

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 6th August 2019

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6th August 2019 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), A Gowler, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy, F Newell and J Smith.

66) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney, A Charrier, M Petrou and I Taylor.

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

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

68) Open Forum

A large number of people were welcomed to the meeting by the Mayor, all were residents of Boadicea Court in Chatteris. Many of the residents had submitted letters and photographs giving details of the parking issues in the road.

Their spokesman said they had coming along to bring to the Council's attention a very dangerous situation. He said motorists parked right up to the junction with the High Street and along the road resulting in a single lane track for two way traffic. Someone trying to turn into the court often had to stop in the High Street to allow cars to leave the Court. Cars often travelled at speed down the road just so they could do a u-turn and motorists were even parking on the green where children played. To make matters worse residents, under the terms of their deeds, were not allowed to park in the road but other motorists could as there were no parking restrictions.

The dustcart often had difficulties accessing the road and grassed areas went uncut as vehicles were parked on them. Residents feared what would happen if an emergency vehicle had to access the area. Motorists sometimes parked across drives and it was often difficult to manoeuvre off driveways. An articulated lorry driver, forced to reverse the length of the road, had commented how dangerous it was. There were also concerns for the safety of pedestrians (especially children) who had to cross the road at the junction and were unable to see vehicles approaching due to the parking.

Residents said they believed it was often people who worked in local shops who parked on the road all day long and they encouraged their customers to park there. The resident called for the Council to take action.

Cllr Hay said double yellow lines were needed and she agreed to pass the request on to Highways and to ask them to consider monitoring the situation. She warned residents the Council would not be able to put in another application for LHI funding for the scheme in the current financial year but the residents said they would be happy to consider paying for the lines and the necessary traffic order themselves. Cllr Hay agreed to ask for a quote for the likely costs of such a scheme. Councillors asked who would enforce the double yellow lines.

Cllr Benney said a fellow district councillor had been tasked with sorting out illegal parking in the Fenland area because the police did not have the time or resources to give out parking tickets. FDC were looking to de-criminalise parking so they would be able to employ enforcement officers to take action against those who parked illegally. At present they could only take action against those parked illegally on their own land, de-criminalisation would enable them to issue tickets to those illegally parked on the public highway. He said motorists often parked all day in 30 minute parking zones. If the 30 minutes was enforced this would lead to a fluid movement of traffic.

Residents pointed out even if there was no-one to enforce the parking restrictions the mere application of double yellow lines would act as a deterrent. There was a suggestion the Council could write to shopkeepers asking them not to park in Boadicea Court but to use Furrowfields Car Park instead.

Cllr Hay took copies of all the letters and the photographs and said she would pass them to Highways officers. She also promised to keep the residents informed about progress.

69) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

70) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 52) Empress Swimming Pool ACV Bid: The Clerk said she had received official notification that the nomination for the Empress Swimming Pool to become an Asset of Community Value had been accepted and the facility had been placed on the successful community asset list. She had also received a request under the Freedom of Information Act, from a chartered valuation surveyor, for copies of the structural fabric and the mechanical and electrical works of the building reports which were passed to Mr Weetman. The Clerk had emailed over copies of the reports. The request also asked if the Council had any further information about the condition of the pool or any redevelopment plans but it did not.

Min 57) Growing Fenland: The Clerk had submitted the Council's top three ideas from the Growing Fenland list and had enquired if the consultants had attended the Midsummer Festival to gather residents' views. The consultants had confirmed they were unable to make the festival but had received a few responses and asked if there would be opportunities to talk to people in August and September. It was agreed the Clerk should state there were no

opportunities and point out they had missed the boat as there were thousands of people at the Festival. Cllr Murphy intimated there was general dissatisfaction with the consultants' work and said FDC was seeking four or five schemes that could be achieved quickly to show the public there had been some action. Cllr Hay suggested the consultants had not listened to what the town wanted and Cllr Haggata said the Growing Fenland steering group had been told to think big but the scheme had now been watered down to a few quick wins. Cllr Benney asked for ideas for achievable schemes and Cllr Haggata suggested going back to the Town Plan. Cllr Smith suggested tidying up the town – re-painting benches and lampposts, replacing bent railings, etc.

Min 58) Clarion: Clarion Housing had responded to the Council's complaints about uncut grass and droves by stating scheduled work had been carried out on the 17th and 18th July and work was due to be carried out on the track between London Road and Tithe Road by the 2nd August. The Mayor said the roadway between London Road and Tithe Road had still to be cut and it was agreed to contact Clarion again. Cllr Benney said Clarions had also agreed to clear out the dyke between Westbourne Close and York Road.

71) Police Matters

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

Local Police

Attached was the confidential report on the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team's work over the past month.

Neighbourhood Alerts

8/7/19: Latest edition of Our News – the Neighbourhood Watch e-newsletter.

11/7/19: Warning issued following a series of burglaries in Wisbech.

24/7/19: Round-up of the latest convictions and news relating to Fenland.

25/7/19: Call to hand in unlicensed firearms and ammunition during an Amnesty Campaign which ran until 4th August.

26/7/19: Information about the 2019 Police Unity Tour which involved officers and staff from Cambridgeshire Constabulary riding cycles in their own time in memory of fallen officers.

31/7/19: Appeal for more information about the series of 26 burglaries in Wisbech.

31/7/19: Warning about a Universal Credit scam.

2/8/19: Warning about fraudsters targeting social media influencers.

5/8/19: Request for public to help tackle hare coursing ahead of the hare coursing season which begins in September.

The Clerk also read out a confidential email from Sgt Lugg in response to the Council's email raising concerns about drug dealing in the town. The Mayor urged all councillors to encourage anyone who complained to them about drug dealing to report the concerns on line.

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

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

Green Dog Walkers: The Mayor suggested it should be possible for dog walkers to sign up for the Green Dog Walkers scheme at the Chatteris Community Hub at the library. Cllr Smith suggested the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park might also be able to publicise the scheme at the park.

73) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 27th July 2019 showing expenditure of £161,044.25 and income of £173,279.83 (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.

74) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll August	1,058.92	
Town Clerk	Payroll August	2,135.29	
HMRC	Payroll January 2019	1,032.36	
Cambs Pension	Payroll August	1,365.37	
Zen Internet	Website Aug-Sep	10.79	
Barclays	Bank Charges	55.70	
One Com	Phone Bill July	76.26	
Financial Officer	Reim Mileage re: Gardeners test & stat order	28.64	
Vitalsigndesign	Little Acre Fen Composite Sign	156.00	
R J Warren	Dry Pond Little Acre	3,024.00	
R J Warren	Hogging Path Extension additional works Little Acre	1,105.20	
PC OK	Recover data from faulty hardrive & new USB	35.00	
David Richards	Programmes Summer Festival	1,086.00	
Warboys, Somersham & Pidley DB	Allotments land drainage	112.40	
Middle Level Commissioners LDA	Allotments land drainage	146.12	
Fran Orridge	Party in the Park Expenses	250.00	

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Ethos Walters	Additional copying meterage outside contract	83.24	
Wave	Water Bill Council offices	64.92	
Wave	Water Bill Allotments LHS	314.80	
Wave	Water Bill Allotments RHS	200.12	
King Edward Centre	Summer Fun Hall Hire	97.50	
Chatteris Army Cadets	Summer Festival donation for help at Festival	60.00	
KECCA	Part Payment re: CTC annual grant	3,250.00	
Stripey Wipey	Summer Fun Entertainer	210.00	
R J Warren	Little Acre maintenance grass cutting service	388.80	
Financial Officer	Work on new invoicing system for KEC	278.01	
Scott Payne	Grass cutting service & 2.5 days spraying course	1,260.00	
David J Richards	Summer Fun Leaflets	134.30	
KECCA	Youth Club Hire Fees	532.50	
Clerk	Reim Mileage re: Little Acre sign	22.50	
LD Ents	Summer Festival Disco	150.00	
JezO's	Summer Fun Entertainer	180.00	
Total		18,904.74	

The Financial Officer said she had set up new spreadsheets and an accounts system for the King Edward Centre and payment for her work would come from the annual grant paid to the KEC. She was thanked for her work.

75) Town Guide – Quotation for Printing Guide

The Clerk had sought an up to date quote for printing 8,000 copies of the new town guide from the local printer and he had sent a quote for £2,384.45 for a 32 page full colour guide.

This was accepted by Councillors and the Mayor thanked Cllr Smith for all her work on the guide and for rescuing it.

76) Street Lighting in Dock Road

Cllr Hay had asked for the item to go on the agenda. She had received complaints about the lack of street lights in Dock Road (as had the Council) and suggested using part of the fund

set aside to fund night time street lighting to pay for streetlights in Dock Road. She pointed out it was unlikely the money would be needed to fund night time street lighting in the near future and neither the County Council or FDC would pay for new street lights. She confirmed the Town Council would be responsible for the upkeep of the lights.

The Financial Officer confirmed there was £12,530 in the holding account for street lighting.

The Clerk was asked to enquire how many lights would be required, the cost of the lights, connection charges and running costs. Cllr Gowler warned they should be of a certain height. Cllr Benney said the villages paid for their own street lighting and paid through the FDC scheme for their maintenance.

Cllrs Smith and Gowler were firmly against purchasing lights and pointed out there were other unlit or poorly lit roads in Chatteris and purchasing lights for Dock Road would set a precedent.

It was agreed to cost out the provision of lights before any decision was taken.

77) Planning

Cllr Haggata presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held on Tuesday 30th July 2019 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**). These were ratified by the full council who also considered three further applications.

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

- a) No further comments
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Recommend Refusal, over-development in the open countryside, poor design (looks like a slum housing development and appears to be designed for communal living), adverse effect on neighbouring property, business and livestock, concerns about possible flooding and the effects of a non-mains drainage system and the foul water soak-away.
- h) Support (Cllr Smith declared an interest as a neighbour)
- i) Support
- j) Support

78) Cllr Benney on FDC's Policy of Commercialisation

Cllr Benney began by explaining that Local Councils had now been advised to generate their own funds by building a portfolio of assets, both industrial and housing, this would generate income to help maintain services without increasing council tax. Other councils were already successfully doing this and it brought a double win by providing homes and by delivering the infrastructure to help drive business.

In order to generate funds FDC was looking to set up a development company to manage these assets to deliver this portfolio. To help fund this FDC was selling off assets which were deemed surplus to the Council's requirements. This included a plot of land at Tithe Road and a garage in New Road, Chatteris.

Councillors were concerned that a press release claimed the land in Tithe Road was "suitable in principle for future development of a single residential dwelling". The Mayor argued it was not suitable for development as the access was inadequate and said it should be retained as it contained garages which were rented out. It was suggested those renting the garages could consider buying the land when it went to auction.

Cllr Benney also said he was one of the FDC members who had met with the Combined Authority to discuss the possibility of bringing to Chatteris affordable housing which could be sold for a fixed sum of £100,000 or rented out by a locally managed trust that would provide homes for local people and key workers such as teachers and medical staff. These homes would continue to sell at a cost lower than full market value, even if they changed hands, to continue the stock of low cost housing.

In order to deliver the housing, a trust for each town or parish would be set up. The trust would look for landowners outside the usual development areas to work in partnership with the trust to deliver these homes, the combined authority would also invest in the scheme. The aim was to drive the housing market by providing homes with key workers and local people taking priority. Cllr Benney said a similar scheme was already running in Stretham and he and other councillors were going to Stretham in September to see the scheme in operation and look at bringing such homes to Chatteris and Fenland.

79) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 16th July 2019 (**copy attached**).

L12) Wenny Recreation Ground: Mr Hughes had responded to say it would not be possible for the Town Council to have a say on the new play equipment for Wenny Recreation Ground. Councillors once again expressed disappointment that the old equipment had been taken out just ahead of the summer holidays (although Cllr Murphy pointed out once it had

been declared unsafe FDC was duty bound to remove it) and that there had been no consultation on replacements.

L12) Cemeteries: The Mayor said she had spoken to a school representative about Cromwell Community College becoming involved with a Friends of Meeks Cemetery group and they were keen that the disruptive pupils should be involved in helping to maintain the cemetery. They were also interested in planting out and maintaining a flower bed, probably at the rear of the Bandstand (Market Hill Gardens), as it would give them an area to take pride in. Cllr Benney said FDC would be able to take away any rubbish removed from Meeks Cemetery. The Clerk said Ms Rebecca Robinett, FDC's Streetpride Co-ordinator, had explained that the Wildlife Trust were helping to put together a management plan for Meeks Cemetery and once that was in place she was happy to help support the establishment of a Friends group. That way everyone would be aware of the support available, the aims and how those involved could complement each other's work.

L13) Church Meadow Bench: The Clerk had established the bench was in Tivoli's yard and was waiting for a quote to have it installed at Furrowfields.

L14) Pocket Park: The Clerk had obtained a quote for three directional signs to the Pocket Park. The cost would be £1,039.94. Members asked whether the high cost included the provision of posts. The Clerk had also collected the new sign for the Pocket Park and members gave their approval of the sign. The Mayor had agreed to the expenditure of £156 on the sign.

The Financial Officer had obtained two quotations for two bins at the Pocket Park. The first quote was for £338.80 per bin (to include installation) and the second was £308.74 per bin (also to include installation). The Financial Officer recommended the first quotation as she said the company would make good the area around the bins. This was agreed.

L12) Section 106 Funds: Cllr Murphy asked what sort of play equipment was being considered for the Doddington Road play area. It was **agreed to purchase goal posts for the site**. Cllr Smith said she believed there were swings on the site and asked if they needed refurbishment.

80) Summer Fun

The Clerk reported there had already been two Summer Fun shows, which had both been popular and well supported, and there were two to go.

81) LHI Application 2020/21

The LHI application for funding for a new crossing outside Cromwell Community College in Wenny Road had been submitted. The Clerk had received e-mail consent from a majority of councillors for the Town Council to offer £10,000 towards the cost of the scheme.

The application had the backing of all councillors as District Councillor Daniel Divine had confirmed his support for the scheme.

82) Local Transport Plan – Suggested Response

The Clerk had drawn up a suggested response to the Local Transport Plan consultation and asked members to approve or amend the response. Cllr Haggata requested the response call for better bus services with connections to rail stations (particularly Manea) and Wisbech. It was agreed the following response should be submitted:
Chatteris Town Councillors have issues with the Local Transport Plan for a number of reasons:

- 1) According to the map there are only two towns in Fenland – Wisbech and March – Chatteris and Whittlesey do not even appear.
- 2) The report repeatedly mentions Wisbech and to a lesser extent March but the only reference to Chatteris is about bus services which are certainly not frequent despite a claim in the report (a two hourly bus service during the day can hardly be promoted as frequent and needs to be vastly improved). The hourly bus service should be restored and bus service hours should be extended into the evenings and at weekends. There should also be a direct bus service to Wisbech.
- 3) There is no mention of the A142 which has been identified as having serious on-going problems. There could be the opportunity to address those problems through funding from the anticipated sand and gravel extraction plans (which will only add to the dangerous state of the road) but again there is no mention of this.
- 4) There is no mention of how Chatteris residents can access rail stations other than by car. A bus service to Manea Railway Station is required.
- 5) There is also no mention of improving cycling facilities for Chatteris residents.
- 6) The former Mayor and Clerk met with County Highways officers working on the transport plan to discuss the many transport problems affecting Chatteris and put forward various ideas but none of the concerns raised (or the possible solutions) get a mention in the local strategies part of the report.

83) ASB in Furrowfields Car Park

The Mayor had alerted the Clerk to complaints about anti-social behaviour in Furrowfields Car Park late at night. Complaints about noise and anti-social driving had been passed to the Community Safety Partnership Officer at FDC, Alan Boughen, the FDC officer in charge of car parks, Garry Edwards and the Street Scene Officer, Anne Marshall.

Mr Boughen had assured the Mayor that FDC was committed to improving the situation and was gathering evidence, including CCTV evidence. Mr Edwards confirmed Community Safety and Environmental Health Teams were working with local residents and the police to improve the ASB by gathering evidence from evening activity to support the case being made to the police. The CCTV cameras did not record sound but the Mayor confirmed a sound recording device had been issued to local residents to gather noise evidence.

Cllr Benney insisted the police should be involved and should enforce the law by issuing fines. He also suggested dispersement orders should be issued followed by hard policing.

84) Parking in Boadicea Court

The matter had been fully discussed earlier in the meeting and a course of action agreed.

85) Traffic Issues

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

86) Retirement of Dr John Szekely

It was agreed to send a letter of thanks from the Council and the people of Chatteris for Dr John's dedicated service to the people of the town for the past 33 years. Councillors pointed out residents were full of praise for Dr John.

87) Correspondence

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

Water Supply: The Clerk explained that Anglian Water had visited the Council Chambers and the Museum and condemned the water supply as most of the taps were fed from two uncovered tanks. There had also been a minor problem with the water supply to the boiler. An action plan list (Improvement Notice) had been drawn up and the Clerk had forwarded this to the Council's plumber. She had asked if possible for a quotation for the work by the next Council meeting but was mindful it was holiday time so this might not be possible. It was essential the work was completed by Anglian Water's follow up visit on the 1st October so if necessary the Clerk would send an appeal asking for members' approval of the quotation.

88) Reports

There were no reports.

89) Items for the Next Agenda

Cllr Taylor had requested the issue of drains go on the next agenda. It had been agreed the next Planning Working Group meeting would be held on Tuesday 20th August and Cllr Carney gave his apologies for that meeting.

