

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 4th August 2020

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 4th August 2020 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

64) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllr Petrou sent apologies for absence.

65) 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.

66) Open Forum

Three members of the public were welcomed to the meeting by the Mayor. Two residents said they only wished to observe the meeting but Mr Lawrence Weetman, Chairman of Chatteris Civic Society, addressed the Council on the Society's opposition to the planning applications to demolish the listed building at Former Coach House, London Road and replace it with a two-storey, 4-bed dwelling. Mr Weetman said the owner claimed the building was not listed but Historic England stated that any buildings within the curtilage of a listed building (Fortrey House) were also covered by the listing and should only be demolished in exceptional circumstances. Mr Weetman said the Conservation Officer also stated the building should be preserved and could be repaired, a fact disputed by the owner. Mr Weetman pointed out the owner had sought permission to convert the building 9 months ago and he queried why it had deteriorated so quickly and asked if it was deliberate neglect. He argued the barrel vaulted ceiling should be preserved as it was impressive and said the loss of the building would set a terrible precedent.

Mr Weetman was also concerned that the last Conservation Area appraisal in Chatteris was carried out in 2008 and should have been reviewed every 5 years. It had now disappeared from FDC's website and he stressed the importance of a new appraisal.

Mr Weetman concluded by asking the Town Council to give the town's historic buildings the protection they deserved.

67) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2020 as a correct record.

68) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 47) Connections Bus: The Project Manager, Mr Alan Webb, had confirmed that detached youth work sessions in the town had begun on the 29th July and would take place on Wednesdays from 6pm to 8pm for six weeks. Under current guidelines the youth workers would be unable to advertise the sessions but would engage with any young people they found. Mr Webb had been in contact with the police who were helpful and positive about the work.

Min 47) High Street Drains: Anglian Water had stated the sewer in the High Street was being placed on a regular 6 monthly jet flushing programme to prevent odours building up. No further remedial work had been identified.

Min 45) Open Forum: One of the members of public who had attended the July meeting had sent in her thoughts and offers of help on items raised during the meeting. It was agreed to go through the letter at a Leisure meeting.

69) Police Matters

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

Local Police

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

Neighbourhood Alerts

28/7/20: Warning received from Cyber Protect (Cambs) for anyone seeking to purchase a puppy that fraudsters are continuing to advertise high value puppies for sale which are a scam. The email also contains advice on how to go about purchasing a puppy safely.

7/7/20: Neighbourhood Watch July E-newsletter including the perception of crime in lockdown and the success of Neighbourhood Watch week.

13/7/20: Warning about problems of car tampering in March area and advice not to leave valuables in car and to lock vehicles.

17/7/20: Information about online shopping fraud during lockdown and top tips for shopping securely online.

24/7/20: Warning that authorities fear rise in disability hate crime following the introduction of the face coverings legislation.

27/7/20: New Neighbourhood Watch campaign to prevent burglaries – Safety in Neighbours.

29/7/20: Plea to report incidents of motorcycles causing anti-social behaviour. Two motorcycles have already been seized.

30/7/20: News of first ever national survey into how Neighbourhood Watch impacts on communities.

3/8/20: Notification that Lithuanian man (formerly employed in Chatteris) who was feared dead has been found alive in Wisbech after being missing for almost 5 years.

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

Members had received a copy of the latest updates (**copy attached**). Cllr Smith was interested to note that a resident had been taken to task over dog fouling.

The Clerk had been contacted again by the Street Scene team leader at FDC regarding the renewal of the Dog Public Space Protection Order. The leader explained she had to apply for a new order as an area in Friday Bridge was to be added to it. Members had no objections to the new Order.

71) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 21st July 2020 showing expenditure of £32,713.48 and income of £78,624.21 (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.

72) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll August2020	1,067.68
Clerk	Payroll August2020	1,546.57
Pension Fund	Payroll August2020	878.67
HMRC	Payroll August2020	609.00
Zen Internet	Website August –September 2020	10.79
R J Warren	Gardening Services & Little Acre	857.10
PKF Littlejohn	External Auditors Fee	480.00
Onecom	July phone bill	78.13
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Bins	34.37

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Viking	Stationery order	107.09
Wave	Water bill council offices	59.03
Wave	LHS Allotments water bill	303.37
Financial Officer	Reim: 2 x hand sanitizer dispenser & 1 x gel	72.66
Christmas Lights Committee	Christmas Lights 2020 part payment re: Grant	4,500.00
J Papworth	1st term youth provision service grant payment	1,200.00
Barclays	Bank charges	6.50
Warren Access	Xmas Lights cherry picker hire	1,890.00
Wave	RHS Allotments water bill	141.57
Total		13,842.53

The Clerk had received complaints that a section of the Old Railway Line footpath from the made up surface to the entrance to the Pocket Park was very overgrown and she had been unable to determine when the County Council were next due to cut it. She had, therefore, obtained a quote from R J Warrens for an extra cut. Members agreed the work was necessary and should be carried out as soon as possible and **agreed** to the quotation of £280 plus VAT.

73) Grants to Voluntary Organisations-CAB Request

Members were reminded that at the April Council meeting the Citizens Advice Rural Cambs applied for a grant under the voluntary organisations grant scheme.

Members did not want to make a decision without seeing statistics and information regarding advice and help that had been given direct to Chatteris residents. They also asked the Financial Officer to look at costings and proposals for a face to face direct service in Chatteris for the residents of the town.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received the key statistics figures for Chatteris residents who were helped in 2019/20. She had also received proposals and costings to provide and deliver a face to face service in Chatteris on a weekly basis.

Members had before them four alternative proposals which all included face to face sessions as well as additional time required for follow up work.

The Financial Officer asked Members to consider the proposal for 48 x 2.5-hour weekly sessions to see how well the service would be used.

Members were advised that Whittlesey Town Council pay the same amount as Chatteris Town Council had been quoted, however Whittlesey Town Council's agreement included the cost of the hire of an office at the Whittlesey library. Members asked the Financial Officer to check with CARB to see if they would include the hire of Chatteris library or another venue in the figures quoted.

Members also agreed to see how well the service was used in the first three months and to then consider increasing the session times if required.

The Financial Officer advised she would check with CARB and the library regarding the hire of a room and would update Members at the next meeting.

Members were all in agreement that in these difficult times this would be an essential service for the residents of Chatteris and **All** were in favour of a grant to provide 48 x 2.5 hours weekly face to face sessions in Chatteris.

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

74) Defibrillator Request

Members were advised that a member of the Chatteris Feoffee Charity had contacted the Financial Officer advising that the charity had agreed in principle to fund the purchase of a defibrillator and cabinet for Chatteris.

However, as a charity there was no provision to retain and manage tangible assets therefore it was proposed that the unit be donated to the Town Council for public use and the unit would then be listed under the Town Councils insurance and its list of street furniture assets.

The Chatteris Community Defibrillators group would manage the unit as they did the other units in the town that fell under their remit.

Members could not see a problem with this arrangement as it would help towards getting another defibrillator in the town.

Members asked where the defibrillator would be situated and also asked for a list of all defibrillators in the town so they could put this on the Council website for residents' information.

The Financial Officer advised that she would ask Community Defibrillators where the unit would be sited and also for a list of all units in the town.

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

75) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 28th July 2020 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to h) (as shown on the **appended list**). In view of Mr Weetman's comments applications b) and c) were discussed at length again with members speaking in favour and against the applications.

It was eventually agreed that all the recommendations from the Working Group should be ratified and the applications should be returned to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Recommend Refusal on the grounds of inadequate access with particular concerns that emergency vehicles would be unable to reach the property.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support but where is the wall to be sited?
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support

Car Park: Cllr Carney confirmed that the new roadway at the Eastwood car park (leading to the leisure centre) had created a form of causeway with uneven land on either side and this meant that parking spaces were now very tight. It was agreed to once again request improvements to the car park.

Second Call for Sites: Members were informed that FDC was giving landowners and developers a second opportunity to suggest where new homes and space for business could be created in Fenland as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan. Thanks to the pandemic work on the Plan had been delayed and it was now anticipated it would be ready for public consultation in February 2021 (instead of summer 2020) with a view to adoption in November 2022. Cllr Benney said the call for sites would close in October 2020 and at this point all sites would be tested to see if there was the potential to develop the land.

Allotment Land: Cllr Benney asked if anyone knew who owned the land at the rear of 33 and 34 Queensway. The Clerk said it was formerly allotment land owned by FDC but it was unclear if it was still owned by FDC or the Housing Association.

76) Transfer of Land to Chatteris Town Council

The Clerk had received an email from Persimmon Homes asking if they could transfer two pieces of open land they owned to Chatteris Town Council. One area was the entrance to Fairbairn Way off London Road, which was covered in shrubs, and the other was beside the footpath cut through from Fairbairn Way to Blackmill Road and was grassed. Persimmon

suggested the areas could become part of the Chatteris in Bloom initiative and said they would cover any reasonable legal fees in transferring the areas to the Town Council.

Cllr Hay was firmly against the idea pointing out it was Persimmon Homes responsibility to maintain the areas. She said both the Town Council and FDC would be mad if they took over the areas. Cllr Benney agreed stating the Council should not buy work and said FDC had too many small areas they had to maintain. Cllr Smith asked how long Persimmon were required to maintain the parcels of land and if it was part of a planning consent which would shortly expire. She was anxious the land should not turn into wasteland, especially as one was on a major entrance to the town. Cllr Hay assured her FDC had the means to ensure Persimmon carried out the work.

Cllr Murphy was also against taking on the parcels of land pointing out they were too small to be useful and he confirmed FDC would not want the land.

Cllr Haggata said there was a small parcel of land on the estate where he lived which no-one would take responsibility for, including the developers, and there was a lack of interest among local residents to maintain it and as a result it was often overgrown.

Councillors agreed by a majority vote to not take over the land. Cllr Smith abstained from voting.

77) Growing Fenland – Chatteris Masterplan Update

A press report had revealed that East Cambridgeshire District Council planned to build a crematorium on the land currently occupied by the Mepal Outdoor Centre. Members recognised this would inevitably impact on the idea of encouraging the re-opening of the Centre and on the Town Council's hopes for a cycle path to the Centre.

Cllr Haggata said there was still the opportunity to develop water based activities on the pit next to the Anaerobic Digester and he suggested opening negotiations with ECDC about this idea. He stressed the Town Council should be promoting the Chatteris Outdoors project by developing new outdoor activities, especially as this had been requested in two surveys of local residents. He said he was disappointed FDC had not approached ECDC with the suggestion of re-opening recreational facilities at the site and was keen for negotiations to begin.

Cllr Carney was also in favour of trying to re-establish the water sports centre on a smaller scale.

Cllr Murphy said he did not believe ECDC would take any notice of or negotiate with a town council in another district and FDC were against putting money into a venture in another district. Cllr Gowler said he would like to see the Mepal Outdoor Centre renewed but acknowledged that the centre was in East Cambs and said the Town Council had to presume

the crematorium would be going ahead. In view of this he felt the emphasis should be on trying to obtain a cycle path to March.

Cllr Hay also admitted that while she would like to see the centre re-open it was ECDC's decision. The County Council was responsible for three outdoor centres and all ran at a loss.

Cllr Haggata argued that the Town Council had access to funding through the Masterplan and should open negotiations but Cllr Benney pointed out there were tight deadlines for applying for Masterplan funding and the Town Council had to be careful not to lose out on the money by not having a scheme ready. Application deadlines were the 11th September and 30th October.

A vote was taken on whether the Town Council should approach ECDC about developing water-based activities at the site. The vote was tied and the motion was lost on a casting vote.

78) Appraisal of Conservation

Cllr Smith, who had asked for the item to go on the agenda, explained she was concerned that there was no up to date Conservation Appraisal Report for Chatteris and developers' agents were using this to push through plans for listed buildings.

The last report was dated 2008 and Cllr Smith pointed out needs had changed in the past 12 years. There were about 90 listed buildings in the report which contributed to the character of the town and Cllr Smith believed the town should make the most of the assets.

Cllr Smith reminded members that the Town Council had asked FDC in the past for a new appraisal but had been informed it was not Chatteris' turn. She suggested asking again and if there was no funding available adding the appraisal to the street furniture refurbishment application which would be going to the Combined Authority.

Cllr Hay agreed an appraisal was a good idea and should be worked on along with the new Local Plan. She suggested asking about the cost of such an appraisal.

Councillors **agreed** to request an appraisal and to consider seeking funding, if necessary. (Cllr Haggata abstained from voting).

79) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Meeting Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure Meeting held on Tuesday 14th July 2020 (**copy attached**).

L3) Grounds Maintenance: Cllr Smith asked if Tivoli could be informed that she believed they had done a brilliant job with the grounds maintenance in Chatteris. She pointed out the importance of open spaces looking well cared for. Cllr Murphy agreed to pass on the message and said the group had a new manager and had managed to carry on with their work throughout the pandemic.

L4) FACT Bus: The Clerk said according to FACT's newsletter day trips were suspended until further notice and they were still awaiting confirmation on what they could safely offer. It would, therefore, not be possible to launch the new bus service to Peterborough or to re-launch the service to St Ives at present.

L9) Code of Conduct: The Clerk had received an email from the Chief Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer at FDC encouraging councillors to respond to the LGA's questionnaire on the draft model Code of Conduct. The Clerk said she had completed the questionnaire.

L11) Marketing Strategy: Members agreed they were not interested in a joint marketing strategy.

80) Summer Fun

The Clerk said she had approached Fenland District Council seeking permission to hold two Summer Fun shows at Furrowfields Recreation Ground as it was not possible to hold the shows at the KEC this year. She was keen to see the shows go ahead (weather permitting) as they would bring some much needed entertainment to the town after the bleak days of the pandemic.

Thanks to a change in the rules outdoor theatre was now permitted and two carefully managed shows were planned at 11am on Fridays 28th August and 4th September. Families would be invited to bring along their own picnic blankets which would be set out to ensure social distancing and children would be required to keep to those blankets. From their vantage points they would be able to watch two highly entertaining shows by Booster Cushion and Mad Etiquette.

There would be no charge for either show but the public would have to book places in advance for track and trace purposes. The entertainers would only be paid if the shows went ahead.

The Clerk had spoken to two FDC officers about how she planned to run the events and was now waiting for confirmation that they were happy with her Risk Assessment and for the shows to go ahead before advertising them.

81) Letter Regarding Erosion of Childcare in Chatteris

Members had received a copy of a letter from a member of the public about "the continuing decline in childcare provision within the town for working parents". Councillors agreed that it was not in the Town Council's remit.

Cllr Hay said she felt for all parents but it was a problem all over the country and the problems were in part due to Covid-19. It was agreed the Clerk should reply stating the Council understood the author's frustrations but these were unprecedented times and unfortunately there was nothing the Town Council could do.

82) Traffic Issues

Cycleways: The Clerk reminded members that they had agreed to respond to a call from FDC's Transport Development Manager, asking for suggestions for walking and cycling schemes which might be eligible for government funding, as follows:

"1) Along the A142 to Mepal Outdoor Centre. This would allow families to access outdoor activities without using public transport or a car. The hope is that the cycleway and footpath will then be extended to Sutton so it is possible to cycle or walk safely all the way to Ely.

2) Along the A141 to March. This would allow people to walk and cycle safely to March for work, leisure, shopping etc. It would also allow people to leave the route near Wimblington and follow the road to Manea to access the railway station.

If money was offered for a route that was off road Councillors would put forward the Old Railway Line footpath and bridleway to Somersham as this is widely used for leisure purposes and allows people to access the nature reserve in Somersham. It is already a popular walking route and the land is in the ownership of Chatteris Town Council and Somersham Parish Council so obtaining permission for a cycleway would not be a problem."

Wenny Road: The Clerk had been updated on the LHI scheme for Wenny Road. It was hoped most of the LHI works would be incorporated when the raised zebra crossing was installed in August but there was a delay with the production of speed cushions and the earliest they would be installed was mid-September.

LHI : Confirmation had been received that the deadline for applications for 2021/22 LHI schemes would be the 27th September and feasibility studies would be undertaken in February/March 2021.

Updates: The latest updates on planned road works had been received along with a list of planned events which would affect public highways.

York Road: Cllr Gowler said he had received a petition from the residents of York Road calling for the double yellow lines at the bottom of the road to be removed. An accompanying letter explained that the residents of Barnes Gardens had put up notices stating if cars parked on their private road they would be issued with a fine of £100. Cllr Gowler explained the lines were put down before Barnes Gardens was developed to allow cars to turn round as York Road was a dead end at that time. Cars no longer needed to turn around at this point so the lines were superfluous and their removal would create an extra 3-4 parking spaces which were badly needed. Cllr Gowler said all but five residents of York Road had signed the petition. Cllr Hay said a new Traffic Order would be needed if the lines were to be removed and there would be a cost but if residents were prepared to pay for the order it was possible.

It was agreed the Clerk should consult the Highways Officer about the removal of the double yellow lines.

83) Correspondence

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

VJ Day: The Mayor and Deputy Mayor said they would be joining the short ceremony being planned by the RBL to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day on the 15th August.

84) Reports

There were no reports.

85) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.