

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 1st December 2020

2117

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1st December 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.

152) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllr Charrier sent an apology for absence and Cllr Hay sent an apology she would be a little late.

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

Cllr Murphy declared an interest in all planning matters as a member of FDC's planning committee

154) Open Forum

The Mayor welcomed members of the public to the meeting. Although several members of the public were observing none took the opportunity to speak.

155) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed the Mayor should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2020 as a correct record.

156) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Conservation Area Appraisal: Cllr Smith asked if the Council had received the estimated costs of carrying out an appraisal. The Clerk said she would chase FDC for a cost.

Min 140) Connections Bus: Members had received the draft minutes of the Connections Bus Project AGM and an explanation of why providing the limited services of detached youth work or a zoom babysitting course were important to young people and the charity during the pandemic. Members had already agreed to start funding detached youth work sessions again in January.

Min L16) FACT Bus: The Clerk reported that as requested the advertisement due to go in local newspapers to advertise the FACT bus services to St Ives and Peterborough had been cancelled as there was uncertainty about when the services would begin. FACT originally hoped to get them going in December and had informed those booked on to the November

buses (which had to be cancelled) of this fact. The Clerk said the Council was in the hands of FACT about when the services should begin.

157) 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 25th November 2020.

Members have also received an email from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office regarding planned councillor briefings (Fenland was not mentioned) and a request for councillors to use community media platforms to encourage people to report crimes.

Neighbourhood Alerts

6/11/20: Warning, from Action Fraud, to people selling items online to be on the lookout for criminals sending fake PayPal emails.

9/11/20: Notification of a Protect your Password national campaign which has been launched by Neighbourhood Watch.

10/11/20: Notification that Cambridgeshire Police would be taking part in a national operation to tackle knife crime.

11/11/20: Advice from Neighbourhood Watch on how to protect you and your community through Covid-19.

16/11/20: Warning that some residents in Fenland have been visited by rogue traders purporting to be Council officers offering loft insulation. FDC have confirmed they are not carrying out such work.

25/11/20: Notification that the National Crime Agency has launched a security campaign, aimed at licensed shotgun holders in the UK, to ensure their homes are secure and they safely store and move firearms.

26/11/20: Warning about a surge of 30% in online shopping fraud during the pandemic.'

Cllr Carney suggested using Chatteris Facebook pages and other on line platforms to encourage people to report crimes as even minor pieces of information could prove to be useful. The Mayor agreed pointing out Sgt Lugg had said the more reports the better and it was very easy to report on line.

158) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

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

The Mayor was pleased to note an additional stall selling Turkish food was planned for the market. Cllr Smith expressed disappointment there was no longer a flower stall and asked if there had been an attempt to find a replacement flower stall. The Clerk agreed to enquire.

The Mayor said there was a continuing problem with dog fouling and encouraged everyone to report problems to FDC.

159) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 23rd November 2020 showing expenditure of £94,411.53 and income of £172,295.31 (includes a Full 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.

160) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll December 2020	1,086.39
Clerk	Payroll December 2020	1,577.26
Pension Fund	Payroll December 2020	900.20
HMRC	Payroll December 2020	643.51
Zen Internet	Website December2020- Jan 2021	10.79
Barclays Bank	Bank charges	52.86
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Sundries	34.38
Iris	Renewal of payroll software license	394.80
Connections Bus project	Detached visits	1,620.00
SLCC	Membership renewal	208.00
Cpalc	HR Training	150.00
Onecom	November's phone bill	79.74
Earth Anchors	Museum noticeboard	369.60
Chatteris Community Archive	Mayors Xmas cards	30.00
R J Warren	Gardening services, & Little acre maintenance	857.10
Total		8,014.63

161) To Agree CCTV Service Level Agreement & Funding 2021-2024

Members were advised that the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) the Town Council had with FDC, for the provision and maintenance of the CCTV cameras in the Town, was due for renewal on the 31st March 2021.

The present SLA with FDC was agreed by the Town Council on the 7th November 2017 (Minute144) whereby they agreed to an annual contribution of £21,270 to include the 5 town centre cameras and the additional camera located at Wenny Rec for the CCTV maintenance in Chatteris for the three-year period to 31st March 2021.

The Financial Officer reminded Members that funding was essential and the CCTV system needed sustainable financial resources to exist and move forward.

In this respect FDC propose that the Town Council continued their support of the CCTV system by funding the town centre cameras and the Wenny Rec camera under a new SLA from April 2021-March 2024 at the current annual figure of £21,270 which would remain fixed with no increase during the length of the agreement.

There had been no increases from the present SLA.

The principle of the original scheme was that the overall system was a partnership and that the Town centre cameras were locally funded, the current proposal is in keeping with this principle.

The Financial Officer recommended that Members approve the new SLA from April 2021-March 2024 at an annual figure of £21,270 which would remain fixed with no increase during the length of the agreement.

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

162) To Agree Arrangements for Citizens Advice Sessions in Chatteris

(Cllr Julie Smith declared an interest in this agenda item as a staff member of the library).

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had a meeting on Monday 23rd November 2020 with the CARB Officer, CARB Trustee and Chatteris Library Managers, to discuss processes for delivering the face to face service at the Chatteris Library.

Discussions had been held previously regarding the cost of the hire of the room and questions asked as to why Whittlesey Town Council didn't pay for the room hire at the Whittlesey library, when Chatteris Town Council had been advised that they could not get the hire for free and would need to pay the Community hire rate.

The District Library Manager advised that this was an historic agreement between CARB and the District Council, however, this agreement was no longer in place for new bookings and going forward all room hire at the libraries would be charged at the Community Rate.

The District Library Manager offered the first two months free to Chatteris Town Council

which equates to 8 weeks and is a savings of £156. The room hire would need to be for 3 hours, which would give 15 minutes either side for cleaning setting up and packing away. The service would be run on an appointment basis and each session would see 5 clients at half hour slots.

The cost of the room hire at the library would be £780 for 48 sessions, 8 of those being free. The Chatteris Library and CARB discussed requirements from both sides to make the delivery of the service COVID-19 safe.

The CARB did not allow lone working therefore the library would need to be open whilst the Officer was there delivering the service.

The CARB advised that they had trained officers willing to deliver the service, however it wouldn't be practical to start until after Christmas as things needed to be put in place i.e. risk assessments, processes and advertising.

The Library Manager advised they would send relevant documents over to the CARB and they would also contact FDC to see if they would loan CARB their screen for each session. Both parties agreed to keep the Financial Officer informed of progress.

Members were advised that this was the first pilot scheme set up since the Covid-19 pandemic and all at the meeting were very keen to get the service up and running asap.

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

163) To Agree Draft Precept Budget 2021/22

1) Draft Precept Budget 2021/22

The Financial Officer presented Members with a proposed draft precept budgetary control sheet for their consideration, comments and approval. (**See attached**).

2) Financial Statement

Members were reminded that as per SLCC advice Members needed to consider projects which might require funding in the next financial year to ensure sufficient provision is included in the Precept budget.

Under the Local Government financial regulations any new project to be included in the Precept budget would normally require a written report.

3) New Budgets

Members were advised that two new budgets had been included in the 2021/22 draft Precept:

A new budget had been included for the Citizen Advice Rural Bureau to deliver a Face to Face service for the residents of Chatteris. The budget included room hire at the Chatteris Library.

Members were reminded that at the August 2020 Council meeting Members agreed to fund CARB to deliver a face to face service in Chatteris as a pilot scheme. Members were all in agreement that in these difficult times this would be an essential service to provide to the residents of Chatteris. It was agreed that if the service was successful the Town Council would consider funding it as an on-going service.

The second new budget was for funding towards a Cycle Path along the existing Old Railway Line in Chatteris. The project would be to improve the surface of the Old Railway Line to allow access to cycles, wheelchairs and pushchairs alike.

It was pointed out outdoor exercise was being promoted by the Government to help the mental wellbeing of the public during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and this project would benefit all abilities.

Somersham PC had responded to requests for support of a cycle path all the way to Somersham by stating they did not believe the existing surface needed to be improved. However the Clerk had already applied for funding from Places to Ride and was working on the proposed scheme with the FDC senior transport officer. The Mayor advised that she would be writing to the Chairman of Somersham PC outlining the reasons for the application and asking them to reconsider their decision. It was agreed to copy in Cllr Criswell the County Councillor for Somersham.

The Financial Officer advised members that another new budget for their consideration was to provide electric vehicle charging points in the town. This had been added into the budget after the original draft budget had been sent to them as the Town Clerk had only just received the costings.

The Financial Officer advised members that the draft budget included the three new budgets (reported above), increases to some current budgets and savings on others.

The Financial Officer advised that the funds for the 21/22 draft budget would come out of the general fund and a slight increase of £1,500 to the precept.

As the precept hadn't been increased since 2018/19 financial year, it was prudent to slightly increase it with a minute impact on each household.

The Financial Officer advised she hoped to be able to give members exact figures on how the increase would impact on households when she received the tax base figure in January.

However, most members were against increasing the precept pointing out that both the District and County Councils had been hit hard by the corona virus and would likely have to raise their precepts which would impact on the Community and, therefore, Members thought there was no justification for Town Council to raise its precept.

The majority voted in favour of not increasing the precept from its current figure of £151,000.

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

164) Allotment Roads

The Clerk reported that the roadways on both the north and south side allotments were in very poor condition and at least one allotment holder had already fallen over as a result. The road on the north side was about to be repaired as the cost was below the price needed for formal agreement by all councillors and did not require further quotations. The County Council rights of way officer had very kindly arranged for a pile of road plainings to be delivered to the allotments free of charge which would be used on the roadway.

The Clerk had also obtained a quote for repairs to the south side roadway but this would be far more expensive and would require three quotations as it involved protecting a water pipe and water meter which were in danger of being damaged by cars running over them. The Council's gardening contractors had submitted three suggested schemes to repair the road which ranged in price from £2,900 to £7,536. The Clerk recommended the middle scheme at £4,200 as the cheaper option would not sufficiently protect the water meter.

Members **agreed** to pursue the middle scheme and **agreed** the Clerk should obtain two further quotes.

165) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the planning working group meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2020 (**copy attached**). Cllr Benney declared an interest as a member of FDC's planning committee and took no part in the decision making process.

The working group made recommendations on applications a) to j) (as shown on the **appended list**) and these were ratified by the full council (Cllr Hay did not vote on applications h) and i).

The Council then considered 4 further applications and agreed to return all to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Recommend Refusal due to the additional traffic which will be generated on an already congested and dangerous road. However, the Town Council takes the pragmatic view that the application is very likely to be granted permission and is therefore insistent that there should be mitigation in the form of the installation of safety/speed reduction measures on the A142, such as average speed cameras. (The Clerk informed members that Mepal Parish Council had submitted similar comments to Fenland District Council.)
- b) Support (Cllr Ashley declared an interest)
- c) Support
- d) Noted
- e) Noted
- f) Support
- g) Support

- h) No objections **if** planning conditions are re-appraised so the hours of use are reduced on a Sunday and another noise level survey is conducted by FDC.
- i) Recommend Refusal, lack of detailed plan, concerns about drainage and servicing property, beyond development boundary, will set dangerous precedent.
- j) Support
- k) Noted
- l) Recommend Refusal, over development within the building will impact on amenities by creating cramped conditions, insufficient parking provision will lead to overspill on to road where there are already serious problems.
- m) Recommend Refusal, over development within the building, unsympathetic conversion, minimum standards are not acceptable. Lack of parking will also be a problem as the road outside already has parking problems. The concerns of the fire service should be taken into consideration.
- n) Support

Public Open Space: FDC Estate Manager Mr Christian Wilson had written to the Council asking if Councillors had any objections to FDC selling public land it owned in Chatteris.

The first parcel of land was next to the old bakery in Huntingdon Road, separated from the main Huntingdon Road gardens by the driveway to The Sycamores. A resident of The Sycamores wished to buy the land. There was some opposition to the sale but the majority of members **agreed they had no objections to it being sold.**

The second parcel of land was in Boadicea Court and was needed as access to the proposed development at the rear of 11, 13 and 13A High Street which the Town Council had supported. Mr Wilson explained the land was also subject to a covenant that it be held as public open space so would also require the agreement of Persimmon Homes to release it. Again there was some objection to the sale or a granting of easement over the land but the majority of councillors **agreed to the sale of the portion of land needed to allow the development to go ahead.**

Replacement tree: FDC planning had replied to the Council's request that the felled Sycamore tree at 7 Ash Grove be replaced with a like for like tree. The planning officer explained that the tree officer had already agreed the Sycamore could be replaced by an Acer plantanoides 'Crimson Red' which had equal value to wildlife, had less of a honeydew problem and was less susceptible to a sooty bark disease.

Minerals: Notification had been received that further modifications had been made to the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The Clerk reminded members she had made written submissions on behalf of the Council on previous drafts of the plan, with little effect, and asked if members wished her to write again. Members suggested referring to previous comments.

166) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 17th November 2020 (**copy attached**).

L24) EVCs: The Clerk had spoken to UK Power Networks who had now given advice on the best locations for EVCs.

L26) Sculpture Trail: Cllr Smith said she was working on the idea of an outdoor trail to give visitors something to do when they came to Chatteris but she had yet to finalise her suggestions.

167) To Consider the Creation of an HR Panel

Cllrs Ashley, Benney and Haggata and the Clerk had attended a CAPALC training session on appraisals and the main recommendation had been that the Council should set up an HR panel to look into appraisals and performance assessments.

The Mayor suggested she should be joined by Cllrs Benney, Haggata, and Smith to assess the Financial Officer but as it was not possible for her to assess the Clerk she asked if Cllr Newell was willing to join the panel and assess the Clerk. Cllr Hay also expressed an interest in joining the panel as she had spent her working life employing people.

It was agreed to set up a meeting of the HR panel to arrange when to carry out the performance assessments. Cllr Hay agreed and pointed out it had been agreed earlier in the year to look at pay and working conditions and the meeting would also be an ideal opportunity to get feedback from employees as well as the other way around.

168) Growing Fenland – Chatteris Update

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the Growing Fenland – Chatteris town team meeting on the 16th November.

Since that meeting the good news had been received that the Town Centre Renaissance Fund bid, drawn up by the Clerk and the Financial Officer, had been successful and the bid had been approved at the CPCA Board Meeting. The Mayor thanked the Clerk and Financial Officer for their work on the bid and members asked how the fund would be advertised and local businesses encouraged to apply for funding on a match funding basis.

169) A141 & A142 Speeding – Reply to Letter

The Council had receive a response to its call for speed reduction measures on the A141 Chatteris to Warboys road and the A142 Chatteris to Ely road.

Highways road safety manager Mr Matt Staton confirmed there had been 22 injury collisions on the A141 between January 2015 and the end of August 2020, one of which resulted in a fatality and four in serious injury. However Mr Staton claimed the risk on the route was lower than on many others in the county. He added that there was one fixed safety camera site (at Oldhurst) and four mobile safety camera sites on the A141 which received regular enforcement activity. Mr Staton admitted speed was a problem but claimed there were other factors which would need to be explored if any solutions were suggested.

Mr Staton said route studies had been carried out on the A1303 Stow-cum-Quy and the A142 between Chatteris and Ely. The A1303 had received £1.3m funding from the Department of Transport for safety measures, the A142 had received nothing. Mr Staton said as part of the County Council's new Vision Zero strategy they would try and expand on the route treatment approach but warned it was unlikely to come to fruition overnight. Campaigns and education-based interventions were likely to target some of the drivers' behaviour identified.

In summary Mr Staton concluded that the A141 was not a priority for specific interventions, although he did recognise that there was speeding on the route, and limited resources would be prioritised elsewhere.

Cllr Carney outlined some of the measures that had been introduced on the A1303 and said it was not as busy as the A142. Cllr Smith confirmed the A142 had been identified as a site requiring safety measures but had been given no funding for safety measures. The Mayor said Mr Staton's letter was dismissive and members agreed to fight on and not let the issue drop.

It was agreed to ask what measures the County Council had made to attract funding for the roads and to copy in the Chairman and the Leader of the County Council.

170) Traffic Issues

New Road Speed Humps: A resident of New Road had written to the Town Council concerned at the alleged damage being caused to his home by heavy traffic going over the humps and vibrating his property. The resident said he was woken in the night as heavy vehicles thundered past and requested the speed humps be removed and alternative measures be put in place if required. The resident had originally written to County Highways and FDC and Highways had stated they had no funds available to investigate any potential solutions and suggested asking the Town Council to apply for LHI funding.

The Mayor confirmed the speed cushions were very high and their height had recently increased due to repairs so she sympathised with the author. She agreed the cushions needed either removing or reducing in height, particularly the ones near the author's home. She pointed out cars parked on both sides of the road acted as a speed reducing measure. Cllr Gowler agreed the cushions were atrocious, cars zig-zagged along the road to avoid them so they were counter-productive. The Mayor reminded members that the humps went in at the same time as the crossing and helped to slow traffic at peak school times. Cllr Haggata suggested asking for speed checks and urged members to be cautious about asking for a

reduction in speed limiting measures. Cllr Hay agreed there were too many speed humps and cushions.

It was agreed to ask County Highways to either reduce the height of the cushions near the author's home or to take some out.

Invitation: An invitation had been received for representatives from Chatteris to join the Fenland Transport and Access group (Fenland TAG). The aim of the group was to ensure that transport was available to meet the basic needs of all Fenland residents. Cllrs Haggata and Newell believed they were already members of the transport group, although they had not been to a meeting for many months, and agreed to continue representing the Council on Fenland TAG.

Boadicea Court: An email written on behalf of the residents of Boadicea Court had been received thanking Cllr Hay for all her help and assistance in getting double yellow lines installed along the road. Cllr Hay spoke of the problems encountered before the lines were actually painted including a lack of communication that the work was about to be undertaken which led to cars parking in the way and a late decision to postpone the work as rain was forecast.

TTRO: A temporary traffic regulation order had been received to close Blackmill Road on the 4th January to carry out roadworks.

Roadworks: The latest bulletins listing road works & events affecting the highway had been received.

171) Correspondence

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

Amendments to Code of Conduct: Members had received a copy of FDC's suggested amendments to the Code of Conduct for Members which would be considered by the Conduct Committee. Members were asked to pass any comments to the Clerk so she could forward them and she warned members that it was likely the Town Council would be encouraged to adopt a similar amended Code of Conduct.

Circus: The Clerk had received a request from Ginnett Circus to visit Chatteris from the 12th to 18th April 2021 and organise a circus at the recreation ground (Wenny?). There were assurances the circus would be Covid-19 secure. Members felt that with the pandemic continuing it was too early to make plans to stage an event in April. They were also concerned that Wenny Recreation Ground was often water logged at that time of year and heavy vehicles would make a mess of the field for the summer. It was suggested Furrowfields Car Park could be used but members still felt it was too early to make a decision or to seek FDC's permission to use the car park.

Day Centre: The Clerk asked members if they were happy to publicise Warboys Day Centre which residents of Chatteris were welcome to attend. Members pointed out there were similar facilities already existing in Chatteris and suggested if Warboys was advertised the Council should also publicise similar clubs in Chatteris. This was agreed. The Mayor said a club run by Age UK at Salem Court in Chatteris had now moved to March. It was agreed to ask why. Cllr Carney asked if there was anywhere over the Christmas period offering hot food. Cllr Petrou said his company would provide free Christmas meals to anyone struggling and was thanked for his efforts.

Post Box: Cllr Smith asked the Clerk to investigate what had happened to the Post Box from London Road which had been taken down for repair and not returned.

Christmas Lights: Members agreed the Clerk should write to the Christmas Lights Committee thanking them for all their hard work in putting up another wonderful lights display, in very trying conditions.

172) Reports

There were no reports.

173) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.