put the information on the Council's website and inform Doddington and Wimblington Parish Councils.

22) Closure of Lloyds Bank & E-mail re: Town's Retail Area

Members had received a copy of an email from a retailer in Chatteris regarding the "dying High Street". Attached to the email was a list of suggestions about how the Council could help, they ranged from purchasing vacant properties, drawing up a public register of High Street landlords and improving the market to setting up a town centre management team. It was agreed these were all points which would be discussed by the business/traders forum which was discussed under item 11.

The email asked the Council to consider writing to head office of Lloyds Bank raising concerns about the planned closure of the Chatteris branch in October. It was agreed the Council should make a representation to Lloyds pointing out the bank was well used and many people were not au fait with on-line banking. In addition the loss of a bank meant the loss of a cash machine so other businesses in Chatteris would suffer. Cllr Smith asked if there was still an arrangement between banks which ensured there would always be one bank kept open in a town. Cllr Benney said there had been mention of a mobile bank coming to town.

The Mayor said as an individual, not the Mayor, he had written to the Co-op asking if they had any intention of taking over the vacant Budgen's store. They had responded by stating they would look into the possibility.

23) Chatteris Midsummer Festival Update

The Clerk gave a verbal report on preparations for the Chatteris Midsummer Festival 2018 which would be held from the 28th June to 1st July at Furrowfields Recreation Ground.

She said the Festival would begin with a pamper evening on the Thursday and a variety show on the Friday.

The theme this year was Musicals and many of the towns' organisations and clubs had already chosen their favourite to depict in the walking parade. Festival Saturday highlights would include an illusion and magic show by JezO, circus skills workshops, an acoustics session by local singers and performances by all the musical entertainers taking part in the parade.

In the evening the Party in the Park promised to be a real treat with a disco, live music from a local band and singers, a foam canon and a spectacular lights and special effects show.

To round off the Festival on the Sunday there would be a horse show, fun dog show, cream teas and the It's a Knockout competition. Over the weekend there would also be the ever popular flypasts by vintage aircraft, funfair and inflatables fun, stalls to browse and refreshments to enjoy.

The Clerk asked councillors for help manning the gates and acting as stewards over the weekend.

24) Traffic Issues

Pot Holes: Highways Officer Mr Les Middleton said he would be marking up more pot holes and pointed out the weather had created the problem and the continuing wet weather had created a back log of repairs. He also said the gullies in Chatteris had been earmarked for cyclic sucking and cleansing in the financial year and he had sent several wet spots to contractors for earlier intervention. Councillors commented that a number of pot holes around Chatteris had been repaired.

Road Markings: Notification had been received that surface dressing works would be carried out in the spring and summer of 2018 to the following roads in Chatteris: the A142 Iretons Way, Eastbourne Close, Eastbourne Road, Hilda Clarke Close and the Elms. The letter also said that following surface dressing works some road markings and studs would not be replaced or additional ones might be added to comply with new legislation on markings.

MVAS: The Clerk had received permission from Fenland District Council to install the MVAS unit on lighting columns in Doddington Road and Curf Terrace subject to a list of conditions including the work being carried out by a qualified contractor and the Town Council to be responsible for insuring the unit. The Clerk had now to find a suitably qualified contractor.

Light Lanterns: A list of streets in Chatteris where the lanterns on lighting columns would be replaced had been received. The work was due to take place on the 17th September.

Roadworks: The latest lists of roadworks due to be carried out in Chatteris along with the dates of the work had been received.

25) Correspondence

Members had before them a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**). The list was noted.

26) Reports

CCTV: Cllr Carney gave a verbal report on the CCTV Partner Liaison group he had attended representing the Town Council. Partnership working with other organisations continued to increase. There had been a dramatic drop in incident figures since the last quarter of 2017 due to targeted intervention by PCSOs and Kingdom enforcement on street drinking in Wisbech which was now producing results.

Chatteris and Whittlesey were flat lining the bottom of the chart showing there was no substance to the perception that crime was a problem in the town. However there had been problems with crime on Friday and Saturday nights before the CCTV cameras were introduced.

Court Leet: Cllr Carney said he had been appointed to the committee of Court Leet and gave a brief history of the charitable organisation.

Police Meeting: The Mayor said he had attended a meeting at March Police Station to meet the new Sergeant responsible for Fenland policing. Although the Mayor had been forbidden to pass on all the information revealed at the meeting he was able to say the police were setting up a new targeted force and the future was not all doom and gloom. Cllr Haggata admitted he was positive about the future of policing in the area. More police officers had been engaged and he assured members that Chatteris was not being forgotten.

Cambridgeshire appeared to be bucking the national trend by employing more police officers.

Heritage: The Mayor said he had visited Ramsey on a heritage day and had enjoyed being shown the history of the town.

Home: The Mayor had also accepted an invitation to visit The Gables residential home on their open day.

27) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

