

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 6th October 2020

2095

1 of 13

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6th October 2020 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

108) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Carney, Charrier, Hay, Petrou and Taylor sent apologies for absence. Cllr Carney had submitted his comments and recommendations on the agenda items which were noted.

109) 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.

110) Open Forum

There was just one member of the public present and he declined the invitation to speak.

111) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2020 as a correct record.

112) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 90) Transfer of Land: The Clerk had informed Persimmon Homes that the Town Council was not willing to take over the two parcels of land at Fairbairn Way. However Persimmon Hones had then asked if the Town Council would be willing if a commuted sum was agreed. Cllrs Murphy, Benney and Gowler were firmly against the idea. Cllr Murphy argued the land belonged to Persimmon Homes and they should be responsible for maintaining it. He queried how many other pieces of land the Council would be offered if they took over the Fairbairn Way areas. Cllr Benney said FDC was responsible for hundreds of similar pieces of land which cost thousands to maintain. He suggested the Town Council could look at the subject again if the areas became a problem.

The Financial Officer, the Mayor and Cllr Smith were concerned that if the Town Council failed to maintain the areas they could fall to rack and ruin and one of the parcels of land was on a main entrance to the Town. Cllr Smith was keen to see the areas maintained as they had been in the past.

Members **agreed** by a majority not to take up the offer of a commuted sum to maintain the areas.

Min 90) Summer Fun: The Clerk had received a letter praising the second Summer Fun show for the calibre of the entertainment, which was described as “truly excellent”, and for the smooth running and good social distancing measures.

Min 103) Connections Bus: The Clerk had received an email to say the lead youth worker for Chatteris had stepped down, however another leader was prepared to take on the detached youth work sessions if they moved to a Monday. The Clerk had agreed to the changes. The Council had been invited to put forward two names to attend the Connections Bus Project AGM on the 26th October via Zoom.

113) Speaker: Mr Alex Laurent on First Responders for Chatteris

The Mayor welcomed Mr Laurent to the meeting and he began by explaining he was one of the Community Response Managers for the East of England Ambulance Service. He said Chatteris was an area in need of Community First Responders as at present it was covered by March or Huntingdon.

Mr Laurent explained he was looking to create a First Responders scheme in Chatteris and hoped to have at least 10 volunteers in place by March next year. At present he had one trained responder and six in the pipeline. He was looking for the Council’s support and help to publicise the scheme and suggested this could be through the town’s newsletter or by approaching businesses, putting up posters, etc.

Mr Laurent explained that first responders were a great asset to a community and there were many good outcomes from intervention by first responders. Unfortunately the Ambulance Service had been unable to keep a scheme running in Chatteris and was now looking to re-establish it.

Cllr Smith asked how long it took to train a community responder and Mr Laurent said it took four or five days training to obtain the national qualification. Cllr Gowler asked about the differences with a trained first aider and Mr Laurent explained a first responder had more in depth training, was able to carry and administer medicines, and was able to assess the seriousness of the situation for the ambulance control room. In response to another question from Cllr Gowler, Mr Laurent said first responders would be contacted about an emergency via an app on a smart phone which meant they were able to respond very quickly.

The Council and the Clerk offered to help in any way they could and Cllr Smith said she would put a poster on the Town Council’s Facebook page. Mr Laurent said he would send the information to the Clerk and would keep the Council updated with progress. He was thanked for attending.

114) Police Matters

The Mayor said she had attended a Teams meeting with Sgt Lugg and other town and parish council chairmen the previous Friday. Members had received a confidential report of the issues raised at the meeting.

Cllr Ashley said it was a very interesting and informative meeting and another meeting was planned later in the month. She was happy to raise any issues of concern to councillors if she was advised in advance so the questions could be e-mailed to Sgt Lugg.

Members had received a report on information received from the police in the past month as follows:

‘Local Police

A confidential report from Sgt Richard Lugg has already been forwarded by email. The report follows a meeting between Sgt Lugg, the Mayor and other Council leaders from the Fenland area on Friday.

Neighbourhood Alerts

3/9/20: Neighbourhood Watch ‘Our News’ Newsletter for September.

4/9/20: Notification that the police will patrol using a new device to gauge exhaust noise if there are complaints about noisy vehicles.

10/9/20: Report on responses to consultation about proposals to build a new police hub in Milton. 70% agreed the hub is a good use of the land at Milton as it will replace Parkside Police Station.

16/9/20: Update from local PCSO about a return to school patrols and a warning of an on line scam which claims a person’s on line banking details have been compromised.

21/9/20: Reminder to parents to be mindful when dropping off or picking up children from school not to park illegally or in a thoughtless or dangerous manner.

24/9/20: Notification of the launch of the Neighbour of the Year Award 2020 organised by Co-op insurance and Neighbourhood Watch.

27/9/20: Notification that PCSOs have been patrolling in Chatteris, March and Whittlesey and that a vehicle has been seized following an incident of hare coursing in the Wisbech area.

28/10/20: Good news that four county lines have been dismantled during a week of action and in addition 9 people have been arrested and drugs, cash and mobile phones seized.

29/10/20: Mayor completed survey on Road Safety Enforcement on behalf of Council.

1/10/20: Neighbourhood Watch Our News Newsletter for October.

2/10/20: Recruitment campaign for Cambridgeshire Volunteer Police Cadets Leaders.’

115) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

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

The Mayor said there was a major problem with dog fouling at Furrowfields Recreation Ground, along the footpath which was a route to schools. This had been reported to the Street

Scene officer. Cllr Ashley suggested owners were failing to clear up after their dogs either first thing in the morning or when it got dark at night.

Cllr Murphy said the problem always became worse at this time of year. He said if anyone spotted a problem to report it to FDC's cleansing team who would then clear it away. He explained the problems of catching offenders. Cllr Gowler said it was a problem all over the town.

Cllr Smith thanked FDC for their speedy response as a bin had now been installed on the green area near the gym in Eastwood. The Clerk reported FDC had also agreed to look for a suitable location in Wood Street.

116) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 16th September 2020 showing expenditure of £62,880.58 and income of £80,385.52 (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.

(2) Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2020/21

Members were advised that the Local Government Services pay agreement 2020/21 had been reached and the pay award had now been implemented.

The pay rates had been up-rated by 2.75% with effect from 1st April 2020.

(3) FDC- Covid-19 Small Business Grant Fund

Members were advised that earlier this year the District Councils were instructed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to make arrangements to pay grants to businesses and organisations in the District in recognition of the economic difficulties experienced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. Grants were payable providing the business or organisation completed a return and confirmed they met the eligibility criteria. At the time the scheme was launched it was understood that legislation prevented Town and Parish Councils from receiving grants. For this reason, the District Council did not contact Town and Parish Councils in the District irrespective of whether they met the other eligibility requirements.

In August the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy clarified its position and confirmed there was no legislation which prevented a Town or Parish Council from receiving a grant providing they qualified and were in receipt of Small Business Rate Relief. Based on this clarification FDC reviewed its records and determined that Chatteris Town Council's property at 14 Church Lane, Chatteris was eligible for a grant of £10,000.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she completed a grant application form which was approved by FDC two days later.

Consequently £10,000 had been paid into the Town Councils bank account from the grant fund.

The Financial Officer advised Members that this money should be spent to benefit the Chatteris Community and asked Members if they had any ideas how they wished the funds to be spent.

In the meantime, the Financial Officer advised that she would transfer the funds into a holding account until Members made a decision on how this would be spent.

(4) Citizen Advice Rural Bureau (CARB) Update

Members were advised that the Financial Officer had a meeting with the CARB's Chief Officer to discuss how CARB intended to deliver a face to face service in Chatteris and when they could start.

The Chief Officer advised the Financial Officer that CARB were not doing any face to face service anywhere at the moment due to Covid-19. The Financial Officer voiced her concerns stating that the face to face was needed more than ever under the circumstances and asked that he keep her updated.

The meeting was suspended to allow the member of public, a trustee of CARB, to speak. He said he was keen to see the service up and running in Chatteris and would push for a face to face service by suggesting the Chatteris scheme could be the pilot.

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

117) Quotations for New Gate & Fencing at Old Railway Line

Members were advised that the gate and fence at the old railway line was in a very poor state of repair and needed to be replaced.

The Financial Officer had obtained quotations to dismantle and remove the old fence and gate from site and supply and install new fencing, posts, and gate and hardware fittings on a like for like basis.

The quotations came in at £980 and £1,020, a difference of £40.00.

The quotation from the contractor who supplied and fitted the original gate and fence approximately 15 years ago (and had also done work for the Town Council since then) came in at £1,020 while the quote from the other contractor, who delivered the Town Council's grass cutting service and other works, was £980.

The Financial Officer advised Members that both contractors were reliable and always delivered a best value service to the Council.

Members approved the works to be carried out by the contractor who had fitted the original gate at a cost of £1,020.

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

118) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

[1] Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October and January meetings each year. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability. The approved budget for grants in **2020/21** was **£3,500**

[2] Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled. There were two late applications which were tabled at the meeting, one from The Chatteris Museum and the other from Peter Pan Pre-school. The recommendations are listed below:

Organisation	Recommended Grant
1) <u>Chatteris Community Care Scheme</u> running costs and additional return transport for hospital appointments.	£300
2) <u>Magmas Air Ambulance</u> Running costs & additional special Covid-19 equipment to ensure the service is fit for the new environment.	£1,000
3) <u>East Anglian Air Ambulance</u> To purchase a new equipment kit bag to ensure the service is fit for the environment and Covid-19 safe for medics and the patients.	£1,000
4) <u>The Firefighters Charity</u> Towards running costs in the Cambridgeshire area.	£150
5) <u>Chatteris Museum</u> Towards the cost of a new noticeboard.	£100
6) <u>Peter Pan Pre-school</u> Towards the cost of new outdoor play equipment.	£300

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

119) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll October 2020	1,198.92
Clerk	Payroll October 2020	1,759.63
Pension Fund	Payroll October 2020	1,029.37
HMRC	Payroll October 2020	852.15
Zen Internet	Website October-November 2020	10.79
Chatteris Community Defibrillators	Reimbursement re Feoffee Grant paid to CTC to pay for a new defib and cabinet for the town.	1,715.99
R J Warren	August gardening services +Little Acre & Old Railway Line cuts	1,370.70
Interesting Timbers	Supply of wood cut to shape for a new town sign	264.00
Swarco Traffic	Additional battery for the MVAS	318.00
The Connections Bus project	Four detached visits to Chatteris Town	720.00
N Foster	Mad Etiquette Summer Fun	400.00
Elizabeth's Florists	Cllr Newell	30.00
Onecom	September's phone bill	76.84
Cambs CC	Little Acre Pocket Park Signs	400.25
KEECA	Hire re Youth Club remaining sessions	426.00
KECCA	Summer Fun Hire	60.00
KECCA	Youth Club Summer Camp	230.75
British Gas	Q gas bill	109.10
Clerk	Reim: Zoom	14.39
Viking	Stationary Order	307.27

		2102 8 of 13
Camguard Fire & Security	Annual Service charge & monitoring Intruder Alarm	345.60
J Papworth	Autumn term Youth club fees	1,100.00
R J Warren	Sept Gardening Services & Little Acre	857.10
Rose Fire & Security	Dualcom Monitoring Fire Alarm	489.60
Rose Fire & Security	Bi annual service	419.23
Chatteris In Bloom	Remaining grant vol org	1,500.00
Chatteris Museum Trust	Remaining Vol Org grant	3,533.58
ICO	GDPR Data Protection annual fee	35.00
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	6.50
Cash	Petty cash	65.16
Total		19,645.92

120) Allotment Rents 2021/22

Members had received the following report from the Clerk:

Background

It is necessary for allotment rents to be agreed and the information made public one year in advance.

At present all 132 Council-owned allotments at Honeysome Road are let and there is a long waiting list of people wishing to take on an allotment. (The Clerk added she had re-let 4 allotments the previous day but still had a lengthy waiting list).

The allotments have been particularly popular during the pandemic as they are seen as a good form of exercise by the Government and there have been no restrictions on people tending their allotments (save social distancing and ensuring strict hygiene measures are observed when using communal facilities such as the taps and gates).

The income from the allotments in 2019/20 was £3,576 and expenditure was £2,722. The main expenditure at present is on necessary repairs to the roadways and water and drainage bills.

Recommendation

In these uncertain times it is **recommended** that allotment rents are frozen at £30 for a full allotment and £15 for a half for the year 2021/22.

Members **resolved** to accept the recommendation and agreed allotment rents for 2021/22 should be £30 for a full allotment and £15 for a half.

121) Accessible Website Requirement

The Clerk said as from the 23rd September 2020, under Government regulations, the Town Council was required to have a website which was accessible to all. A quick check appeared to show that some parts of the website met or partly met the criteria but not all.

Members agreed that the matter should be discussed at the Leisure Working Group meeting on the 13th October.

122) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 29th September 2020 (**copy attached**).

The group had made recommendations on planning applications a) to m) (as shown on the **appended list**) and these were all ratified by the full Council. It was agreed the plans should be returned to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) No further comments
- k) No further comments
- l) Support
- m) Support

Members also agreed to add the following comments on planning application F/YR20/0795/LB: Continue to support the application but suggest in order to allay some of the concerns that Unit 2 be moved away from the boundary and either reduced in height or the new buildings be single storey dwellings.

Notification had been received that an application to convert a listed building to a 4-bed dwelling at 12 East Park Street had been withdrawn.

P22) The Clerk had still to write to FDC again regarding the conservation area appraisal.

Call for Site Submissions: The Mayor suggested an extraordinary meeting of the Council should be called to consider and comment on new sites submitted during the second Call for Sites exercise as part of the Local Plan. Fifteen new sites had been submitted to FDC for consideration and the Mayor pointed out it would take time to consider and comment on each site. It was agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting of the full Council on Tuesday 20th October 2020. Planning applications would also be considered at the meeting.

123) Growing Fenland – Updates & Decisions

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the latest Growing Fenland – Chatteris Town Team meeting which included actions to go forward.

Cllr Benney said it had been agreed to apply for £50,000 for the refurbishment of street furniture and a £50,000 pot open to businesses who wished to improve their shops/premises. Another £30,000 would be applied for to provide equipment for the new training academy so the building could be used by the whole town, in particular to upskill people and for adult education. The money would be spent on computers and other equipment.

As previously stated £100,000 would be ring fenced for a district wide Civil Parking Enforcement project.

The final project being put forward was a Community Hub on the rear of the library which could be used for a large hall to be hired out, new council chambers and offices or a new home for the museum. FDC officer Mr Justin Wingfield was seeking the County Council's permission to extend the library building on to land owned by FDC.

The Mayor asked who would be responsible for the running costs of the hub.

Cllr Smith asked if part of the refurbishment of street furniture fund could be used for a Conservation Area appraisal. Cllr Benney suggested the idea should have been considered at an earlier stage but agreed to ask the question.

Cllr Smith also queried if there was a need for space for adult training at the new training centre as there was already a facility at the library.

Cllr Benney reminded Councillors they had been asked for ideas about how the money being set aside by the Combined Authority could be spent to benefit the town but ideas had not been submitted.

Cllr Haggata said ideas had been put forward but they did not meet the criteria. Cllr Murphy said there were now restrictions on time for the schemes to be submitted to the Combined Authority Board.

Councillors **agreed** to support the schemes outlined.

124) Complaints re: HGVs Parking in Albert Way

Cllr Hay had been approached by Cllr Divine who in turn had been contacted by MP Mr Stephen Barclay following complaints from residents of Albert Way about HGVs parking overnight in Albert Way. The residents were requesting no parking overnight signs for lorries.

Cllr Hay had already pointed out that Albert Way was built as a workplace homes development and there was already a commercial business at the end of Albert Way when the homes were built and purchased.

The Mayor said the issue had been raised in the past and Suttons (the commercial business) had pointed out they were present before the houses were built. She said if lorries had refrigerated units operating all night long this problem could be reported to environmental health and if the residents wanted double yellow lines they could go down the same route as Boadicea Court homeowners and agree to pay for a TRO and lines to be installed. Members agreed these were the favoured solutions.

125) Remembrance Sunday Arrangements

The Clerk reported that the Chairman of the Royal British Legion, Major Norman Larke, had revised his plans for Remembrance Sunday based on the Government's Rule of Six. There would still be no parade and only the Mayor, President, Chairman and Secretary of the RBL, the Vicar and a representative of the RBL Women's Section would be present at the War Memorial. A bugler would be stationed in front of the Church. After the exhortation, 2 minute silence and reveille, the RBL Chairman would give a short presentation on Remembrance, the Vicar would give a blessing and prayers and the Mayor would lay the Town Council's wreath followed by the RBL wreaths. Organisations and clubs who wished to lay a wreath would be invited to do so throughout the day and these would then be tidied up and secured by RBL officers at the end of the day.

The ceremony would take place at 11am instead of the usual 3pm. The hope was the community would not turn up to watch. The Clerk had agreed to create a poster to let everyone know what was happening. The Clerk said the arrangements might still be subject to change if the Government issued guidance on the day and if that was the case she would inform councillors about the revised arrangements.

Arrangements would be similar for Armistice Day. Instructions were being sent out about the Poppy Appeal. Cllr Carney had asked the Clerk to inform members that he would be launching the Poppies on a Lamppost scheme again with the hope of raising even more money to help the RBL, who would not be able to carry out their usual fund raising activities. Cllr Smith said there was an informal swell of opinion that residents might like to display large red poppies in their windows to show support.

126) Performance Management

The Financial Officer reminded members that she and the Clerk were long overdue an evaluation of their jobs and an appraisal of their work. It had been agreed a committee of councillors should carry out the evaluation and appraisal but this had still to happen.

CAPALC were running a number of HR Seminars via Zoom, one of which was a Performance Management course and the Financial Officer suggested it might be beneficial for councillors on the evaluation panel to attend the course. Cllrs Haggata, Ashley and Benney agreed to attend the course on the 20th November with Cllr Gowler offering to deputise if Cllr Benney was unable to attend.

127) Traffic Issues

A141: As requested the Clerk had written to Highways regarding speeding along the A141 and had copied in the Clerk of Warboys Parish Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Clerk from Warboys had confirmed that he received more complaints about speeding than anything and the A141 between Warboys and Chatteris had always been a problem. He promised to raise the issue at the next Council meeting but felt confident Warboys Parish Council would support the Town Council's action. The Police and Crime Commissioner had passed on the letter to the police and the Speedwatch co-ordinator. Highways had yet to send a response.

A142: Councillors had receive a copy of a letter from a Manea resident concerned about speeding along the A142 and calling for speed cameras along the entire stretch of the A142 from Mepal to Chatteris, particularly on or near bends, following a fatal accident. Cllr Haggata said he would support speed cameras but pointed out they would not have saved the couple killed in the accident as that was the result of a criminal act. Cllr Gowler said straight sections of road also required monitoring, particularly near the Mepal Outdoor Centre, while Cllr Haggata said if the centre was replaced by a crematorium this would lead to more motoring frustrations. It was agreed average speed cameras might be the solution but Councillors queried where the funding would come from.

Parking Bay: The proposal to remove the parking bay in West Street had been abandoned as a blue badge holder was still using it.

Roadworks: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received as had the IHMC incident reports for August and September 2020.

128) Correspondence

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

Quaker Building: A resident had suggested the Council consider purchasing the Quaker building for a register office and council offices. Members were firmly against the idea as costs would be significant, especially as the building was now being sold with planning permission which had enhanced its value, and the building was in a poor condition.

Snooker Centre/Youth Club: Members were asked if they could suggest somewhere for a snooker centre or pop in café with pool tables where young people could hang out. The person behind the idea had already looked at the room above the swimming pool but this was unsuitable. A few ideas were put forward and Cllr Gowler agreed to pass on the information.

129) Reports

Cllr Benney asked for advice on how to find information about public rights of way and byways following an enquiry about ownership of land from a resident. Cllr Gowler said Cambridgeshire County Council's website had information on public rights of way and the Clerk said there were maps in the Council Chambers. Failing that it would be necessary to approach Land Registry.

130) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.