

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 5th March 2019

1897

1 of 12

Minutes of the meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th March 2019 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors W Haggata (Mayor), L Ashley, I Benney, A Hay, P Murphy, J Smith and I Taylor

235) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A and J Carney and F Newell. Cllr Taylor apologised that he would be a little late.

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

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

237) Open Forum

One member of the public was present and said he was happy with his six weeks slot on Chatteris market which was going very well.

He then said he was appalled at a newspaper article stating that new double glazed windows in March Town Hall had been allowed by FDC. The resident had been forced to replace the upvc windows in a property he owned in New Road with single-glazed units. He said it was unjust and he had been victimised and he would be taking the matter further.

238) Speaker: Mr Satish Karia

Postmaster Mr Satish Karia had been invited to the meeting to outline the services the Post Office could offer and how it could help the community in the light of the bank closures. He was accompanied by his wife and Samantha, the area sales manager for the Post Office, who were all welcomed to the meeting. The Mayor thanked Mr Karia for attending and said the Council was concerned that with the closure of the two banks in the town the onus fell on the Post Office to take all the banking business and the Council would appreciate an insight into how he saw the situation.

Mr Karia explained that the Government had taken a decision that small rural banks should be allowed to close provided the Post Office took up the slack and the Post Office was geared up to take most of the business and to provide help where needed.

Samantha gave out leaflets which gave details of the services the Post Office could offer. Mr Karia said the Post Office could take in and pay out cash but customers could not discuss their bank accounts, set up direct debits and standing orders, etc. Councillors suggested the Post Office should advertise which services it could offer in the local press, in particular Centrepoint. Samantha said Post Office charges for handling money, etc., were considerably less than those charged by a bank. Banking services were not profitable but they did result in extra footfall for the shops. Mr Karia said he could take payments to a number of Councils but FDC had not signed up to the service.

Mr Karia said up until 2018 he had been exempted from business rates but when he modernised and extended his shop and made it disabled friendly he became liable for business rates. He claimed other councils had helped their local Post Office by putting pressure on the district council to reduce business rates. Samantha admitted if Mr Karia's premises closed the Post Office would have to look for another operation in the town to take on the Post Office. Mr Karia was asked if he had approached Fenland District Council about small business relief, he said he had but still had to pay a monthly charge while other shops were fully exempt. Cllr Benney pointed out Post Office salaries were based on the responsibilities undertaken by the Post Master and Samantha admitted this was being looked at. Mr Karia confirmed he was capable of taking on the extra business but he would have to employ more people and he had to be careful about his overheads.

With the extra work and the popularity of the ATM machine came extra security risks and a police presence was more of a requirement, said Mr Karia. Sgt Lugg agreed to meet Mr Karia after the meeting to discuss the issue. Mr Karia also said parking in the High Street was another major issue and the Town Council assured him they were putting pressure on the police to take action against those who parked for too long and in disabled parking bays.

Mr and Mrs Karia and Samantha were thanked for attending the meeting.

239) Police Matters

Sgt Richard Lugg was welcomed to the meeting and he introduced Pc Jacob Reeves, a new police officer with the neighbourhood policing team who would primarily be based in Chatteris. Sgt Lugg said he now had four warranted police officers on his team but there had been a slight reduction in the number of PCSOs.

Sgt Lugg assured members that Chatteris was covered 24/7 for 999 calls and there was a new push on neighbourhood policing which would mean more neighbourhood police officers in future. He admitted the days of low risk policing were long gone and in their place was policing targeted at crimes which created most harm.

Sgt Lugg said six points had come out of the last Town Council meeting and he asked which were seen as priorities by the Town Council. The points raised were:

- 1) The problems with motorbikes and quad bikes.

- 2) Parking problems in the High Street.
- 3) Drug dealing.
- 4) Shed break-ins.
- 5) Drive to get the public to report crimes.
- 6) Lost property procedures.

Members said 1), 3) and 4) were priorities. Sgt Lugg agreed motorcycles and quad bikes were potentially dangerous and said he had put out teams to tackle the problem and was working with FDC on the issue. There had been a reduction in ASB driving but it was very difficult to stop quad bikes and motorbikes accessing private land, droves, etc. Cllr Taylor raised the issue of ASB motorbike riding at Burnfield Estate.

Sgt Lugg pointed out if he was unaware of problems he could not deal with them so it was essential that residents reported all crimes, via 101 or the police website. He admitted parking too long in the High Street was not a priority as it took so much officers' time. He said the Government encouraged local councils to take on responsibility for parking and suggested the Council should de-criminalise parking issues. Cllr Murphy said the problem was there was no desire for paid parking in Fenland which could lead to the employment of traffic wardens. Sgt Lugg said if there was a blatant disregard of parking rules officers would issue tickets.

Sgt Lugg then spoke about the police response to certain crimes and the Council agreed to treat the information as confidential. He was thanked for attending the meeting.

Members had received the following report:

“Local Police

Please see attached the confidential report from the policing team and Sgt Lugg on the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team's work over the past month.

Neighbourhood Alerts

6/2/19: Information about a burglary day of action which was taking place on that date.

14/2/19: Warning about how romance fraudsters target people using dating sites.

20/2/19: February edition of Neighbourhood Watch E-Newsletter.

21/2/19: Warning that Action Fraud has received several reports where fraudsters are claiming to be landlords of properties offered for rent online and asking for money upfront to go into the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

27/2/19: Information about a Peterborough PC who completed a charity challenge in memory of his daughter.

28/2/19: Notification of the launch of a new Twitter account by the Rural Crime Action Team in order to better engage with rural communities in the county. The account is @CambsRuralCops or #RCAT.

240) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 5th February 2019 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

241) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 214) Barclays Bank: Members had received a copy of the letter from Barclays Bank sent in response to the Council's letter which set out objections to the proposed closure of the Chatteris branch and suggested ways to mitigate the effects of the closure. The Barclays letter re-iterated that the number of customers at the bank was falling and had not risen as a result of the closure of Lloyds Bank as most customers now banked online. The letter claimed the bank had cut down on the number of days it was open to try and improve the situation but this had not worked. Barclays said the Banking Code no longer had a "last branch in town" requirement because there were alternative ways to bank. Ideas of a shared bank and a mobile bank were dismissed as were concerns about elderly and vulnerable customers. The Bank claimed these customers could do online, mobile or telephone banking or use the Post Office. The Bank also offered to take these customers to the Post Office to show them what to do and said it had offered in branch Tea and Teach sessions to show people how to do online and digital banking. On business banking, the Bank claimed business customers could use the Post Office or Barclays Collect. The letter said even though the town was set to grow this would not lead to more customers. The letter concluded by saying the decision to close the Chatteris branch remained.

Min 213 and 231) Sixteen Foot Bank Road: The Clerk had informed Cllr Will Sutton of the Town Council's decision not to commit their LHI bid to the barrier scheme. Cllr Sutton had thanked Councillors for allowing him to attend the meeting and admitted it would be more difficult to deliver the scheme.

The Clerk had mentioned in the letter that the Council considered its priority should be the provision of a crossing outside Cromwell Community College. Cllr Murphy asked if the Town Council had leftover funds which could be used for such a crossing. The Financial Officer confirmed funds were available and Cllr Smith suggested this should be a backstop if the crossing was not provided as part of the school development.

Min 231) Dock Road: The Clerk had received a reply to the query she sent to Fenland planners who had confirmed that none of the small pockets of development along Dock Road had included additional street lighting as part of the development and it was not possible to request street lighting for infill developments. The resident had been disappointed by the reply and asked for the Town Council's help in trying to persuade the County Council to install street lighting. She had also started a petition to show support for the initiative. It was agreed the Town Council should write to the County Council.

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

Members had a copy of the latest updates (**copy attached**).

243) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 26th February 2019 showing expenditure of £172,334.84 and income of £188,263.52 (includes a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

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

244) Financial Review

Members had before them a report from the Financial Officer, the purpose of which was to review the Council's financial activities, as required to be undertaken annually under the Financial Regulations, in preparation for the 2018/19 audit. **(A full copy of the report is attached to these minutes)**

Members noted that Financial Regulations for the Council had first been approved in August 2002. They had been reviewed at the February 2012 meeting. A draft revised update, adopting Capalc/Nalc's 2016 Financial Regulations, was reviewed and approved by resolution at the February 2019 meeting and revised regulations were published (Min 221).

As a result of the Financial Regulations being updated and approved by the Town Council on the 5th February 2019, Standing Order 18 Financial Controls & Procurement had been amended. The amount of the value for setting different procedures for procurement had changed from £19,000 to £25,000.

Included in the Financial Officer's report were appendices containing the Council's Risk Management Policy (Appendix A), Assets Register (Appendix B), Internal Controls (Appendix C) and Investments Register (Appendix D). Members were informed that it was no longer necessary for the Internal Controls (Appendix C) to be included as a separate appendix in the Financial Regulations. The Internal Controls were reviewed every year under the Financial review.

The new Financial Regulations 2019, approved under resolution by Members at the February Council meeting (Min 221), included everything that was appended in the Internal Controls (Appendix C).

Appendix C had been revised due to the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits & standing orders to process payments. Under the Financial Regulations this approval would be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. This renewal was approved at the February 2019 full council meeting (Min 222).

Members were informed that the Council's insurance arrangements were reviewed on the 7th March 2017 (Minute 233). The Financial Officer obtained a best value quotation from Zurich Municipal accepted for three years from the 1st April 2017 - 31st March 2020. The detailed terms for renewal from the 1st April 2017 were attached to the report.

Members were reminded that although an annual review of effectiveness of internal audit was no longer required, it was still necessary to re-appoint an Internal Auditor annually and it was recommended that the current Auditor, Mark Saunders, be offered re-engagement for the 2019/20 audit.

The Council's Register of Investments, including yields, was attached at Appendix D.

At the April 2017 Council meeting the Financial Officer advised Members that the FSCS only protected funds up to £85,000 per investment/savings. Members were concerned that the limit of protection was only £85,000 therefore instructed the Financial Officer to look into splitting the £160,000 between Lloyds and another high street bank/building society to ensure that the majority /all the investment money was covered under the FSCS scheme. This was approved by Members at (Minute No 256). The Financial Officer obtained Members approval to reinvest the £160,000 by splitting it between Lloyds Bank and Nationwide Building Society. Members were advised at the 6th June 2017 Council meeting that £85,000 was re-invested with Lloyds on the 19th May 2017 fixed for 1 year with an interest rate 0.80% and the remainder of £75,000 was invested with the Nationwide Building Society fixed for one year with an interest rate of 0.65%. Members approved the reinvestment split at Minute 34 item 2.

At the full council meeting held on June 2018 (Min 36) Members of the Council considered and **approved** reinvestment of £85,000 with Lloyds Bank at 1.00% and £75,000 plus an additional £10,000 with Nationwide Building Society at 0.90%, both fixed for 1 year.

A risk assessment was undertaken during the year for use of the King Edward Centre for Summer Fun activities.

It was **RESOLVED** that: -

- [i] the Council's Risk Management Policy (Appendix A) be noted and approved;
- [ii] the Register of Assets (Appendix B) be noted and approved
- [iii] the revised Internal Controls (Appendix C) be approved;
- [iv] Mark Saunders be offered re-engagement as Internal Auditor in 2019/20
- [v] the Register of Investments (Appendix D) be approved.

245) Approval of Insurance renewal

Members were advised that the Council's Insurance policy was due for renewal on the 31st March 2019. The current insurance policy was with Zurich under a three-year contract which would reach full term in 2020.

The Financial Officer advised Members that as the Council was in a long-term agreement (LTA) with Zurich they were committed to renew the policy and in return Zurich had applied LTA discounts and frozen the rates that had been applied to the relevant lines of cover.

The cost of the renewal insurance for 2019/20 was £2,051.85. The 2019/20 precept budget for the insurance renewal was set at £2,500.

The Council building sum insured was index linked and had increased to £514,516.65 which was an increase of 3%. The remaining lines of cover were based on the same principles as the previous year's policy.

All were in favour of renewing the insurance policy at the sum quoted and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

246) Payment of Accounts

At the Leisure meeting it had been agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quotation for an advertisement in the Fenland Citizen for the annual town meeting. The cost of an advert for one edition was £44.50 (inclusive of VAT) and members agreed the advertisement should be purchased.

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

Financial Officer	Payroll March 2019	1,028.80
Town Clerk	Payroll March 2019	1,497.57
HMRC	Payroll March 2019	628.51
Cambs Pension	Payroll March 2019	1,281.95
Zen Internet	Domain name renewal Summer Festival	8.39
Zen Internet	Monthly Website fee Mar-Apr	10.79
Barclays	Bank Charges	11.00
One Com	Monthly Phone Bill	75.40
Viking	Stationary Order	143.65
Julie Smith	Pool Table Youth Club, Cafy money	100.00
Iliffe Media Publishing Ltd	Annual Town Meeting Advert	44.50
Clerk	Reim. re mileage Elections meeting	8.10
County Engraving	Chatteris Green dog walkers dog tags	255.00
Homegrownandraised	Mobile Farm Deposit, Summer Festival	325.00
Rose Fire & Security	Bi annual service	428.95

		1905
Rose Fire & Security	Fire awareness training	8 of 12 594.00
W Haggata	Mayors Allowance	100.00
R J Warren	Additional work to bund at Little Acre Fen	1,230.00
R J Warren	Little Acre remaining works	3,775.20
S Payne	Grass cutting Service	200.00
King Edward Centre	Annual Town Meeting hall hire	30.00
Fenland DC	Summer Festival Contribution	6,900.00
Flying Fysh	Office cleaning	40.00
Cash	Petty Cash	15.04
Total		18,731.85

247) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 26th February 2019 (**copy attached**). The group made recommendations on applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**) which were agreed by the Council.

The Clerk said a decision was still required on F/YR19/0097/F (the erection of a shed for use as a dog grooming parlour at 14 James Gage Close). After discussion it was agreed to Recommend Refusal on the grounds it was out of character, the detrimental impact on the environment and an unsuitable business for a small cu-de-sac. The Council then considered four further applications.

It was agreed to return applications a) to k) to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) No objections to the proposed development in principle **but it is essential that a pelican crossing** and 20pm speed limit (during school drop off and collection times) in Wenny Road are included as part of the scheme and Chatteris Town Council will only support the plan if these measures are included. The County Council has a policy of encouraging children to walk and cycle to school yet it has failed to include a safe means to access the school from the other side of Wenny Road. The Town Council is hard pressed to think of another secondary school in the County which does not have some form of crossing and would point out that this is a major road into the town. It is imperative that a survey is carried out into how many children cross Wenny Road and while there the surveyors should also look at the East Park Street/Wenny Road junction which badly needs a footpath on both sides of the road and possibly some

kind of mini roundabout to slow down the traffic and make it safer. It also requires measures to stop cars parking right up to the junction; this has after all been identified as one pedestrian route to Cromwell. The Council would also appreciate consideration of the formation of a one way road from Eastwood around the school site to Wenny Road to allow a safe drop off point for children as there are concerns that with the expansion of the school Eastwood is going to become very congested and is not fit for purpose.

- g) The Council supports the idea of development but requests that the road running through the estate is wider than the road running through the existing estate which is inadequate and frequently blocked by parked cars. Parking on the estate is woefully inadequate with pedestrians often forced to walk in the road as the pavements are also blocked by parked cars. The Council also requests a Section 106 donation towards a pot which should be set up to fund the final section of the southern bypass for Chatteris from London Road to the A141. The Town Council would also encourage FDC to impose planning conditions to include features to improve the ecology of the site, as set out in the ecology report, including the addition of bird and bat boxes (such as swift bricks/boxes), the retention of the hedgerows, further landscaping to include native and wildlife attracting species and the installation of boundary post and rail fencing. (Cllr Hay said she had called the application in as part of the development was on green field land).
- h) Support
- i) Councillors to visit site
- j) Support
- k) Noted

Members were also advised that an appeal had been lodged against Fenland District Council's refusal to grant permission for the erection of a dwelling on land north east of 107 High Street (the Town Council had supported the plan) and the County Council had launched a consultation into a revised Local Validation Guidance List and Local Validation Check List for planning applications for the County Council's own development and for waste development.

248) 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 12th February 2019 (**copy attached**).

L65) Green Dog Walkers: FDC officer Mrs Layna Warren had requested a delay in launching the campaign because she was unable to get the campaign material and dog bag dispenser before Purdah. Members agreed to the delay in launching the campaign.

L65) Little Acre Fen Pocket Park: The Clerk requested the Council formally approve Company A's quotation to create the pond and dipping platform at a cost of £5,763 plus a further £380 for the advice of an ecologist on setting up the pond and the removal of a willow overshadowing the pond area. The quotations were **formally approved**.

249) Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park Grant Request

The newly formed Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park group had asked the Council for a grant of £50 to pay for some equipment to use at the site, particularly tools suitable for children. As the group had no clear idea of exactly what was required or the costs, it had been suggested it would be better for the group to make a list of requirements and prices for approval by the Council who would then re-imburse the costs. This was agreed.

250) Plans for Annual Town Meeting

Members had received the agenda for the Annual Town meeting and the plans for the evening were included in the Leisure report.

251) Growing Fenland - Chatteris Update

Unfortunately there was no update as the next meeting of the Growing Fenland – Chatteris team was due to be held on Thursday 7th March.

252) Re-Launch of FACT Shuttle Bus Service – Proposed Changes

Members considered the following report:

“Background

The Ely Shuttle Bus service was launched on the 9th June 2018 by Fenland Association of Community Transport using Section 106 Funding given to FACT by Tesco's.

Originally the aim was for FACT to run buses to the new Tesco's store but after Tesco's categorically stated they would not be opening a store in Chatteris, the Town Council asked if the money (£54,000) could be used for another bus service to benefit the people of Chatteris and the surrounding area.

The service had been little used and was therefore not cost effective, so the Mayor, Cllr Ashley and the Clerk met with the new Head of Operations at FACT Mr Steve Shannon and two other employees of FACT on 30th January 2019 to discuss the future of the service.

Figures showed there was still just over £50,000 in the fund and FACT were keen to see the fund used to the best advantage and came up with suggestions for new services.

The Way Forward

After very positive discussions, it was agreed that the current service should be suspended and a new timetable for the Ely Shuttle bus should be drawn up incorporating a stop in Ely

City Centre and a return bus from Ely Leisure Village when most films ended (about 10.30pm).

It was also agreed there should be no charge for the bus service for those aged under 19 and the service should be launched again in the spring.

FACT suggested offering a bus to another destination and a befriending club for the elderly. It was agreed to try out a monthly bus service to St Ives for the Monday market. It was also agreed that rather than start a new club for the elderly, existing clubs should be offered the opportunity of a bus service to pick up members from their homes and return them after the meeting. The first club to welcome the offer would be able to take advantage of the service.

Attachments

Attached to the report were a suggested new timetable for the shuttle bus, an amended letter to parents and a letter to go out to clubs for the elderly in Chatteris, for members' comments and approval.

Recommendations

Members were asked to consider and approve the following recommendations:

- 1) The new Ely Shuttle Bus timetable (as attached) to be launched in May 2019.
- 2) A new monthly bus service to St Ives Town Centre & Market (as attached).
- 3) No longer charging Under 19s to use the shuttle bus.
- 4) Offering local clubs for the elderly the chance of a transport service to get members to and from meetings."

The suggestions had also been sent to Mr Shannon, who was happy with the proposals and suggested a follow up meeting to discuss the finer details of launching the service if the details were approved by the Council.

Members **resolved** to approve all four recommendations.

253) High Street Issues

The Mayor had been asked by a member of Rotary if the Council would consider the idea of a one way system for vehicles through the centre of Chatteris, better markings for disabled parking bays and better policing of disabled bays.

Members pointed out the idea of a one way system had been discussed and rejected in the past as Railway Lane would not be able to cope with the additional traffic.

The Clerk agreed to pass on the request for re-marking of the disabled parking bays. The police had been asked to take action against illegal parking in the High Street.

254) Traffic Issues

Disabled Parking Bay: Notification had been received that the application for a disabled persons parking bay at Horsegate Gardens had been turned down. The Town Council was opposed to the application as the bay was on a bend in the road and those determining the application had decided that there was not sufficient pressure for on-street parking places in Horsegate Gardens to warrant the implementation of another disabled parking bay.

Road Closures: Notification had also been received that the following road closures would be in force for the Midsummer Festival parade on the 29th June: Church Lane from 9am to 12 noon and Market Hill, High Street, Furrowfields Road from 10am to 1pm.

Road works: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received as had the IHMC Incident Report for January 2019.

255) Correspondence

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

It was agreed the Clerk should write to Chatteris boxer Mr Jordan Gill and congratulate him on winning the WBA International Featherweight championship title.

256) Reports

Liaison Group Meeting: Councillors had received a copy of Cllr Smith's written report on the FDC CCTV partner liaison group meeting she attended on the 20th February 2019. Partners were updated on the plans to merge the service with Peterborough City Council's CCTV service. In the meantime new partners were using the service, including the local hospitals, the Horsefair and a Clarion Housing complex in Wisbech. Chatteris continued to be bottom of the list for incidents picked up by CCTV but the cameras had helped in the arrest of an individual and were often used to try and locate vulnerable individuals.

Control Room Meeting: Councillors had also received a copy of Cllr Carney's written report on a meeting he had attended with Cllr Smith to consider the use of CCTV in helping to reduce ASB at Furrowfields car park. The Councillors heard that the new speed bumps and parking bays had resulted in the anti-social driving stopping virtually overnight and new street lights planned for the area would help with the CCTV coverage by reducing the dark spots. Councillors asked for vegetation near the recycling containers to be cut back as this created a blind spot for the camera.

257) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

