

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 7th July 2020

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 7th July 2020 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

43) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllr Charrier sent apologies for absence.

44) 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.

45) Open Forum

Three members of the public were viewing the meeting and two took the opportunity to address councillors.

Both began by thanking councillors for embracing the new format of video conferencing which allowed the public more access to meetings and said they hoped similar arrangements could be incorporated after lockdown ended.

The first resident then referred to the Growing Fenland – Chatteris Masterplan report pointing out that the main priority for local residents was more access to parks and green spaces yet there were no proposals for the provision of more parks and green spaces or access to the countryside in the report, just a proposal to establish a website to promote the existing assets.

She also said the decline of the High Street was another concern to the public but key proposals 3 and 6 appeared to be striving against one another and she suggested 6, develop a stronger cultural offer and evening economy, would deliver better outcomes for the community.

The second resident said she was viewing the meeting as she had a real interest in the vision for Chatteris.

The Mayor explained that the Masterplan would be fully discussed by councillors later in the meeting.

46) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2020 as a correct record.

47) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 25) Connections Bus: Connections Bus Project manager Mr Alan Webb had informed the Clerk that the National Youth Agency was still advising only online, detached and 1-2-1 for high needs young people activities were allowed, therefore, it was unlikely the bus would be able to start in September.

Recognising the importance of re-engaging with young people at the difficult time, Mr Webb suggested two options which might be of interest to the Town Council. The first was detached youth work which would give youth workers the opportunity to be out on the streets interacting with young people. This was likely to be available from the end of July and would cost £180 per session.

The second option was an online, 10 week babysitting course which would start in mid-September and would be for 12, possibly 15, young people. The cost would be £1,380 and young people would be charged £15 each.

The Mayor said the first option would be very beneficial, especially as the youth workers would know the young people who had attended the bus. Other Councillors agreed option one was the best as that young people had already spent 3 months on the internet and parents would not appreciate them being encouraged to spend even more time on-line.

Members agreed the Clerk should find out how long the detached work would last and when it would begin and should encourage the youth workers to work with the young people until they returned to school.

Min 33) Tree Works: The Clerk said Anglian Water had confirmed the dangerous trees near the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park were not on their land and the Clerk had, therefore, obtained two quotes to cut back the trees. Warren's had supplied the cheaper quote and had carried out the work thereby removing the danger.

Min 38) High Street Drains: The Clerk said she had received confirmation that Anglian Water had cleaned the High Street drains.

Cllr Hay said she had been approached about standing water in New Road as a result of blocked gulleys at the side of the road. She had reported the problem to Highways who had promised to look into it.

48) Police Matters

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

Local Police

Two confidential reports from Sgt Richard Lugg had already been forwarded by email.

Notification had been received that Acting Police and Crime Commissioner, Ray Bisby, would be holding group meetings for parish, town and city council representatives online. This would be the opportunity to speak to the Commissioner about policing issues pertinent to the local area and of concern to local residents. A local police officer would also be in attendance. The first meeting for Fenland councils would be on Monday 14th September from 6.30pm to 8pm. Parish/Town Council representatives would need to email the police so a Microsoft Teams invite could be sent to them.

Neighbourhood Alerts

3/6/20: Notification that PCSOs visited play parks to ensure they were locked and not being used.

5/6/20: Information about Neighbourhood Watch week (7th to 13th June) which celebrated neighbours.

9/6/20: Update on PCSOs visits to towns where they observed everyone social distancing.

15/6/ & 1/7/20: Findings on consultation into the need for a new police hub on the outskirts of Cambridge and alert to a new consultation on proposals for that hub to be on the outskirts of Milton.

16/6/20: Advice on how to protect yourself against coronavirus related scams.

17/6/20: Warning after Fenland phone scam when an elderly gentleman received a call from ‘police officers’ in Fenland advising him he would be taken on a trip to Spain but would first need to draw out more than £3,500 from his bank.

1/7/20: Update from PCSOs about being called out to a ‘concern for person’ and two neighbourhood issues.

6/7/20: Advice to contact FDC if you witness fly tipping and not to tackle the person responsible.

The Mayor and Cllr Smith agreed to represent the Town Council at the meeting with the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner.

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

Members had received a copy of the latest updates (**copy attached**) along with an update on the re-opening of businesses in Fenland following the easing of lockdown rules. The updates were noted.

50) Financial Officer’s Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 30th June 2020 showing expenditure of £28,945.73 and income of £79,388.72 (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.

51) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll July 2020	1,067.68
Clerk	Payroll July 2020	1,546.77
Pension Fund	Payroll July 2020	878.67
HMRC	Payroll July 2020	608.80
Zen Internet	Website July- August 2020	10.79
R J Warren	Gardening Services & additional cuts	1,034.70
Onecom	June phone bill	75.95
Clerk	Reim mileage, tree Stakes, Zoom & land signs	72.52
Flying Fysh	Council offices cleaning	70.00
British Gas	Gas Bill	231.12
British Gas	Elec Bill	243.56
Cambridge Asbestos Removal	Removal of asbestos from allotments	288.00
Warboys Somersham & Pidley Drainage Board	Drainage Rates Allotments	112.40
Middle Level Commissioners	Drainage Rates Allotments	146.12
Travis Perkins	Cement re Little acre	22.96
R J Warren	Pollard Willow Trees Pocket Park & Allotment road repair	684.00
Total		7,094.04

52) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received no new grant applications for the quarter.

She was still waiting for additional information from Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire with regards to their previous grant application in April. Members were advised they would be updated as soon as the Financial Officer had received the information.

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

53) Solar Lights in Dock Road

The Clerk had met with a representative of a solar lighting company to obtain a quotation for the cost of installing solar street lights in Dock Road.

The contractor had suggested eight 5 metre columns would be sufficient to light the road and the total cost would be £7592 plus VAT.

The Clerk said if members decided to go ahead with the scheme she would seek two further quotes, would write to all householders in Dock Road to check they had no objections to street lights being installed and would seek the permission of highways to install the lighting columns on the verges.

Cllr Hay suggested approaching Red Tile Wind Farm trust for a grant towards the cost of the lights as they would be solar-powered.

Cllr Smith was not in favour of investing in the lights warning it would open the flood gates, especially as there were other roads in the town which were not well lit, such as Blackmill Road. She pointed out it was the responsibility of FDC and the County Council to provide street lights. Cllr Gowler was also concerned about setting a precedent. The Clerk reminded members that both FDC and the County Council were adamant they would not install lighting.

The Cllr Carney & Cllr Newell spoke in favour of the lights, with Cllr Carney pointing out Dock Road was a special case and the Town Council would be seen as forward thinking by installing sustainable lighting.

Cllr Hay said the County Council were only responsible for lights on the main highway and villages had to pay for the energy costs and maintenance of their street lights. She said normally developers would be expected to install lights but Dock Road was an exceptional case as it had been developed piecemeal so she supported the Town Council providing the lights. She suggested any further requests for lights should be considered on their merits.

Cllr Murphy warned the Council to be careful as it would be responsible for maintenance and replacement of the lights. The Financial Officer said the cost of the lights could come from the night time lighting holding account, they would be insured and replacements could be budgeted for. She also pointed out the external auditors had been in contact due to the

Council's reserves and she suggested it would be a good project to spend the Council's funds on.

Members voted six against and five for installing solar lights in Dock Road and it was, therefore, agreed not to pursue the idea.

54) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 30th June 2020 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to h) (as shown on the **appended list**). The decisions were ratified and members considered six further applications. It was agreed to return all applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Noted
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Refer to Tree Officer
- k) Support
- l) Support
- m) Support
- n) Support

P6 i), Speed Limit: Members agreed to support a reduction in the speed limit in London Road from 50mph to 30mph.

P6 ii), Names: Members agreed to draw up a list of names which could be used for new developments and agreed Mr Harlock's name should be on that list. Cllr Smith said she had prepared a list of possible names for members to consider.

P7, 130 High Street: Cllr Carney said he knew the current owners of 130 High Street and it was very much a work in progress with the owners working with conservation officers at FDC to try and find a resolution to problems. He agreed the architect's first course of action should be to contact the owners.

55) Growing Fenland – Chatteris Masterplan Update

Cllr Benney began by explaining that £50,000, from the Combined Authority, had been spent on employing consultants to produce the Growing Fenland report for Chatteris. The

document was important because it proved need when applying for further funding from the Combined Authority. As a result of the report Fenland and Chatteris had fared well and Cllr Benney suggested it was the best £50,000 spent.

Since work had begun on the report, two years previously, the Combined Authority had already agreed a £3.2m grant for Stainless Metalcraft to help develop their site and build a training college which would secure jobs and ensure the company stayed in Chatteris. Whilst Metalcraft would use it to train engineers, Cllr Benney was hopeful it would also be used to train young people for the building trade because there was currently a shortage of labour making it difficult for Fenland to meet its target of building 11,000 homes over the next 20 years.

Aerotron, who had taken over the Onion factory site, had also received a substantial grant from the Combined Authority. The company, who supplied aircraft engines and parts to aircraft companies and also worked for a racing car company and the MOD, would bring 350 better paid jobs to Chatteris and also provided apprenticeships for young people.

A further £1 million from the Combined Authority and £800,000 from Fenland District Council would be spent on building 8 more units at the South Fens Business Park and a substantial sum was also being spent on Manea Railway Station, including providing a car park at the station, which would give Chatteris residents access to a nearby station.

Cllr Benney pointed out this was “fantastic” news for Chatteris and meant number 1 – ‘Grow our business base’ - of the 9 key proposals for Chatteris in the Growing Fenland plan had already been met.

The next proposal was ‘Develop the provision of skills for residents’ and this would be achieved through Metalcraft’s training college which would also be used to re-train and upskill local residents. Cllr Benney was hopeful this would increase the average wage of residents in the town.

Proposal 3, ‘Promote mixed housing development’, was being met through planning applications and 4, ‘Set up a commuter shuttle bus’, was dependent on the transport strategy being worked on by the Combined Authority.

Proposal 5, ‘Develop the Chatteris Outdoors platform’, was being worked on and would involve more signposting to existing facilities while 6, ‘Develop a stronger cultural offer and evening economy’ would come when the town expanded and new services could be attracted to the town, said Cllr Benney.

‘Create a new cycle infrastructure’, was proposal 7 and Cllr Benney pointed out the County Council were putting a lot of money into the provision of cycleways and were providing new cycle racks. Proposal 8 was ‘Provide better car and bike parking management’ and Cllr

Benney said FDC was looking into better management of car parking. The final proposal was 'Create a community project funding pot' which was being considered.

Cllr Benney pointed out there had never been a time when there had been more investment in Chatteris.

However the town still had the opportunity to bid for a further £1million worth of funding for the town and the Council had to decide which project it wished to put forward. Cllr Benney admitted he would like to see a new swimming pool but research had shown the need for a pool would not be justified until 2030 and there was no way to find the additional £1 ½ to £2million needed for a pool.

His second choice was to re-open the Mepal Outdoor Centre and provide a cycleway to the centre but the centre was in East Cambridgeshire and the district council there was currently considering a scheme. However they might be open to the idea of a shared service in future. Cllr Benney's third idea was an extension to the library to provide a cultural centre for Chatteris to include the Council chambers and the museum. Cllr Benney asked if councillors had any other ideas for an infrastructure, capital based project for the town.

Cllr Hay was in favour of trying to re-open the Mepal Outdoor Centre and the cultural centre, pointing out it should also incorporate a large meeting room, an idea supported by the Mayor. Cllr Gowler also favoured the cultural centre.

Cllr Haggata strongly supported the idea of re-opening the Mepal Outdoor Centre and accessing it via a cycleway. He said the Peterborough and Cambs waste and mineral project in conjunction with the RSPB was looking to develop a country park with a bird watching sanctuary on the other side of the Mepal road and it would be a wonderful opportunity to connect Chatteris to a country park. This would tick many of the boxes raised by residents of Chatteris.

Cllr Smith said she was impressed with the report and excited by the opportunity to put forward plans for capital investment. She was in favour of more cycleways to give access to open spaces and suggested developing a cycleway along the Old Railway Line footpath to Somersham.

Cllr Carney also favoured the cultural centre and the re-opening of Mepal Outdoor Centre and suggested all that was happening in Chatteris should be widely publicised.

Cllr Benney warned Chatteris needed to grow or it would die. He pointed out new businesses would only open in the High Street if there were more customers. He said Chatteris would not lose its community spirit by having more residents but it would give the opportunity to stop the many deliveries to the town by giving residents access to more services. Cllr Haggata said people moving to Chatteris from London and other towns would have been used to more facilities and more housing was the key to prosperity as more people would bring more

facilities. Cllr Petrou pointed out new people would bring new skills and new energy to the town.

56) To Agree New Standing Orders for Council

The Clerk said now the Council was a member of CAPALC she had been able to access the latest model Standing Orders published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The model Standing Orders were published after GDPR so it was necessary to update the Town Council's Standing Orders in line with the model set.

The main differences between the new Standing Orders and the existing Standing Orders, which were adopted in February 2015, were the references to responsibilities to provide information, responsibilities under the data protection regulations and financial controls and procurement.

The Clerk explained the Standing Orders were the written rules of a local council. Standing Orders were essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A Council could also use Standing Orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements.

Standing Orders in bold type contained legal and statutory requirements. It was recommended that Councils adopted them without changing them or their meaning. Model Standing Orders not in bold were designed to help Councils operate effectively but they did not contain statutory requirements so they could be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. For example: Chatteris Town Council had Working Groups rather than Committees so the Clerk had inserted the word Working Group into any standing order referring to a Committee.

Standing Orders 27) Attendance of Councillors and 28) Tenure of Office were not included in the latest NALC model Standing Orders but had been adopted by Chatteris Town Council in the past and it was recommended they were included in the new Standing Orders.

Councillors **resolved** to adopt the new Standing Orders.

57) Changes to Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way for Chatteris & 58) LGA Model Member Code of Conduct Consultation

It was agreed these two items should be considered at the next Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting and it was agreed that meeting should be held on Tuesday 14th July via Zoom and should be open to all councillors.

59) Community Car Scheme

The Clerk had received regular updates from the organiser of the Community Car Scheme in Chatteris, Mr Phil Couldridge. After spending lockdown collecting prescriptions and delivering shopping the aim was now to return to the car scheme's original format of taking people without transport to appointments, etc.

Initially Mr Couldridge had been concerned that the scheme's existence was threatened as serious issues had to be addressed before it could restart in its original form but he had since taken advice and had drawn up a risk assessment for drivers and passengers. His main problem now was finding sufficient drivers as many of the original drivers were worried about the continuing dangers of coronavirus and those who had helped out during lockdown were returning to work. The Clerk asked members to put the word out for anyone who might be willing to help.

Members agreed Mr Couldridge should be sent an official letter from the Council giving him a massive thanks for all the good work undertaken by the Car Scheme during lockdown, which had been so beneficial to local residents.

60) Application for Disabled Parking Bay in Wimpole Street

Councillors were informed that an application had been received by County Highways to install a disabled persons parking bay for a resident in Wimpole Street (outside number 25).

Cllr Gowler said he strongly supported the application as the applicant had been involved in a major accident in January and his recovery was going to take a long time. It was important for him to be able get into and out of his car near his home.

Cllr Hay said as the County Councillor she had supported the application. The applicant had previously attempted to gain access to the rear of his property from Salem and Lyons Court so he could park in his garden but this had not been allowed.

Cllr Petrou asked if the bay would remain if the applicant moved and the Clerk explained the bay was not allocated to a person, it could be used by any disabled driver and would remain unless there was an application to remove it.

Members **agreed** to support the application.

61) Traffic Issues

Cycle Racks: The Town Council had been asked to suggest possible sites for four temporary cycle racks in the town centre. Suggestions were put forward and sites were discussed and it was agreed to put forward the following five possible locations:

- 1) In Park Street near the market and the Empress Pool (possibly on the site currently occupied by the telephone kiosk which is to be removed).
- 2) Market Hill Gardens
- 3) The area at the junction of High Street and Boadicea Court.
- 4) On the paved area at the junction of Lindsells Walk and the High Street.
- 5) Furrowfields Recreation Ground.

Wenny Road LHI: Costings had been forwarded for the installation of the traffic calming measures (speed cushions and hatching) and 20mph part time speed limit in Wenny Road. The initial estimate had been £16,293.67 but that was quickly reduced to £15,464.17. The Town Council's contribution would be £6,000. A Road Safety Audit had been completed and the aim was to install the works following the installation of the raised zebra crossing, which it was hoped would go in during the summer holidays. Members welcomed the news.

Covid Measures: Members had received information on a website which showed measures put in place to aid social distancing across the county.

Fire Risk: A resident of Fairbairn Way had written expressing concerns about access along the road for large vehicles such as fire engines. The resident pointed out large vehicles could not get through the chicane of cars parked along the first 20 metres of road (he had two failed deliveries of building supplies because the vehicle couldn't get through) and he feared if a house caught fire or someone needed emergency medical help a fire engine or ambulance would be unable to get down the road. Members were aware of the issues and had already asked for the width of roadway not to be replicated elsewhere in Chatteris. Cllr Taylor said there had also been an issue down Burnsfield Street when a fire engine could not get through. He suggested passing places were required. Although members sympathised with residents they did not have a suggested solution to the long standing problems.

Street Sign: The Mayor thanked Cllr Smith for her hard work in re-painting the name plate for New Road, which now looked really good. She said the restoration of street name plates should be discussed at the Leisure meeting.

Updates: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received as had the IHMC Incident Report for May 2020.

62) Correspondence

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

VJ Day: The Mayor suspended the meeting to allow the Clerk to ask the Town Crier if he would be prepared to take part in the Cry for Peace Around the World on the 75th anniversary of VJ Day, on 15th August 2020. The Town Crier confirmed he was happy to pre-record the cry (possibly next to the Town Sign) and post it on social media as he had done on the

anniversary of VE Day. It was agreed to also ask Mr Norman Larke if the RBL had any plans for the day.

62) Reports

Cllr Benney reported he and Cllr Gowler were still trying to install the MVAS unit.

63) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.