

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 1st September 2020

2085

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1st September 2020 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

86) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Carney, Charrier, Hay, Newell and Taylor and the Financial Officer sent apologies for absence.

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

Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in all planning matters as members of FDC's planning committee.

88) Open Forum

Five members of the public were welcomed to the meeting by the Mayor and were invited to speak. Just one member elected to speak and said it had been suggested that the young man who had carried out tidying work around the town should receive an award.

89) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4th August 2020 as a correct record.

90) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 77) Growing Fenland – Cllr Haggata reminded members that under the Leisure meeting mins L11) (subsequently ratified by the full council) it had been agreed that Chatteris was not interested in a joint marketing strategy with the other Fenland towns yet the Growing Fenland meeting report received by members contradicted that decision. Cllr Haggata explained the potential for an officer to run an FDC website had been discussed at the Growing Fenland meeting and he asked members if they wished to go with their previous decision or with the Growing Fenland team's recommendation. Cllr Gowler reminded members that Chatteris was worried it would not get an equal share of publicity. Cllr Benney suggested if each of the four towns had their own website there would be insufficient work for each of the website organisers and FDC was pushing for a joint website which was more sustainable. The Growing Fenland group had agreed to look into what was already available as Cllr Hay had

pointed out there was already a website up and running. Cllr Smith said the content Chatteris would have for a website would be minimal and the town should therefore not pay the same amount as other towns if there was to be a joint website. Cllr Benney said updating a website would be preferable to launching a new one as the original website already had followers. He promised the Growing Fenland committee would look at the website idea again.

Min 77) Growing Fenland, Mepal Outdoor Centre: The Council had received an email from a Chatteris resident who had launched a petition to save Mepal Outdoor Centre. The email pointed out the value of the centre and listed the many activities which could be undertaken at the centre including opportunities for blind people. The email sought the Town Council's support for the petition. Cllr Haggata said the Council should reply thanking the author for putting forward the ideas and assuring her that the Town Council had tried to take up the case for saving and re-opening the Mepal Outdoor Centre but it had unfortunately not been successful. Cllr Benney said the Combined Authority Mayor would not entertain the idea of putting money into saving the Centre because it had closed, while he was leader of East Cambs District Council, as it was losing so much money. Cllr Benney believed the deal to turn the Centre into a crematorium was complete and Chatteris Town Council had no influence over the deal.

Min 76) Transfer of Land: Mr Phil Hughes, FDC Head of Leisure Services, had confirmed that FDC had not been approached by Persimmon Homes asking if they would take over the two parcels of land at Fairbairn Way. He said if FDC had been approached they would not have adopted the land, even if the company initially paid money for FDC to maintain it, as they were looking for developers to maintain their own open spaces.

Min 80) Summer Fun: The Clerk reported that the first Summer Fun show had been well received. Thanks to a change in rules for village halls it had been possible to move the venue for the show to the King Edward Centre when it was judged to be too wet to hold the shows outdoors. Families had been asked to bring along their picnic blankets and these were socially distanced with children not moving from their own blankets. The Mayor, who had helped at the event, confirmed everything had gone very well.

91) Police Matters

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

“Local Police

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

A reminder that the virtual briefing for Councils in Fenland, by the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner, Ray Bisby, will take place on Monday 14th September from 6.30pm to 8pm.

Neighbourhood Alerts

5/8/20: Information about a Blue Light Race Charity event in aid of Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech.

6/8/20: Notification that a number of business burglaries, which took place in Chatteris overnight on the 5th/6th August, were being investigated.

6/8/20: August edition of the E-Newsletter Ournews. The theme was Crime Prevention.

12/8/20: Notification that 3 dogs were rescued by police after being left in cars in direct sunshine. All were fine. And a warning about the dangers of swimming in lakes, rivers, etc.

14/8/20: Notification that the Constabulary has purchased two state-of-the-art sound monitoring equipment kits to tackle anti-social motoring – namely noisy exhausts.

Notification three days later that the equipment would be used in Fenland.

29/8/20: Information about the rescue of a horse found in the middle of West Street which was returned home with the help of officers.

29/8/20: Request for the public to help in the fight against drug production and dealing by reporting anything suspicious.”

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

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

Updates had also been received from Mr Phil Hughes. He reported that it was business as usual for the grounds maintenance team and Tivoli were doing a good job with limited complaints and the occasional compliment.

He had been assured the clock on Jubilee Gardens would be repaired in early September after Cllr Murphy chased the repairs.

Mr Hughes said the new school car park at Cromwell was a distinct improvement and the old car park would be tidied in the coming week (shrubs would be cut back). In a subsequent email he had confirmed that £75,000 had been set aside for improvements to the car park. There had been very positive feedback from customers using the leisure centres. Gym sessions and exercise classes were socially distanced and gyms had extended their opening hours in week 2 of re-opening due to demand. It was hoped by early 2021 membership and usage would recover to 2019 levels.

93) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 19th August 2020 showing expenditure of £50,439.71 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.

94) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll September 2020	1,067.68
Clerk	Payroll September 2020	1,546.77

Pension Fund	Payroll September 2020	2088 4 of 10 878.67
HMRC	Payroll September 2020	608.80
Zen Internet	Website September-October2020	10.79
Summer Reading Challenge	Library Summer Reading Challenge	350.00
Chatteris In Bloom	Part grant payment re running costs	1,500.00
Chatteris In Bloom	Watering Service reim costs June July	810.00
Onecom	August phone bill	78.10
Clerk	Reim Zoom	14.39
Barclays	Bank charges	6.50
Warren Access	Xmas Lights cherry picker course	352.80
Debbie Wilkinson	Reim Hand gel, toilet rolls re council offices	45.83
cf corporate	August photocopier Q lease	239.95
Total		7,510.28

95) External Auditors Report

Members had before them a copy of the external auditor's (PKF Littlejohn) report and a copy of the Notice of conclusion of audit for the year end 31st March 2020.

Members noted that the audit report was clear, in that there were no matters that the auditor wished to draw to the Council's attention.

Members were advised that to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the notice of conclusion of audit, which detailed the rights of public inspection in line with the statutory requirements, along with Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Annual Return would be displayed for a period of 14 days from 2nd September 2020 and copies of the full Annual

Return would be available for purchase by any person upon payment of a reasonable fee. As for last year, it was not proposed to charge for copies.

It was **Resolved** that the external audit report for 2019/20 be approved.

96) Grants to Voluntary Organisations-CARB Update

Members were reminded that at the August Council meeting they approved a grant to Citizens Advice Rural Cambs to provide a face to face service for residents in Chatteris.

The Clerk advised that the Financial Officer had been in meetings with the Chatteris Library Managers to see if the service could be run from the library and what the costs would be.

Members were reminded that Whittlesey Town Council and the CARB were not charged for the hire of the Whittlesey library as it came under the FDC Hub as did the Chatteris library when it was the venue for the CARB in the past. This was a historic agreement between FDC and the CARB and was still in place at Whittlesey.

Members were advised that the library managers had stated that they knew nothing about this agreement and that the hire of the room would need to be paid for; whether it be by the Town Council, CARB or FDC. The library manager made enquiries regarding this historic agreement and could find no information or paperwork about it.

Cllr Hay had advised the Clerk that she would look into this further and report back at the next meeting. Members were keen to get the service up and running and did not want this to delay anything.

The Clerk advised Members that the Manager of the CARB had informed the Financial Officer that there was no face to face service running at the moment due to Covid-19, however he was meeting with the Financial Officer on 2nd September to discuss options and updates.

Members would be updated at the next meeting.

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

97) Defibrillator Request

Members were reminded that they had agreed at the August council meeting for the Town Council to accept a new defibrillator and cabinet from Feoffee Charity to be installed in Chatteris for the community.

It was proposed that it could be installed on 14 Church Lane, the Chatteris Town Council offices. Members agreed this was a good idea as the electrics could be easily accessed, there was CCTV on the building and in Church Lane and the defibrillator would cover St. Martins Rd and beyond, the Church and also the top end of Church Lane into Market Hill. Cllrs Benney and Gowler, who had installed a defibrillator at the Apple Green garage, kindly offered to install the cabinet.

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

98) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 25th August 2020 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**) and these were all ratified by the full Council. The Council also considered three further applications h), i) and k). Application j) was considered later, due to time constraints, and it was agreed all applications should be returned to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- b) Support
- c) Recommend Refusal more information is required regarding the access to plots 1-4. The access point between 100 and 102 High Street is inadequate.
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Councillors have no objections to the application but have no local knowledge of the site and are prepared to accept the information put forward by the applicants.
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support

An application for a pavement licence had been received from The Old Bakery Tea-room and Restaurant, 3 Market Hill. Members agreed to support the application.

99) Growing Fenland – Updates & Decisions

Councillors had received the minutes of the last Growing Fenland meeting outlining actions to be taken forward.

Cllr Benney outlined a venture which required the support of all four market towns through the Growing Fenland programme.

He explained that Cllr Jan French from March had been tasked with trying to sort out the parking problems in Fenland, this included people parking over the allotted time, parking on double yellow lines, parking on corners, etc.

He said it would be an expensive programme to set up before money started to come in. It was not just the cost of putting in double yellow lines, new traffic orders would be needed and parking would need to be de-criminalised. The first years running costs would also be required. Both the County Council and the police were behind the idea. The costings had

been analysed and it was agreed £400,000 would be needed to set the scheme up, £100,000 from each town. After the first year it was planned that the scheme would be self-funding.

Cllr Benney said the aim was to free up the parking so customers could park in the centre of the town to help traders. He pointed out it had been one of the issues highlighted in the Growing Fenland report.

Cllr Smith said she was keen to see enforcement work carried out at all times of the day, not just 9am to 5pm, and to see this written into any agreement along with the requirement for officers to spend 25% of their time in Chatteris if the town paid a quarter of the set up costs. Cllr Haggata and Ashley agreed. Cllr Haggata said productivity would diminish after the initial rush so the scope of the enforcement officers would need to be extended beyond just the centre of the town to include car parks, near schools, etc. Cllr Benney confirmed he had put forward the flexibility requirement and said he hoped enforcement would help to solve anti-social problems in car parks at night.

Cllr Murphy said one of the biggest moans was about parking problems and he was concerned that if the council failed to take the opportunity to fund an enforcement scheme through the Growing Fenland project it would never be delivered.

Members **agreed** that £100,000 of the town's Growing Fenland budget could be used for the enforcement parking project bid if Chatteris was allotted 25% of the enforcement officer's time and officers worked outside office hours.

100) Remembrance Sunday

Members had already been informed that there would not be a parade on Remembrance Sunday and it had, therefore, been decided there would be no application for a road closure. Major Norman Larke, of the Royal British Legion, had been planning a wreath laying ceremony at the war memorial, the sounding of the Last Post, and a short open air service. At present, however, the RBL were not in favour of a wreath laying ceremony and Major Larke was suggesting wreaths would have to be laid throughout the day. He was suggesting the Last Post should be sounded at 11am not 2.45pm as usual in Chatteris.

The Clerk also informed members that according to paperwork, passed on by Major Larke, in future the Town Council would have to take responsibility for the parade.

The Mayor said a short ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ day had worked well with everyone observing social distancing rules. The same format could be used for Remembrance Sunday.

101) Request for Litter Bin in Eastwood

Cllrs Smith and Ashley had both highlighted the lack of a litter bin in Eastwood, particularly near the gym.

Cllr Smith suggested it would be helpful to have a bin located next to the access road to the gym. She also pointed out there was no bin in Wood Street and suggested it would be useful to have one near the back entrance to Cromwell Community College.

It was pointed out both locations were used by schoolchildren and a bin was needed for dog walkers.

Cllr Murphy said money had been put into FDC's capital programme for the replacement of bins and he suggested approaching them about both locations. The Clerk reminded members the Town Council also had a budget for bins. Cllr Benney welcomed a bin in Wood Street as his hedge was currently used for refuse.

102) York Road Parking Issues

Members had received a copy of the letter which accompanied the petition calling for the double yellow lines at the bottom of York Road to be removed to free up 3-4 parking spaces. The letter pointed out residents of York Road were facing a £100 fine if they were caught parking in Barnes Gardens at the end of York Road. The petition had been signed by most of the residents of York Road.

Cllr Hay had also forwarded correspondence she had received from a resident of York Road complaining about cars parking over her front door at the top of the road. Another email had been received from a resident of Barnes Gardens pointed out there was a deed of covenant which meant the residents of that area were responsible for repairs, management and upkeep of the land. A private parking company had been brought in to stop cars parking and blocking access to the turning area and private drives.

The Clerk had consulted the Highways Officer who had confirmed it would be possible to remove the double yellow lines if a new TRO was applied for but this would need to be funded either by an LHI or by residents. The Clerk believed the likely cost would be £2,000 although this would require confirmation. The Town Council had already submitted an LHI bid for a different scheme so it would be up to the residents to fund it. Cllr Gowler, who had received the petition, agreed to relay the information back to the residents.

103) Connections Youth Service Update and Decision on Future Activities

The Clerk had received a report on the three detached youth work sessions which had been undertaken by the Connections Bus team in Chatteris and details of services currently on offer.

Councillors were asked if they wished to continue funding the detached youth work for the autumn term. The Mayor said the work appeared to be going well and the youth workers had been in contact with a number of young people. She suggested the service should continue until half term when the evenings would be darker.

Cllr Gowler said as far as he was aware there had been no more anti-social behaviour than usual despite 6 months of lockdown and children not in school. He asked if the youth workers could pass on the Council's thanks to the young people for being so patient through the difficult times.

It was **agreed** to fund the detached youth work sessions up to and including October half term and to consider the matter again at the November Council meeting.

104) Traffic Issues

Wenny Road LHI: The Clerk had received notification that the works to install a zebra crossing, traffic calming measures and 20mph flashing signs in Wenny Road were complete. Members praised the scheme. The Clerk had now to contact the school regarding activation times for the 20mph flashing signs and would be taking delivery of the device for programming the units. She asked if Cllr Benney would kindly help with the programming.

MVAS: Cllr Benney said the MVAS was now up in Huntingdon Road and he would be looking at how to download the information captured by the unit and would be able to give the councils statistics and post information on the internet. The unit would soon be moved to Curf Terrace when it would have to be re-programmed to turn red when vehicle speeds exceeded 40mph instead of 30mph. Cllr Benney said there were spare brackets which could go up in different locations – London Road, New Road and Furrowfields Road were mentioned. The Clerk had received emails asking if there was anything that could be done about speeding cars in Doddington Road and Bridge Street/High Street and cars parking on the junction of New Road and St Peters Drive. Positioning the MVAS and enforcement action over parking were possible solutions.

A141: The Mayor proposed the Council should write to the County Council about serious concerns over speeding along the A141 following a fatal crash. She suggested the police and Warboys Parish Council should be copied in to the correspondence. Cllr Gowler said he was aware of a petition calling for average speed cameras between Chatteris and March so he felt the Council should write about both sections of the road. He pointed out the number of accidents along the Forty Foot Bank Road had dropped to virtually zero following the installation of the average speed cameras. It was also agreed to mention the A142 to Ely.

Disabled Parking Bay: Members had no objections to the proposed removal of a disabled parking bay outside 24 West Street which was no longer required.

Car Park: Notification had been received of resurfacing works to Church Lane car park. The works had been completed in August.

Road works: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received as had the IHMC incident report for July 2020.

105) Correspondence

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

Young Worker: One of the emails praised the efforts of the young man who had spent the summer cleaning signs and weeding public areas. It was agreed the Council should write to him and thank him for all his hard work and suggest he might like to join the Street Pride group. The Clerk would be able to put him in contact with the FDC Street Pride Coordinator.

Community First Responders: It was agreed to either put off the Community Response Manager until Leisure meetings resumed or to invite him to speak briefly at a full Council meeting.

106) Reports

There were no reports.

107) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.