

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 4th February 2020

2017

1 of 11

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 4th February 2020 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

202) Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence as all councillors were present.

203) 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.

204) Open Forum

A total of 9 members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and expressed the wish to speak on four different topics.

HMO: The developer applying to turn the former Lloyds Bank into a house of multiple occupancy (HMO) said he was seeking views on the plan and admitted the main problem appeared to be the lack of any parking provision. The developer said he believed the scheme put forward would have minimum impact on the street and the area as there were no plans to change the outside of the building. He suggested the Pera Palace restaurant created more parking problems as would a 5-bedroom home and he the bank had created more need for parking spaces.

He said his intention was to let the rooms to 5 professional working people but the application was for 7 in case anyone stayed over. The Mayor suggested professional people would not be interested in sharing a lounge and kitchen. The developer gave examples of people who lived in other HMO properties he owned and said many of his tenants did not drive. Cllr Carney said night time parking was a problem as the Church Lane car park was now widely used at night.

The developer spoke about other potential uses for the site, including as an office with a flat above.

He was informed that the Council would discuss the application for an HMO later in the meeting.

Police Station: A resident attended to claim that there had been no law and order in Chatteris for the past year and to call for the re-opening of the police station. She claimed the town was

polluted and terrorised day and night by street cruisers and said it was dangerous for people to cross the streets, especially as the signs on crossings were faded. Cllr Hay said she had raised the issue of faded lines with Highways and re-marking of the lines was on the agenda for the new financial year.

Save Wenny Meadow: A number of members of the Save Wenny Meadow campaign group attended the meeting to explain that they were not a political or a lobby group but they had conducted a petition which had been signed by over 1,000 people opposed to the development of the Meadow. The spokesman said this represented about 10% of the population of Chatteris. The group used Facebook pages to communicate with the public and had contributed to the Local Plan consultation.

The spokesman asked if the Town Council believed it represented the townspeople as the council did not oppose development of the land. He suggested the public should be consulted before the next round of Local Plan consultations. Councillors said they did listen to their electors but none had raised the issue of Wenny Meadow. Cllr Newell said it was former farmland and had been earmarked for development for many years. The Mayor said the current proposal was for a decent development but there were concerns that if that did not go ahead a less sympathetic development would be put forward.

Cllrs Gowler and Petrou explained the Council had to be careful when putting forward comments as these could be seen to prejudice future decisions.

The campaigners also complained that the Town Council had not suggested removing the meadow as potential development land when consulted on the new Local Plan and complained about the Council's single word answers to some of the questions in the Plan. Councillors were accused of putting forward uninformed and unrepresentative answers; such as their answers to questions about peat soils.

Cllr Gowler assured them that all the questions had been carefully considered and discussed and majority decisions had been put forward but there had been little opportunity to include more detail.

The campaigners argued the Wenny Meadow land had once been a landscaped park while councillors pointed out it had become farmland and many of the trees on the site were to be preserved as part of the plans.

Another resident asked what green spaces were planned and Cllr Smith said the Council had tried to create a green haven on land it owned in the form of the pocket park.

Fumes and pollution: Another resident was concerned about car fumes/emissions which were polluting parts of the town, in particular the bus stop area in East Park Street and the underpass to Jacks. The resident said he had complained to various bodies including environmental health at FDC, Defra and the Wildlife Trust. He suggested putting in hedges and trees at the underpass and on the edge of the bypass to counter the problem and asked if the Town Council needed evidence to justify this action. The Clerk explained that there were plans to improve the play area at Larham Way, which was next to the underpass, so it might be possible to include some planting as part of that project.

205) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the full council meeting held on 7th January 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

206) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 183) Connections Bus: The Clerk reported that the Connections Bus had now started meeting again and would meet every Wednesday from 6pm to 7.30pm in term time in Furrowfields car park (in a location agreed with FDC). The organisers were delighted by the Council's decision to fund the bus for a year.

Min 196) Ely Shuttle Bus: Cllr Carney asked if the St Ives service could be increased to twice a month. The Mayor said she, Cllr Haggata and the Clerk would be meeting with FACT representatives the following day to discuss the bus services.

Min 182) Boadicea Court: Cllr Hay said she had been liaising between the residents of Boadicea Court and County Highways. She had received an explanation about the costs quoted for installing double yellow lines and they were a worst case scenario which Highways had a duty to inform residents about. Costs were also higher because it was anticipated the work might take two days due to the number of cars parked in the road. Cllr Hay had asked the residents to make a quick decision on whether they were prepared to fund the work because there was a possibility that the work could be undertaken at the same time as the lining work in Huntingdon Road, thus reducing the costs.

207) Police Matters

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

Local Police

Please see attached the partially confidential report from Sgt Richard Lugg and PCSO Dawn Rae on the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team's work over the past month.

Please also see the confidential report of a police liaison meeting with Sgt Lugg.

Neighbourhood Alerts

15/1/20: Warning about courier fraud targeting elderly people.

21/1/20: Latest edition of Our News, the e-newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch.

24/1/20: Invitation to complete a survey as part of Cambridgeshire Road Safety Partnership's review of local road safety governance, strategy and delivery.

28/1/20: Notification that almost £88,000 was lost to courier fraud across Cambridgeshire in January alone. In 6 of the 7 instances the fraudster cold-called the victim by telephone, posing as a police officer claiming they had someone in custody as part of a fraud investigation and asking the victims to withdraw cash or purchase Amazon vouchers.

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

Members had received copies of the latest FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV updates (**copy attached**).

Members were concerned about an increase of dogs' mess left on the town's pavements and it was agreed to report the following areas to the Street Scene officer:

Park Street, High Street, St Martin's Road, outside Glebelands School and Ash Grove.

It was reported that members of Street Pride had collected a horrendous amount of rubbish on their latest litter pick and it was agreed to send the Council's thanks for all their hard work.

209) Financial Officer's Report

Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 28th January 2020 showing expenditure of £245,360.29 and income of £260,193.41 (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.

Replacement Guttering & Downpipe to Rear of the Council Building

Members were reminded that they had previously been informed that the guttering and down pipe at the rear of the council offices urgently needed replacing. The Financial Officer advised that three contractors were invited to quote for the works; however only one quotation was received back.

The quotation was for £798 which included materials, labour and rubbish clearance.

Under Financial Regulations 4.1 the Clerk and RFO in conjunction with the Mayor could authorise works up to £1,000. On this basis Members were advised that the quotation had been accepted and the works had been booked in for the 7th February 2020.

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

210) Council's Gardening Contract Renewal

Members were informed that the Town Council's gardening contract was up for renewal as costs and prices needed to be revisited after two years.

The Financial Officer reminded Members that she sent out an email to all Members asking for approval to go ahead with the renewal process as 4 weeks' notice needed to be given to the current contractor. Nine Members replied giving their approval to go ahead. The Financial Officer advised Members that letters have been sent out to three local contractors (one of them being the current contractor) inviting them to tender for the gardening services

as per the Town Council's Financial Regulations. The closing date for quotations was noon on the 24th February 2020.

Members would be advised of the quotation results and recommendations for consideration at the March 2020 Council meeting.

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

211) Council's Insurance Policy – To Agree Renewal

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

Members were advised that the Financial Officer had gone out to three different insurance companies who specialised in Town & Parish Council insurance to obtain a best value quotation as listed below.

	Annual	3 Year contract
1) Came & Company (Ecclesiastical)	£1,909.05	£1,816.10
2) Norris & Fisher (Ageas)	None provided	£1,671.67
3) Zurich Municipal	£2,223.96	£2,120.49

After much deliberation, emails and detailed talks with all the insurance companies/brokers the Financial Officer obtained an almost like for like policy schedule from each of them. This enabled the Council to receive competitive quotations for comparison and approval.

Zurich Municipal's original quotation came in highest, just over £300 to the second highest quotation for the 3-year contract. The quote from Norris & Fisher came in lowest, £144.00 lower to the second highest quotation.

Came and Company Brokers obtained a mid-range quotation from Ecclesiastical who were keen to get Chatteris Town Council on their books. They provide Local Council insurance to many Parish and Town Councils in the Cambridgeshire area.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she received a last-minute reduced quotation from Zurich. The new quotation was for 1 year £1,907.13 and 3 years 1,849.45, making a reduction of £316.83 and £271.04 respectfully.

The Financial Officer advised Members that Came & Company offered a free service, as part of the insurance deal, to provide a business manager on a one-to-one basis. They looked at the Asset Registers, risk assessments and advised on any queries the Council might have with its insurance and compliancy procedures. They also supplied generic templates and provided help in understanding the insurance policy and details the Insurers expected of the Council.

i.e. to maintain the correct records and complete the right assessments and surveys that were required for insurance purposes.

Zurich Municipal had been the Council's insurers for many years and had always been very proactive and helpful. Norris & Fisher provided the lowest quotation and had been helpful and informative in the quotation process. Came & Company provided a mid-table quotation to include the additional services outlined above.

On this basis The Financial Officer recommended that Council **Approve** a 3-year contract with Ecclesiastical Insurance through Came & Company as their quotation and services offered a best value quotation to the Council.

Members voiced their concerns that they were not happy that Zurich didn't provide the Council with a best value quote until the last minute and agreed that Came & Company should be **approved** to provide the Council's insurance on a 3-year contract.

212) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll February 20	1,058.92
Clerk	Payroll February 20	1,538.01
Pension Fund	Payroll February 20	1,365.37
HMRC	Payroll February 20	629.90
Zen Internet	Website Feb-Mar + Domain name Annual renewal	22.78
Onecom	Phone Bill January	76.44
Wave	Estimated Office Water Bill (Refund of £524.75 being processed)	410.58
CPRE	Countryside Membership renewal	36.00
Barclays Bank	Charges	24.40
Communicorp	Local Councils Update subscription renewal	75.00
Camguard Fire & Security	New Keypad & system reset re Alarm	136.80

FDC	CCTV Contribution to running costs	2023 7 of 11 21,270.00
Dean Odell	Magician Friday Night Summer Festival Dep	100.00
KECCA	Chatteris Festival Quiz	29.50
Clerk	Mileage reimbursement LHI Meeting	9.00
	Road Planings Entrance Little Acre	778.80
FDC	Elections cost for the May2019 local election	7,034.03
Total		34,595.53

213) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held on Tuesday 28th January 2019 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to e) (as shown on the **appended list**). Further information had been received about applications a) and b) as outlined by the developer in the Open Forum. The planning officer had also explained that Sui Generis meant a use that did not fall into any particular use class. Councillors considered one further application and it was agreed to forward the following recommendations to Fenland District Council:

- a) Recommend Refusal. The application will adversely affect the amenity of the area and will detract from the street scene in a conservation area as it is not in keeping with the area. It will have a detrimental effect on neighbouring businesses and will exacerbate existing parking problems in the area. (Cllr Gowler declared an interest).
- b) Recommend Refusal. The application will adversely affect the amenity of the area and will detract from the street scene in a conservation area as it is not in keeping with the area. It will have a detrimental effect on neighbouring businesses and will exacerbate existing parking problems in the area. (Cllr Gowler declared an interest).
- c) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- d) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- e) Support
- f) Support

The Clerk had also received information that an appeal by Mr and Mrs Jaggard against Fenland District Council's refusal to grant planning permission for the erection of a dwelling on land east of 24 Pound Road had been allowed and planning permission had been granted.

The applications for a whip aerial at 21 The Hawthorns and for new floodlights at the tennis club in New Road had been granted planning permission by FDC.

214) Community Right to Bid Nomination from Save Wenny Meadows

Fenland District Council had informed the Council that a Community Right to Bid nomination had been received from an unincorporated body (Save Wenny Meadows) regarding Wenny Meadows in Chatteris.

FDC had received a request to nominate the site as an Asset of Community Value and would consider the nomination prior to the 16th March 2020. The Town Council was asked if it wished to make any comments.

Cllr Hay explained that if the site was nominated as an Asset of Community Value it would give the Save Wenny Meadows group an opportunity to bid for the land but the landowners did not have to accept that bid.

Councillors gave views in favour and against the nomination but in the end Councillors agreed to make 'No Comment' on the nomination.

215) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 14th January 2020 (**copy attached**).

L48) Bollards: Cllr Murphy said an order had gone in for three lockable bollards for the parish church grounds and more wooden bollards would be erected to stop cars parking on grassed areas once underground water pipes had been located. Councillors pointed out the faces of the Clock on Jubilee Gardens were out of synch. This had been reported but Cllr Murphy said the manufacturers had warned the clock was nearing the end of its useful life.

L50) Pocket Park: Cllr Smith reported that the additional bollard had been erected and this would hopefully prevent 4 wheel drive vehicles accessing the park from the Old Railway Line. The base had also gone in for the Fen Tiger statue. She said the park was looking very good and a lot of planting had taken place with a further planting day due to take place on the 15th February. Cllr Haggata suggested it might be an ideal time to look for more land for the park and Cllr Petrou asked if the Council would be interested in him setting up a couple of beehives at the park. Members were enthusiastic about the idea.

L47, 51 and 52: The Clerk said she had further information about EVC points and VE Day 75 celebrations for the next Leisure meeting and Ms Brown, of ACRE, had agreed to attend the March meeting of the leisure group to speak about the Fens Biosphere project.

L53 Annual Town Meeting: Members were asked to note that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on the 22nd May at the King Edward Centre. Cllr Hay gave her apologies.

216) Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Official Opening

Councillors had received a copy of the press report about the plans for the opening:

‘A youngster from Chatteris will help officially open Chatteris’s first Pocket Park on the 25th April 2020. The youngster, who will be chosen through a drawing competition, will cut the ribbon when Little Acre Fen Pocket Park is officially opened at a special ceremony. Another young winner will open the dipping pond at the park.

Children are being invited to submit an A4 drawing of their favourite, native wildlife creature by the 27th March.

The Mayor, Cllr Linda Ashley, is expected to welcome everyone to the opening event at 10.30am on the 25th April and give a brief history of the park which has been created by Chatteris Town Council and is now being developed and maintained by volunteer members of FLAPP (Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park).

Visitors will be able to join a guided walk around the park to see how it has developed from waste land to a tranquil green space where residents can enjoy the vast open skies of the Fens. Young visitors will be able to take part in an activity trail and be one of the first to try their hand at pond dipping in the new pond. Everyone is advised to come on foot (as parking is limited) and wear their wellies!

Little Acre Fen Pocket Park can either be accessed from West Street (turn right along the drove at the end of West Street) or from the Old Railway Line Footpath.’

The Clerk said a number of people who had been instrumental in ensuring the project got underway would be invited along to the event.

217) Reminder of Council’s Press and Social Media Policy

Members were given a copy of the Council’s Press and Social Media Guidance and Policy which was agreed by the Council on the 6th October 2015.

218) Christmas Market in Chatteris

The Clerk had spoken to the officer at Fenland District Council responsible for organising the Wisbech and March Christmas Markets and as suspected she confirmed FDC did not have the capacity to organise another Christmas market. She also warned that as such markets were now very popular visitors’ expectations were high.

The Mayor suggested the best way forward might be to organise a market as part of the Christmas Lights Switch On event as an audience was guaranteed and the roads were already closed. She pointed out part of the High Street was always cut off to traffic but the fairground

rides did not extend for the length of the road closure; this would be an ideal spot for the market stalls.

It was suggested raising the idea with the Christmas Lights committee. The Clerk pointed out the lights committee were already fully committed that night and someone else would have to organise the market stalls.

219) Traffic Issues

LHI: Cllr Haggata reported that he and the Clerk had attended an LHI panel meeting to speak in favour of the application for LHI funding for a 20mph zone outside Cromwell Community College (at school times) and traffic calming measures. He was pleased to report that it had been a very positive meeting and panel members appeared to be in favour of the scheme, especially as the school would soon be welcoming four year old pupils. The results of the application would be known in March.

Potholes: Cllr Hay reported that 45 potholes had been identified in Stocking Drove and as a result the road would be closed between the 5th and 10th March for re-surfacing works. Cllr Smith asked if there was any news on repairs to Rosemary Lane and Cllr Hay agreed to follow it up. She said she was waiting until the new financial year before reminding Highways of their promised work in the town.

Car Park: Cllr Hay also reported that the car park at the entrance to Cromwell Community College from Eastwood was to be re-surfaced but she admitted the car park in Eastwood was not included as there still appeared to be arguments between FDC and the County Council about who was responsible for the work.

South Park Street: The Clerk had received notification that South Park Street would be closed to traffic from the 10th to the 16th March to facilitate new electrical supply works.

Road works: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received.

220) Correspondence

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

The Clerk said an additional item of correspondence had been received from FDC which was not on the list and she asked Cllr Benney to speak on the item.

Cllr Benney was delighted to announce that over £4 million was to be invested in Chatteris to bring jobs and economic growth to the town. The Combined Authority had agreed that £3.1m from the Local Growth Fund would be used to create a Manufacturing Launchpad in Chatteris and a further £997,000 from the fund would be used to develop new business space at Fenland District Council's South Fens Business Centre in the town.

Cllr Benney said the funding promised would provide investment and security for the town.

The funding was agreed by the Board of the Mayoral Combined Authority when the authority approved Fenland's four Growing Fenland Masterplans. The plans would be used to bid for a share of £5m pump-prime funding earmarked for the Masterplans.

Cllr Benney said Stainless Metalcraft, who were behind the Manufacturing Launchpad, were over the moon with the funding which would ensure the long term presence of one of the town's major employers

Councillors unanimously agreed it was excellent news for the town.

Local Plan: The Clerk had downloaded details of the site submissions for Chatteris and the green space submissions. The report warned that FDC was not committed to any sites identified in the document, they were sites promoted to FDC not by FDC. Cllr Benney said FDC were expecting more potential building sites to be put forward during the next stage of the Local Plan consultation.

221) Reports

There were no reports.

222) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.