

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 5th May 2020

2040

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th May 2020 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

1) To Agree Adoption of Covid-19 Temporary Standing Order

Members unanimously **agreed** to adopt a temporary standing order to allow Council meetings to take place in a variety of ways including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call numbers and to allow voting to take place. The temporary order would cover the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic and followed advice set out in:

[1] The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; In force between the dates of 4 April 2020 – May 2021

[2] National Association of Local Councils, Legal Briefing Note, 3 April 2020.

2) Election of Mayor

Cllr Benney proposed Cllr Ashley as Mayor for a second year, seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by all. Cllr Ashley was duly elected as Mayor.

Cllr Ashley said she had thoroughly enjoyed her year as Mayor although she had been absent for part of the year due to ill health. However she was looking forward to whatever might be possible in the coming year.

3) Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Benney continue as Deputy Mayor for a second year, seconded by Cllr Newell and agreed by all. Cllr Benney was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.

4) 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 FDC's planning committee.

5) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllr Carney sent apologies for absence as he was working but he had submitted his views on the items listed on the agenda.

6) Appointments to Outside Bodies & Election of Working Groups

Members had before them a list of groups and the Councillors who represented the Council on those groups. The Clerk asked members to confirm they were happy to represent the Council and made amendments as advised. The revised list was agreed as follows:

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

Cllr Smith was thanked for serving on the CCTV Partner Liaison group.

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

Leisure and General Purposes: Cllrs Ashley, Benney, Carney, Charrier, Haggata, Hay, Newell, Petrou and Smith.

Planning: Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Gowler, Haggata, Newell, Petrou and Smith.

Members were asked if they were interested in becoming a governor of either Cromwell Community College or Kingsfield Primary School. Cllr Hay expressed an interest in joining the governing bodies of both schools, Cllr Gowler was interested in joining the Kingsfield governing body and Cllr Newell the Cromwell governing body.

7) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members considered approving the Mayor's Allowance for 2020/21 as shown in the budget. It was **resolved** that an allowance of up to £1,550 be paid to the Mayor in respect of expenses incurred in the performance of official duties under the scheme approved by the Council on 11th January 2011 and in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Regulations.

8) Open Forum

The Mayor invited members of the public to speak for up to 15 minutes. The two members of the public viewing the meeting both declined the invitation to speak and said they were merely observing proceedings.

9) To Approve the Minutes of the March Town Council Meeting and the Notes of the April Briefing Session

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday March 3rd 2020 and the notes of the Briefing Session dated Tuesday 7th April 2020 were agreed and were signed later by the Mayor.

10) To Approve Decisions Taken at the April Briefing Session and Matters Arising from that Session

Decisions: Members had a list of all matters agreed at the Briefing Session held on the 7th April 2020 and were reminded they required ratification by the full council:

- 1) Under Item 6: End of Year Balance Sheet & Bank Reconciliation – Approval of the detailed accounts, bank reconciliation and analyses of the Annual Return for 2019/20.
- 2) Under Item 7: Payment of Accounts as set out in the Briefing Notes.
- 3) Under Item 8: Grant to Summer Reading Scheme in the Library - £350.
- 4) Under Item 9: Membership of CAPALC at a cost of £1,218.30.
- 5) Under Item 10: Planning Recommendations
- 6) Under Item 11: Course of Action to be taken if Public Meetings are banned.
- 7) Under Item 12: A Recording of Meetings Policy
- 8) Under Item 13: A General Privacy Policy

The Mayor introduced each point and all were **agreed** by Councillors. 3) Cllr Smith declared an interest and abstained from voting and Cllr Hay also abstained from voting.

Matters Arising: The Clerk had received an update from the organiser of Chatteris Community Car scheme as the scheme had received an emergency grant from the Town Council to cover the cost of collecting and delivering prescriptions to the vulnerable in Chatteris.

Mr Phil Couldridge said 13 drivers had been enlisted, the scheme had a client base of 85 and the drivers had carried out 106 trips, of which 88 were prescription collections and 18 were shopping trips. The car scheme had been working with FACT by passing to them any big shopping requests and FACT passed to the car scheme any prescription requests and this was working well. By the 2nd May the car scheme had paid out £258 which left £342 in the pot for prescription collections. This was likely to be sufficient funds for May.

Mr Couldridge admitted his main concern was that when the return to work started he might

lose his new drivers and the old regular drivers might not return. Mr Couldridge said he believed the Chatteris car scheme was the only one in Cambridgeshire which was currently working.

11) Police Matters

Members had received the following report:

“Local Police

The confidential report from Sgt Richard Lugg has already been forwarded by email.

Neighbourhood Alerts

8/4/20: Information about distraction burglaries in Wisbech and Peterborough and how to reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

9/4/20: Call from the Neighbourhood Watch Network and the Chief Constable for people to continue to conform to the Government guidelines over the Bank Holiday weekend.

14/4/20: Information on how to access support and advice for those living with domestic abuse.

17/4/20: Two of many updates from PCSO Jonathan Hall, one giving details of a car in Chatteris which contained a quantity of cannabis and another about the arrest of a man causing problems outside Aldi in Chatteris.

22/4/20: Notification that PCSO Hall came to Chatteris to check on shops and pharmacies and to visit a couple of addresses where there had been reports of large social gatherings taking place.

28/4/20: Neighbourhood Watch’s May 2020 e-newsletter.

29/4/20: Advice for people helping others during lockdown including what to do if you are concerned about someone.”

The report was noted.

12) FDC, Street Scene, CCTV & Section 106 Updates & Dog Public Space Protection Order Review

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

Cllr Smith said she had noted more dogs mess recently as people were not cleaning up after their dogs; London Road was particularly bad.

They had also received a letter about FDC’s Dog Public Space Protection Order which celebrated its third anniversary on the 4th May 2020. Current legislation only allowed for the enforcement to run for 3 years before the Council had to review it and decide whether to proceed with a new order or let the existing one end and not replace it.

The plan was to renew it as the following activities had to be adhered to by the order:

- Dog faeces to be removed from any land to which the public have access.
- Dogs to be put on a lead when requested by an authorised officer.

- Dogs to be on a lead in some open play areas, public facilities, closed cemeteries, and churchyards.
- Dogs to be excluded from fenced/gated play areas and open cemeteries.

In Chatteris the Order covered Huntingdon Road and Larham Way play areas, Meeks Cemetery and St Peter's and St Paul's Churchyard. Members asked why Wenny and Furrowfields Recreation grounds were not covered and Cllr Murphy explained that these were areas where dogs were allowed off their leads. However dog owners could still be fined if they allowed their pets to foul in those areas and did not clear it up.

Members agreed the Order should be extended for another three years.

13) Consideration and Approval of Annual Governance Statement Section 1 (Agar 2019/20)

Members had before them Appendix A & Section 1 of the Agar 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement both (**attached**).

Members were reminded that Appendix A sets out the assurances that Members were required to attest to in Section 1 of the AGAR 2019/20, together with qualification of each section to enable the Council to provide the required assurance over the signatures of the Mayor and the Clerk.

This was to be considered and approved in advance of the Accounting Statements (section 2 of the AGAR) and minuted accordingly.

The paragraph numbers and the headings in bold in Appendix A correspond to the individual parts of the Governance Statement contained in the 2019/20 AGAR.

It was **Resolved** that: -

The Annual Governance Statement as detailed in **Appendix A** be considered and approved by the Members as a whole for signature by the Mayor and the Clerk prior to the approval of the Accounting Statements.

14) Approval of the Accounting Statements (Section 2 Agar 2019/20) and the Annual Return with amendments

[1] Introduction

Members were reminded that at the Briefing Session held on the 7th April 2020 they approved a draft Annual Return report and noted the draft Accounting Statements (Section 2 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20).

The Accounting Statements and the Annual Governance Statement could not be approved as the documents had not been received from the External Auditors.

The documents had now been received and completed for Members consideration and approval at the meeting.

Members were advised that the final figures for the end of year accounts had slightly changed due to late invoices being received and payment made in the new financial year.

The creditor invoices received late were for the Jan-March quarterly water rates from Wave. One for the Premises £43.70 and one for the allotments £103.24. This increased the creditors figures by £146.94 making the final creditors figure £1,651.52. The premises water rates increased the pro rata Museum services re-charge figure by 21.84, this in turn increased the debtor's figure to £4,915.98. The above figures had been incorporated in the revised and final end of year balance sheet and accounting statement. The final net current assets decreased by £125.00 from 305,897.92 to £305,772.83.

[2] Type of Audit

Members were reminded that the Council's accounts for 2019/20 should attract a 'Basic' audit as neither the total income nor the total expenditure for 2019/20 exceeds £200,000.

[3] Annual Governance (See Separately under Agenda Item No 13)

This was considered and approved in advance of the Accounting Statements.

[4] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2019/20)

Members were advised that the Financial Officer was required to certify and sign the document in advance of the Council meeting. The Mayor was required to sign the document after approval by Council. As required the Accounting Statement was approved after the approval of the Annual Governance Statement. The minute reference had been recorded for both accordingly.

[5] Statement of Accounts

The detailed Statement of Accounts was **enclosed (Balance Sheet)**.

Members were advised to note and approve the changes made to the balance sheet as explained above in Item 1.

[6] It was Resolved that: -

[i] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2019/20) certified by the Financial Officer and endorsed by the Mayor be approved.

[ii] The detailed accounts and analyses of the Annual Return for 2019/20, as submitted with the changes, was noted and approved.

15) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll May 2020	1,067.68
Clerk	Payroll May 2020	1,546.77
Pension Fund	Payroll May 2020	878.67

HMRC	Payroll May 2020	2046 7 of 12 608.80
Zen Internet	Website May-Jun2020	10.79
Stuart Barnes	Dog & Duck show cancellation fee re summer festival	223.50
R J Warren	Gardening Services & additional cuts	986.70
Capalc	Annual Membership	1,218.30
Onecom	April's bill	79.87
Wave	Council premises water bill	43.70
Wave	LHS of Honeysome Rd Allotments water bill	103.24
Clerk	Reim re: Zoom Monthly subscription bill & webcam	64.38
Cfcorporate Finance	Quarterly photocopier lease	239.95
King Edward Community Centre Association	Annual Grant	3,000.00
Summer Reading Challenge	Grant Summer Reading Challenge Chatteris Library	350.00
Total		10,422.35

Cllrs agreed that work to repair the potholes in the roads at the Allotments should go ahead at a cost of £120. Cllr Benney said if more work was needed it was possible to obtain road planeings for the work.

16) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 28th April 2020 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to n) (as shown on the

appended list). The recommendations were ratified and it was agreed to return all applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Recommend Refusal, no reason given for removal. Summer House was built when tree was well established.
- e) Recommend Refusal, detrimental impact on neighbouring properties and detrimental impact on the street scene.
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Noted
- j) Support
- k) Support
- l) Support but request footpath is widened.
- m) Support
- n) Support

The Clerk said the Council had been invited to speak at the FDC planning meeting on the 13th May when the plan to erect a dwelling on land west of Gaultree Lodge, London Road, was considered. However the officer's recommendation was to refuse which was in line with the Town Council's recommendation.

Church Grounds: Councillors were asked if they agreed a letter should be sent to FDC's horticultural officer, Mr Kevin Wilkins, criticising the decision to kill off a large area of grass at the rear of the Parish Church to create a wildflower garden. Cllr Ashley read out the proposed letter and a majority of councillors agreed it should be sent.

Members also agreed that a letter should be sent to the Diocese of Ely asking them to change their minds and grant permission for the RAF memorial stone to be positioned in the grounds at the front of the Parish Church.

An architect had asked if the Council would support in principle the idea of two frontage properties on land adjacent 118 London Road. It was agreed to make no comment as any comment could prejudice the Council's ability to comment and make a recommendation on any future planning application for the site.

17) Traffic Issues

Wenny Road LHI Scheme

Members had received a copy of the proposed design for the traffic calming and a 20mph speed limit in Wenny Road outside Cromwell Community College at schools start and end times. The Mayor gave an explanation of the proposals which she welcomed. In an email the engineer explained it was hoped the scheme would be combined with the construction of the zebra crossing so savings could be made. Once he heard back from the Town Council the plan was to obtain a target cost for the works and to request a road safety audit be undertaken. Cllr Benney was very pleased with the proposals and said the scheme was long overdue. Councillors agreed it was an excellent scheme.

Cllr Hay commented that the scheme could not have come at a better time with the primary school opening on the Cromwell site in September.

Double Yellow Lines

The Clerk had requested an update on when the double yellow lines would be installed in Boadicea Court and the new TRO for Huntingdon Road would come into force. She had pointed out lines had been repainted in the centre of the town and now was an excellent time to carry out such works as there were so few cars about.

The Clerk had been informed that two comments for the schemes had been received, one for each. As a result the schemes would have to go to a delegated decision and that was likely to take a while due to the current situation. Cllr Gowler commented that it was disgraceful it took so much bureaucracy to paint a few lines and Cllr Smith agreed it was very frustrating. Cllr Hay offered to chase up the matter and said she believed delegated decisions went to the local county councillor – herself.

Bus Services Review

Members had been sent details of a review of Fenland bus services and local bus stop infrastructure. The information gathered would support the Fenland Bus Service Report being developed to aid the Combined Authority Bus Service Review and Bus Reform Task Force. The bus service report compiled by FDC/s transport development manager, Mrs Wendy Otter, had already pointed out bus services in Fenland were in decline as a result of rural bus services being commercially challenging and this had led to fewer people using the service. This had resulted in difficulties accessing railway stations, healthcare and employment.

The report identified the particular problems for Chatteris being access to further education, access to Huntingdon, the lack of bus services to Ely on a Sunday and no connectivity with railway services at Manea, March or Huntingdon.

The Clerk had carried out a full audit of bus stops in Chatteris noting if there were flags/markers, timetable cases, litter bins, seating or shelters. There were mainly just faded signs at most stops. The results of the audit had been sent to FDC.

The Clerk asked members for help in completing an online questionnaire about Fenland bus services. Cllr Charrier commented that the current bus service was shockingly bad.

Members agreed the Clerk should make the following points:

- i) The need for an hourly service;
- ii) The need for a direct bus service to Cambridge;
- iii) The need for adequate connections with rail stations;
- iv) The need to promote services and to sell bus services as a proper business;
- v) The benefits of franchising the service so profitable routes were able to subsidise non-profitable rural routes;
- vi) The need for better services to get people to work in the mornings and later services to get them home at night.
- vii) The need for a consistent and quality service.
- viii) The need for later bus services and weekend services to allow access to entertainment venues.

Cllr Hay said she was on a Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was on a working group which was looking at the bus services review. Towards the end of the year the review committee was expected to put forward four options for bus services in the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The need for different options for rural and urban services had already been identified. The working group was hoping to be able to consider the options before the bus review group finalised them so it could recommend the most suitable option. Cllr Hay said members had been impressed by the person leading the bus services review group. He had been involved in transport at Manchester.

Cllr Hay suggested employers should be encouraged to encourage their employees to use public transport as this would also help the climate change agenda by cutting car usage and would make bus services more viable. The services would need to link in with the proposed Cambs Metro. Cllr Benney said the problem for bus services was that employees did not have linked up work times. He was worried that future use of public transport would be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr Smith was encouraged that franchising services was being considered.

Cllr Haggata pointed out that many local people did not have access to private transport and their access to entertainment and leisure facilities was, therefore, restricted

Next LHI Scheme

Members were informed that four ideas had been put forward for LHI schemes which could be considered for LHI funding in 2021/22. Members were asked to choose which scheme should go forward. The schemes under consideration were:

- i) Reducing the speed limit in Doddington Road from 40mph to 30mph;
- ii) Extending the double yellow lines and improving the junctions of Wenny Road/East Park Street and Wood Street/South Park Street;
- iii) Installing double yellow lines to improve the Station Street/Station Road junction.
- iv) Installing double yellow lines in New Road at its junctions with other roads.

Members spoke in favour of the first two schemes. Cllr Carney favoured scheme i) as did Cllr Taylor who pointed out many new homes had been built along the road and the speed of some cars was scary. Cllrs Ashley, Benney, Hay and Smith all spoke in favour of scheme ii) pointing out it was a blind corner and people parked right up to junctions giving motorists entering the road nowhere to go. They pointed out the road would get busier as it led to the entrance for the temporary new primary school. Cllr Hay said it was an accident waiting to happen. Cllr Benney suggested one solution might be a mini roundabout and change of priority for the road. Cllrs Petrou and Smith both agreed that if yellow lines were installed they would need to be enforced.

Members were asked to vote on the two schemes with 3 being in favour of i) and 7 in favour of ii). It was, therefore, agreed that improvements to the junctions of Wenny Road/East Park Street and Wood Street/South Park Street should go forward as the Council's next LHI bid.

Road works

The latest bulletins listing road works and events affecting the highway had been received as had the IHMC incident report for March 2020. There were warnings that scheduled works might change or be cancelled at short notice due to a change in advice issued by the Government. All non-essential works had been suspended including the 2020 Micro Asphalt Programme.

18) Correspondence

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

Connections Bus: Cllr Smith suggested the bus project might be able to apply to Blake's Charity for funding. She also pointed out that on the Connections Bus website there was no mention of the bus operating at Chatteris and suggested urging the organisers to add Chatteris to the list of stops.

19) Reports

Since no events or public meetings were taking place there were no reports.

20) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.