

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 3rd November 2020

2108

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd November 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, M Petrou and J Smith.

131) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllr Taylor sent an apology for absence as a poor internet connection meant he was unable to join the meeting.

132) 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.

133) Open Forum

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

134) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 20th October 2020 as correct records.

135) Matters Arising from the Minutes

116) Citizens Advice Rural Cambs: Cllr Hay had received a reply from a County Councillor in response to the query why Chatteris would be charged to use the library for CARC sessions but Whittlesey paid nothing. Cllr Criswell said CAB had been allowed to use the FDC room in Whittlesey library when it was not in use. However this was now under review as the library service was under huge pressure to increase income hence the charge of £6.50 an hour for community groups to use the room. Cllr Criswell pointed out if CAB used the room for free other community groups would expect the same. The Financial Officer said CAB were still not doing face to face sessions and thanks to the latest lockdown the start date for these had been put back again. The Financial Officer said the service was likely to be needed more than ever in the New Year and she suggested looking at the figures at the December or January meeting and deciding if it would be better to use the library or a room at the King Edward Centre for the face to face sessions.

Cllr Hay was in favour of using the King Edward Centre as it would support a facility in the town the Town Council helped to run. She pointed out it would be necessary to advertise the location as widely as possible.

The Clerk said national CAB had invested in a Freephone Adviceline for clients to call and she would be putting the number on the noticeboard. It was suggested it should also go on the Council's Facebook page.

136) Police Matters

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 the 28th October 2020.

Notification has been received that the Constabulary and local Community Safety team are looking for panel members for the Cambridgeshire Use of Force and Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel which is being established.

Neighbourhood Alerts

8/10/20: Warning to motorists to beware of mud on roads and pot holes.

9/10/20: Notification that the Cambridgeshire Constabulary has submitted a planning application to build a new police hub on the outskirts of Milton.

10/10/20: Information about a busy day for the Fenland Neighbourhood Team including an arrest, execution of a drugs warrant and high visibility patrols.

20/10/20: Notification of a live Tweet-a-thon day to mark International Control Room Week and demonstrate the hard work of call takers.

22/10/20: Information about how police cadets from St Neots joined forces with regular officers to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in and around the Cambridgeshire area.

The Mayor said she had raised the issue of motorbikes on public land with Sgt Lugg and as a result police had been on patrol in the town throughout the weekend. Cllr Haggata confirmed it had now gone quiet at Wenny Recreation Ground although Cllr Gowler said the motorbikes had still been using the Old Railway Line footpath as an access to a field. The Clerk said she had asked if there was any CCTV evidence of the motorbikes at Wenny Recreation Ground.

137) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

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

138) Financial Officer's Report**(1) Financial Statement**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 22nd October 2020 showing expenditure of £82,872.29 and income of £172,040.31 (including a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

(2) Draft Precept

The Financial Officer advised Members that she would be completing a first precept and budget draft for 2021/2022 for consideration and approval at the December Council meeting. She asked Members to think about any future projects that they wished to be included for consideration in the draft budget and to advise her accordingly.

Cllr Hay suggested the development of the cycleway along the Old Railway Line to Somersham should be considered. She pointed out if it was possible to establish the cycleway it would increase the profile of the pocket park and would give connectivity to another community. The Financial Officer said she and the Clerk were looking into applying for a Places to Ride grant to help fund the cycleway. Cllr Hay suggested Somersham PC might apply for the grant and the Town Council could match fund. Cllr Murphy said he and Cllr Benney had pushed for the cycleway to be included in a list of cycle projects being put forward by Fenland District Council. The list also included the cycle path from Slade End roundabout to Jack's roundabout.

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

139) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll November 2020	1,086.39
Clerk	Payroll November 2020	1,944.26
Pension Fund	Payroll November 2020	900.20
HMRC	Payroll November 2020	891.03
Zen Internet	Website November-December2020	10.79
Barclays Bank	Bank charges	6.50
Clerk	Reim: Zoom & Fact Bus Advert	494.39
Ian Benney	Reim: Mileage for civic duties & meetings & tools re: defibrillator	86.46

Cfcorporate	Quarterly lease re: photocopier	2111 4 of 9 287.95
Wave	Allotments LHS water bill	115.18
Wave	Allotments RHS water bill	115.18
Onecom	October's Phone bill	76.50
Wave	Council offices water bill	53.81
Fire Firefighters Charity	Grant to voluntary organisations	150.00
Chatteris Christmas Lighting fund	CTC grant voluntary organisations	3,131.00
Illiffe Media	Advert for Fenland Citizen re Fact bus Service	155.70
RBL Poppy Appeal	CTC Wreath for Remembrance Day	25.00
British Gas	Q Elec Bill	145.35
A Holmes	Peter Pan Pre-school grant towards play equipment	300.00
Chatteris Comm Car Scheme	CTC grant voluntary organisations	300.00
East Anglian Air Ambulance	CTC grant voluntary organisations	1,000.00
Cromwell Fire	Fire extinguishers service	92.61
Magpas Air Ambulance	CTC grant voluntary organisations	1,000.00
RJ Warren	Gardening services, Little Acre & rubbish clearance	953.10
David J Richards Printers	Printing of Town Guide	2,388.95
James Carney	Reim: CTC Mayors Lamppost Poppy	25.00
Chatteris Museum	CTC grant voluntary organisations	100.00
Total		15,835.35

140) Connections Bus Youth Service – Decision on Future of Funding

Members had received an update on the Detached Youth Work carried out by the Connections Bus youth workers in Chatteris in September and October. Councillors were asked if they wished to continue with the outreach work during lockdown.

The Mayor and Cllr Hay were concerned that the report noted occasions when the youth workers did not approach groups of young people, particularly on one occasion when the youngsters appeared to be drinking while Cllr Haggata was unimpressed by an apparent lack of adhesion between the youth workers and the youths. Concerns were also expressed that the young people did not appear to be observing Covid rules.

Cllr Smith said a number of assumptions had been made and the concerns should be raised with the Connections Bus organisers to give them a chance to explain. She pointed out in some cases youngsters who were finding life difficult were opening up to the youth workers.

The Mayor and Cllr Hay expressed an interest in accompanying the youth workers while they were undertaking their detached youth work. Both confirmed they were DBS checked.

It was agreed to begin funding the detached youth work again in the New Year and to request that Cllrs Ashley and Hay join the youth workers on patrol one evening.

141) Museum CIO New Trustees Board & Museum Trustees Funds

It was agreed this item should be postponed as talks were still ongoing.

142) King Edward Community Centre – Verbal Update

The Financial Officer reported there had been some really positive work at the King Edward Centre and things had been going really well with new groups coming in and others gradually returning after the lockdown. The centre administrator and caretaker had worked hard to meet all the Covid-19 safety requirements and she had spent many hours sending out invoices and collecting payments. Unfortunately just as the centre was taking off the second lockdown was imposed and the Financial Officer feared many of the users would not return until the New Year. The exception was the pre-school group who were allowed to continue meeting.

143) Planning

Cllr Haggata updated members on the planning recommendations on applications a) to f) (**as shown on the appended list**) which were considered at the extraordinary meeting of the council on the 20th October 2020.

Councillors considered four further plans and agreed to return all to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support (Cllr Benney left the meeting on the 20th when this application was discussed)
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Noted
- f) Noted
- g) No opportunity to comment as decision made before consultation period elapsed.
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support

Complaint: Members agreed that the Clerk should send a letter of complaint to Fenland District Council about their handling of the planning application (g) to fell a Sycamore Tree covered by a TPO at 7 Ash Grove. Some members pointed out the tree must have been unsafe for the Tree Officer to allow its felling but others said it was not the health of the tree which was the main issue, rather it was the manner in which the decision was taken that was in dispute and there were concerns that the owner had damaged the tree.

Members agreed the following letter should be sent via FDC's 3Cs complaint system.

'Chatteris Town Council wishes to protest in the strongest possible terms at the processes undertaken to determine the planning application to fell a Sycamore tree at 7 Ash Grove, Chatteris; planning application F/YR20/0981/TRTPO.

The Council was not given a chance to submit its comments because the decision to allow the application was taken ahead of the end of the consultation period. This is poor practice.

The Council wishes to query why a TPO apparently offers no protection to a tree which was full of leaves and apparently healthy throughout the summer. A look back at the history of planning applications on this site is clear evidence that the tree has been in danger for several years and the Town Council has alerted FDC to the efforts of the householder to fell or damage this tree in the past.

Back on the 23rd October the Clerk sent an email to planning officer Kimberley Crow as follows: "Planning application F/YR20/0981/TRTPO, Chatteris Town Councillors are very concerned by this application as there is a very unfortunate history regarding this applicant and trees. They are particularly concerned by the term 5 day notice as this application needs serious consideration.

Councillors would like a sight of the alleged report from the FDC tree officer claiming this tree is diseased please and for no work to be authorised until this has been fully investigated."

The Clerk never received a reply to her email or a copy of the report requested. The Mayor was then alerted by a member of the public to the fact that permission to fell the tree had been granted.'

Planning Committee: The Clerk had received notification that planning applications F/YR20/0824/F (demolition of rear annexe and workshop and refurbishment of existing dwelling to form a 4-bed dwelling at 16 Park Street) and F/YR20/0854/F (Erection of 3 x 2-storey dwellings at 25 Victoria Street) would be considered by FDC's planning committee on the 11th November with a recommendation to refuse the applications. The planning officer wished to see the rear annexe converted to a dwelling and said the current proposals included inadequate parking provision. The Clerk reminded members they had supported the applications and Cllr Carney agreed to speak at the planning meeting in favour of the plans, representing the Town Council's views.

144) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 13th October 2020 (**copy attached**).

L14, EVCs: Members agreed that the idea of installing an EVC in Chatteris should be explored and UK Power Networks should be asked to identify areas where it could be installed.

L15, FDC Update: The Clerk said she was still awaiting a reply to her enquiry about when FDC would pay back the Section 106 money incorrectly spent on tree works in the cemeteries in 2019/20. Cllr Hay suggested if no reply was forthcoming FDC's Chief Executive Mr Paul Medd should be alerted. Cllr Murphy said work on the overgrown trees and bushes in Wenny Recreation Ground would begin in December and would cost thousands of pounds. He also said new parts had been ordered for the zipwire. Cllr Gowler said the public footpath at the rear of The Elms was overgrown.

L17, Pocket Park: Members agreed the park had been of great benefit to people during the pandemic and lockdown. It was agreed that the Council should either spend £19,000 extending the made up surface of the Old Railway Line to the Pocket Park or use the money as match funding for a scheme to extend the made up surface all the way to Somersham.

L20, Leisure Centre: Cllr Hay said she had spoken to the leisure centre manager about problems with the booking app and had been informed that bookings on the app were restricted between midnight and 6am. The problem was that numbers able to attend classes were restricted so there was high demand for the classes.

145) Remembrance Sunday Arrangements

The Clerk reported she had been working with Major Norman Larke of the RBL on arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (8th November) following the Government's strict coronavirus guidelines. New guidelines were constantly being issued and arrangements would be finalised on the 4th November. It appeared that a short service outside at the war memorial was allowed - focussed on wreath laying - and that people could attend as part of their work (including councillors), in a voluntary capacity on behalf of an organisation, as a member of the armed forces or a veteran of the armed forces. The public could spectate as long as they observed social distancing rules and had no symptoms of Covid.

The Clerk had written a risk assessment for the event based on Major Larke's usual risk assessment with additional information to cover Covid-19 restrictions.

146) New Town Guide

The new Town Guide was finally ready and was already being distributed by Councillors, Council officers, Centrepoin helpers and Rotarians. Every household in Chatteris would receive a copy of the guide.

Grateful thanks were expressed to Cllr Smith for all her hard work in producing such a great guide.

147) Cromwell Community College – Community Access Principles Agreement

The Clerk had sought Councillors approval for her to sign the Community Access Principles Agreement on behalf of the Town Council. That agreement had been given and the Clerk confirmed she had signed the agreement.

The agreement meant sports, community and arts facilities at Cromwell Community College (new facilities as identified on a plan of the school) were available (when their use was not required by the College) for use by the local community in compliance with a condition of planning permission. The facilities were identified as the new artificial pitch and the cricket non-turf pitch.

148) Traffic Issues

A141: The Clerk to Warboys Parish Council had written to Mr Graham Hughes at County Highways backing Chatteris Town Council's call for speed reduction measures on the A141 between Chatteris and Warboys.

Warboys councillors had pointed out there were frequent accidents on the road (including a fatality earlier in the summer) and when the road was closed this led to traffic being diverted on to unclassified rural fen roads which were totally unsuitable. The letter pointed out drivers often exceeded the 60mph limit on the road and problems were exacerbated by the number of farm vehicles on the road and poor visibility on misty mornings. The letter asked if average speed cameras would be feasible.

The Clerk said she had still to receive a reply from Mr Hughes but she would chase the matter.

London Road: A number of letters and notices had been received about the carriageway resurfacing works on London Road which were underway.

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

149) Correspondence

Digital Marketing: Members agreed to a request from the digital marketing team at the Combined Authority that information about the Market Towns Masterplans could be posted on the Town Council's Facebook page.

Co-op Food Fund: It was agreed the Clerk should pass information about the Co-op Food Fund to the Foodbank.

Social Housing: Cllr Smith requested a copy of the FDC press release regarding a consultation into the social housing allocation policy.

150) Reports

There were no reports.

151) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward.