

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 2nd July 2019

1940

1 of 10

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 2nd July 2019 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), J Carney, A Charrier, W Haggata, A Hay, F Newell, M Petrou, J Smith and I Taylor.

45) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Gowler and P Murphy.

46) Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

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

47) Open Forum

Two members of the public were welcomed to the meeting; Mr Lawrence Weetman, who made the ACV bid for the Empress Swimming Pool and Mr Alan Melton.

Mr Weetman began by explaining why he decided to initiate the process of nominating the pool as an Asset of Community Value. He said the supporter list had quickly topped 130 people. He also outlined the Legislation involved in making a building an Asset of Community Value and said if the pool application met all the legislation (which he believed it did) the local authority was legally obliged to accept the nomination and add the building to its list.

Mr Weetman then went on to argue why the pool was a community asset pointing out that the support received for the nomination demonstrated it was obviously a much-loved, much-valued and much-loved place. He spoke about the popularity of the Kingfishers Swimming Club, how the pool was used to teach swimming (an important life-saving skill) and its use by local schools, who had all supported the ACV. He explained how difficult it would be for schools to access swimming facilities in other towns. He also pointed out the benefits of the pool to local businesses.

Mr Weetman said he believed there were no signs that the Empress pool would stop being a community asset if it weren't for the intended sale of the building. The trustees had reserves and people and groups wanting to hire the pool.

In his letter of support local MP, Mr Steve Barclay, pointed out Chatteris was a fast-growing town. Chatteris had far fewer amenities than the other Fenland towns and the Empress Pool gave people a reason to visit the town centre; it also gave people a lot of joy and the campaign had given people hope.

Mr Melton congratulated Mr Weetman on his work supporting the application and said in the 1990s he had persuaded FDC to step in and save the pool from closure. The Trustees had built up a surplus so they no longer needed FDC funding but the understanding had always been that FDC would step in again if there were problems. He said he had used ACV legislation to secure the King Edward Centre but on that occasion he had been armed with money from the Town Council, FDC and a goodwill gesture of peppercorn rent from the County Council.

The problem with the pool was that there was no longer money available in the public purse. Mr Melton also warned that some of the correspondents on the pool issue needed to be reined in as they were making untrue and libellous statements and were likely to alienate the people who could help them. Mr Weetman said he had defended councillors against such allegations.

48) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cllr Benney requested an amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th June 2019. Under Min 42) he said the paragraph which began “Cllr Benney warned that...” should have read: “ Cllr Benney warned that if the pool was deemed a public asset it would presumably have to be open to the public and would come under a different set of rules.”

Members then agreed the minutes as a correct record and they were signed by the Mayor.

49) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 36) Payments: Cllr Carney asked that the Council’s thanks be sent to Mr David Johnson for videoing the Festival parade free of charge.

50) Police Matters

Members had the following report on information received from the police in the past month:

Local Police

Please see attached the confidential report on the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team’s work over the past month.

Neighbourhood Alerts

4/6/19: Warning about courier, bogus police and bank official’s fraud. Advice on what to say if you receive a phone call from someone claiming to be a police officer or banking official and information on what the banks and police will never do.

5/6/19: Notification that Crimestoppers were the chosen featured charity on the BBC Radio 4 appeal on the 9th June.

7/6/19: Warning about fraudsters who advertise vehicle and machinery (including equipment used in the agricultural industry) for sale on various online selling platforms.

7/6/19: Warning that Action Fraud has experienced an increase in the reporting of malicious calls and voicemails to members of the public purporting to be from HMRC.

11/6/19 & 26/6/19: News and Convictions weekly roundup for Fenland.

17/6/19: Notification about the start of Neighbourhood Watch week, which celebrated the amazing work carried out by volunteers in the community.

26/6/19: The Police and Crime Commissioner's latest newsletter including information about a project which has helped 400 young people from across Cambridgeshire recover from sexual abuse and the proposal for a new police station on the outskirts of Cambridge.

2/7/19: Warning that elderly victims are being targeted by individuals purporting to be police officers or traffic wardens, who claim the victim's car is illegally parked or has broken a speed limit, and are advised to pay a smaller fine upfront.

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

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

Green dog walkers: Councillors were asked to attend, if possible, the launch of the Green Dog Walkers scheme on the 5th July.

Open Spaces: Councillors were concerned that tenders were still out for replacement play equipment for the Wenny Recreation Ground. They were worried that with the six weeks holiday fast approaching there would be no equipment for children to play on and requested that FDC chase the matter ASAP.

CCTV Update: Cllr Hay said she would prefer to see figures for the number of patrols completed in each town rather than a figure for all towns. Cllr Smith said figures were clearer at the CCTV liaison meetings and Chatteris always had the lowest recorded crime and patrols.

52) Empress Swimming Pool ACV Bid

The Mayor began by reminding members that at the last meeting the Town Council had agreed not to support the bid to make the Empress Swimming Pool an Asset of Community Value due to the financial, health and safety and legal implications.

However following that meeting the Clerk had been asked to contact FDC to ask if there would be any implications for the Town Council if they supported the bid. There had also been many emails and letters from members of the public asking the Town Council to support the bid and, following a request from Cllr Benney, the Clerk had received a more up to date Health and Safety Assessment of the pool from FDC. The report had thrown up some issues and a Trustee of the pool and responded to those concerns by stating many had been dealt with.

The FDC Officer dealing with the ACV application had confirmed there would be no legal or financial implications if the Town Council was to support the application and the Council would have no liability for knowing the building was in a poor condition. The Town Council would also be under no obligation to contribute towards the purchasing of the building or essential repairs unless the Council felt this was necessary.

Cllr Haggata said he wished the group involved in making the ACV bid had informed the Council of their intention before any action was taken so the Council had had time to look into the implications. Cllr Hay pointed out time had been of the essence.

The Mayor proposed that the Town Council should support the ACV application on the understanding there were no legal or financial implications for the Town Council. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Smith and supported by all councillors bar one who abstained.

It was **resolved** that Chatteris Town Council support the application to make the Empress Pool an Asset of Community Value on the understanding there were no legal or financial implications for the Town Council.

53) Financial Officer's Report

Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 24th June 2019 showing expenditure of £144,409.62 and income of £163,880.88 (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.

Cllr Hay asked if the Night Time Street Lighting holding fund could be used to fund new street lights in the Town. The Financial Officer advised that it could be used for other things on approval by Members. Cllr Hay asked for this to go on the agenda for the next meeting.

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

54) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll July	1,058.92
Clerk	Payroll July	1,538.01
Pension Fund	Payroll July	1,365.37
HMRC	Payroll July	629.90
Zen Internet	Website Jul-Aug	10.79
Onecom	Phone Bill June	76.15
Nicky Ashberry	2 x Wrestling shows Summer Fest	650.00

		1944 5 of 10
CPTC	Spraying tests re gardener	220.00
Homegrownandraised	Summer Fest Mobile Farm Event	325.00
Flying Fysh	Office Cleaner	40.00
Clerk	Reim sundries for Summer Fest and Poo Bags	104.21
Fran Orridge	Party in the Park sundry items Reim	29.67
Froglife	Pond & Dipping Platform Little Acre	6,143.00
Booster Cushion	Summer Fun show	318.00
JJ Butler	Squirty Wirty Summer Fun show	195.00
British Gas	Elec Bill	213.93
British Gas	Gas Bill	315.63
Ely & District Training Group	Pesticides course gardener Part 1	102.00
Ely & District Training Group	Pesticides course gardener Part 2	102.00
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	22.32
Cambs CC	2018/19 LHI contribution	663.40
S Payne	Gardening services 7th-28th June	800.00
Lucky's Rosettes	Summer Festival Rosettes re activities	58.50
Sharon Selman	Reim food for Summer Fest	204.72
R J Warren	Pocket Park gardening services 18th June	129.60
J P Sport & Fitness	Youth Club 2nd payment & equipment	1,200.00
J P Sport & Fitness	Reim Mileage Summer Festival	12.60
A Papworth F/O	Reim Mileage Summer Festival	25.20
Cash	Petty Cash	20.23
The Old Bakery Tea Room	Friday Night Food Summer Festival cabaret night.	156.48
Total		16,730.63

55) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October and January meetings each year. 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 **2019/20** was **£3,250**

The Financial Officer advised Members that no Grant Applications had been received to be considered at the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

56) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 25th June 2019 (**copy attached**).

The group made recommendations on applications a) to f) (as shown on the appended list) and these were ratified by the full council. A further four applications were considered and it was agreed to submit the following recommendations to Fenland District Council:

- a) Support
- b) Support on the condition that the wall is re-built in accordance with the instructions of the Conservation Officer.
- c) Support, request the trees which have to be removed are replaced with new trees elsewhere on the site.
- d) Support
- e) Support, request provision of bat box as suggested.
- f) Recommend Refusal, condition should remain and should be enforced because of parking issues in the area.
- g) Support (Cllr Petrou declared an interest)
- h) Fully Support an application that brings jobs to the town.
- i) Support if FDC is able to give assurances that the trees are replaced, as outlined in the application. Supervision of this application must be maintained to ensure the work is carried out and the correct trees planted.
- j) Members to visit site and submit recommendations

Cllr Haggata suggested that the Town Council should insist that for all future developments, of a certain size, trees should have to be planted and swift boxes installed. The Clerk suggested this could be included in the Local Plan consultation response.

57) Growing Fenland – Chatteris – To Agree Response to Interim Plan

All members had received a copy of the Growing Fenland – Chatteris Interim Plan which set out 14 ideas for Chatteris. The Clerk asked members to either pick their top 3 ideas or list the ideas in order of priority so she could analyse the results and submit a collective response to the consultation.

58) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

L3) Recreation Grounds: It was agreed the Clerk should not only write asking when the new equipment would be installed at Wenny Recreation Ground but also enquiring if the see-saw and slide would be re-instated and pointing out there had been disquiet from residents that equipment had been removed and not replaced immediately.

L3) Section 106 Funds: Cllr Benney said the old cemetery in March had recently been improved but Section 106 funds had not been used to pay for the work. It was agreed the money should be spent on recreation grounds and open spaces (including Larham Way play area) and not for tree works and cemeteries.

L3) Cemeteries: Members were also opposed to the idea that Meeks cemetery should go wild, pointing out relatives still visited the cemetery, it was not a closed cemetery and it should, therefore, be managed. Cllr Benney said he was happy to help set up a “Friends of “group for the area. He had also received complaints about the grass cutting and tidying at the main cemetery. Local people did not wish the old part of the cemetery to go back to nature as Mr Hughes was suggesting. Councillors were concerned about the brambles and ivy which were taking over.

It was **agreed** to support the recommendation that the Council should write to the Chief Executive stating the Town Council did not agree to the use of Section 106 funds to carry out routine maintenance work in the cemeteries as these were not recreation areas. It was FDC’s responsibility to maintain trees and remedy past neglect of trees from its own resources. Cllr Benney suggested Mr Gary Garford should be copied in to the correspondence.

L5) Little Acre Fen Pocket Park: Cllr Smith reported the scouts and cubs had enjoyed helping out at the park. The Friends of the Pocket Park were currently looking at the possibility of obtaining funding to improve the approach road to the Pocket Park which was badly potholed. Cllr Smith said the road/drove was the responsibility of the County Council who had a responsibility to maintain the by-way but not to vehicular access standard. Cllr Smith said she would speak to the new rights of way officer about the road.

L8) Town Guide: Cllr Smith said Mr Richards had confirmed he could replicate the Festival programme for the Town Guide.

L9) Roundabout near Jacks: Cllr Newell said she had received two complaints that the roundabout near Jacks was dangerous. Cllr Hay said she had requested a timeline for when the problems would be rectified.

59) Land at Bridge Street

The Clerk reported that she had received a telephone call from the registered owner of the land at Bridge Street, Mr Lawrence Perring, of Elite Packing Services, after she had sent a letter explaining how the land had been gifted to the town by Swift Adhesives and subsequently looked after by the Town Council. The Clerk had requested the land be registered in the Town Council’s name.

Mr Perring said he was sold the units and land in Bridge Street by the company who took over from Swifts Adhesives. The sale included the parcel of land the Town Council has been maintaining as public amenity space. On purchase there was no mention the land had been

gifted to the town (and the Clerk could find no paperwork proving it had been gifted to the town).

Whilst Mr Perring was happy for the Town Council to keep using it as public amenity land and up-keeping it he would not gift it to the Council because there was a possibility that part of the site might be needed as an additional access to the units behind in future years.

Whilst this was very unlikely to happen yet he did not want to prejudice any future use of the site, which he believed might even be considered for housing in future. At present he was trying to sell or rent out the empty units on site.

Mr Perring assured the Clerk that even if part of the site was used for access it was likely that part would remain as public amenity area.

He said he would put this information in writing via his solicitor in case Chatteris Town Council made a bid to claim the land as it had up kept it for over 12 years!

Cllr Newell said she was prepared to swear an affidavit that the land had been gifted to the town and up kept for over 12 years. The Financial Officer was asked to obtain a quotation on the likely cost of claiming the land so the Council could consider whether to start the process.

There was some discussion on whether the Council should continue to maintain the land. The Financial Officer pointed out the maintenance costs were low so it was agreed to continue to maintain the site.

60) Chatteris Midsummer Festival

The Clerk reported the Festival had once again been a great success with a record number of people attending on the Saturday. It was estimated over 1,000 people attended the Party in the Park on the Saturday evening, far more than ever before, and people were fighting for picnic space on the hottest evening of the year. The Financial Officer said gate takings showed over 4,000 people attended over the weekend (this included those who took part in the parade and did not have to pay an entry fee). Unfortunately the Sunday gate was slightly down on the previous year. Most of those entering the ground had been charged but there were still too many people helping on stalls who did not pay.

The parade was also a great success with hundreds of children taking part and the tug of war proved to be a popular end to a busy weekend with everyone from tots to ladies of a certain age taking part. All the attractions proved popular and this included the pamper evening, the Friday evening entertainment, the wrestling shows and the horse and dog shows. It was an exhausting weekend for all the organisers who included Town Council staff, FDC staff and many volunteers.

Councillors who helped out over the weekend said everyone should be proud of what was achieved and there were a lot of thanks from those who attended.

61) LHI Application 2020/21

The Council had been invited to submit a Local Highway Improvement 2020/21 application by the 4th August.

The Clerk asked members to confirm they wished to bid for funds for a crossing in Wenny Road and this was agreed. She had requested the cost of a pelican crossing in Wenny Road and had been informed it was likely to be in the region of £100,000 which would include a commuted sum to pay for the ongoing maintenance.

62) Traffic Issues

Transport Plan: The Clerk had been notified about a consultation on the first ever Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The aim of the plan was to set out the key priorities and principles to shape the transport network to 2050. The email explained that the Combined Authority had taken over the role of Local Transport Authority from Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council and one of its key responsibilities was to develop a new Local Transport Plan. One of the consultation events would be held in the Town Council Chambers on the 11th September. In the meantime the Clerk had downloaded the draft Plan and was angered to note that there was little mention of Chatteris (save to say there were frequent bus services!!) and there was no mention of improving any of the roads or cycleways. Of particular concern was the map of key projects in Fenland which did not even show Chatteris or Whittlesey so presumably there were only two towns in Fenland! Members were horrified by that news and agreed there should be a joint complaint from Chatteris and Whittlesey. They were equally upset that there appeared to be no mention of the problems along the A142 and no plans for improvements to that road. There also appeared to be no plans to improve bus services, no mention of how Chatteris residents could access rail stations and no mention of the ideas and possible solutions put forward by former Mayor, Cllr Haggata, and the Clerk when they met with County Highways officers to discuss the transport problems affecting Chatteris. The report repeatedly mentioned Wisbech and, to a lesser extent, March. Cllr Charrier said she would like to see a bus service between Chatteris and Wisbech.

It was agreed to enquire if Whittlesey wished to make a joint complaint and to send the Council's concerns to the Mayor of the Combined Authority with a copy for MP Mr Steve Barclay.

Street Complaints: The Clerk had been copied in to a letter to Cllr Murphy from a resident of Victoria Street complaining about lorries and buses using the street making houses shake and causing damage and about the parking problems created by the veterinary practice. She had also received a letter from a resident of Rosemary Lane asking when the yellow lines in Huntingdon Road were to be altered. The Clerk agreed to chase up the TRO for Huntingdon Road.

1949

10 of 10

Drains: The Clerk had also passed on complaints from a resident about flooding in the High Street (outside Chatteris Garage) probably due to blocked gulleys. A tanker had been asked by County Highways to respond to the problem. Cllr Smith suggested once again requesting a solution to the drains problems in the High Street and regular cleansing of the gulleys. The Clerk had been asked to request the bushes at the rear of Jubilee Gardens be cut down as a few residents were regularly using the alleyway, at the rear of the gardens, as a toilet.

Highway Events: The Clerk had received details of July's Highways Events Diary and a list of planned roadworks in Chatteris.

63) Correspondence

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

Good Neighbour: The Clerk was requested to obtain more details about the idea of setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme in Chatteris.

Letters: The Clerk was asked to write to Major Norman Larke, congratulating him on being awarded a BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours, and Mr Simon Grainger for winning the Lawn Tennis Association's National Lifetime Achievement Award for his work with Chatteris St Peters Tennis Club. She was also asked to write to Chatteris Town Football Club congratulating the Club on its 100th anniversary.

64) Reports

There were no reports.

65) Items for the Next Agenda

The Mayor asked Councillors to bring ideas on how to mark the retirement of Dr John Szekely to the next meeting.

Drains in Chatteris was also requested as an agenda item and it was agreed the Doddington Road playing field should be discussed at the next Leisure meeting.

