

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

2143

1 of 10

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 virtually via Zoom video conferencing system.

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

### **196) To Accept Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Charrier, W Haggata and M Petrou.

### **197) 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

### **198) Open Forum**

There were no members of the public present and it was, therefore, agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

### **199) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### **200) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Min 192) Disabled Parking Bay markings: The resident who had requested the re-painting of disabled parking bays throughout Chatteris had thanked the Clerk and Cllr Hay for responding and “promoting the interests of disabled persons requiring access to restricted car parking locations”. He said he would continue to inform Cllr Hay of locations where bay markings had deteriorated. It was reported the disabled parking bay in Wimpole Street had been completed.

### **201) Police Matters**

Members had received a 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. The report follows a meeting between Sgt Lugg, the Mayor and other Council leaders from the Fenland area on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

**Neighbourhood Alerts**

6 & 8/1/21: Warnings about Covid vaccine scams, what to look out for and a reminder that all vaccines are free.

11/1/21: Neighbourhood Watch National Newsletter for January 2021.

20/1/21: Notification that 3 cannabis factories, worth up to £725,000, were found in the north of Cambridgeshire (including March) in the space of 24 hours. Five people were arrested.

22/1/21: Warning to dog owners to be vigilant and review their security after reports of a rise in dog thefts.

26/1/21: Invitation to design a Croods 2 inspired treehouse and then win it for your local community.’

The Mayor commented that the meeting with Sgt Lugg had been very informative. She had asked why groups of youths seen on the streets of Chatteris had not been picked up by CCTV. Cllr Ashley promised to bring up any issues raised by councillors at the next meeting.

**202) FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV Updates**

Members noted the FDC, CCTV and Section 106 updates (**copy attached**).

Cllr Smith said dog fouling was once again a major issue and asked if CCTV could help to identify culprits. Cllr Murphy explained that officers were meant to actually catch offenders walking away from the dog fouling and warn them that they would be reported. He said if dog fouling was discovered Rapid Response would clear it up if notified. Cllr Smith said two reports she had made had not been actioned. The Mayor said she had reported dog fouling at St Stephen’s Drive. Cllr Murphy said it was possible to contact the Street Scene officers but warned two officers were due to retire on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, including the officer for Chatteris. He said FDC were advertising for replacements.

Cllr Carney said the skip had been collected from the garden of the bungalow in St Martin’s Road but there was still a quantity of rubbish, including bulky items, left in the garden. It was agreed to inform the Street Scene officer.

**203) Financial Officers Report****(1) Financial Statement**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 showing expenditure of £135,827.30 and income of £173,559.98 (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) Town Council’s Insurance Renewal Policy**

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received the Council's renewal insurance for 2021/22. She reminded Members that they had agreed to a long-term agreement policy of 3 years at the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 Council meeting (Minute 211).

Members were advised that the renewal policy premium of £1,869.08 was based on the discounted long-term agreement and would be renewed on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

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

#### 204) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll February 2021	1,086.39
Clerk	Payroll February 2021	1,577.06
Pension Fund	Payroll February 2021	900.20
HMRC	Payroll February 2021	643.71
Zen Internet	Website February-March plus renewal of Domain name 2021	22.78
Barclays Bank	Bank charges	9.50
Clerk	Reim: Zoom	14.39
British Gas	Q Elec Bill	296.17
Onecom	January's phone bill	79.88
R J Warren	Gardening services	727.50
R J Warren	North side Allotments Road repair	1,020.00
Skylark Garden Centre	Friends of Little Acre Gardening equipment Grant to voluntary organisations	180.00
Cfcorporate	Photocopier lease	239.95

Viking	Stationary Order	<b>2146</b> <b>4 of 10</b> 136.80
Clerk	Reim Deep Water sign Little Acre	6.28
UK Safety Management	Pat testing	252.47
CamSAR	Grant to Voluntary organisations	150.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,343.08</b>

**205) To Approve Funding Request from Fenland Sparta ABC Amateur Boxing Club in Chatteris**

The Financial Officer advised members that she had received an email from the Head Coach of the Chatteris Sparta Boxing Club requesting help with funding towards costs for starting-up again following the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown.

The funding would be used to pay towards 3 months utilities and rent of the building, additional cleaning materials under the COVID-19 -rules, Coaches, Club and boxers' registration and insurance. The grant amount requested was £1,570.

The Head Coach explained in his e-mail that the Boxing Club had always managed to pay for all their costs by fund raising and people in the town organising fundraising events to help towards the Boxing Clubs expenditure. However, due to the Virus lockdowns, the Club hadn't been able to do any fund raising at all for the last year and were now facing dire consequences.

Members were advised that the Sparta Boxing club were unable to claim for any business grants because they were not responsible for the business rates. The club paid rent to the Trustees of the original boxing club who owned the building.

The Financial Officer advised members that she was making enquiries into any other grants that may be available to the Boxing Club and would update Members at the next council meeting.

Members **agreed** to defer a decision until the next full council meeting to be held in March 2021.

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

**206) Planning**

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (**copy attached**).

The group made recommendations on planning applications a) to e) (as shown on the **appended list**) and these were ratified by the full council. It was agreed to return the plans to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support

### **207) Growing Fenland Project Update – To Agree New Scheme & Necessary Expenditure**

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the last Growing Fenland – Chatteris Town Team meeting and the following reports from the Clerk:

**New Project:** ‘Members may recall that at the January meeting they formally agreed that plans should be drawn up for a new building adjoining the library to house the museum on the ground floor with residential accommodation above. These plans were to then have been submitted to the Combined Authority to apply for funds set aside for the Growing Fenland – Chatteris Project.

Unfortunately when the plans were drawn up and costed the estimated costs of the work were either £2.9m or £3.3m, way in excess of the £750,000 allocated for the project. As a result the Growing Fenland team decided to abandon that project but were keen to submit another scheme before the deadline for projects.

Cllr Ian Benney put forward the idea of purchasing the former Barclays Bank and adapting it for use by the museum and this was agreed by the Growing Fenland team. The aim is to not only purchase the freehold to the ground floor of the building but to also purchase the leasehold to the first floor offices. Rental of the first floor either as offices or as residential accommodation will help to maintain the building and offset the costs of the museum on the ground floor.

Events have moved swiftly over the past week and a half as the time to submit a scheme to the Combined Authority is very limited.

Plans for the conversion of the ground floor are being drawn up and an estimation for the conversion costs will be obtained as will a valuation of the building ready for the scheme to be submitted. Curator of the Museum Mr Ian Mason has been consulted and is on board with plans to move the museum from 14 Church Lane to its new location in one of the most prominent and historic buildings in the town.

In conjunction with the museum move, new ideas for 14 Church Lane are being explored which include extending the council chambers, creating two new offices for Council staff (along with storage space), creating a new unit to let and developing one or two residential flats upstairs (the number being dependent on the feasibility of extending over the flat roof).

Members' **approval** is sought for the new project ideas being explored.'

**Fees:** 'In order to submit the bid to the Combined Authority for Growing Fenland funds to be spent on purchasing and converting the former Barclays Bank to a museum, certain information is required from experts. All the funds available to help with the Growing Fenland bids to the CPCA have been used, so it now falls on the Town Council to fund those professional fees. Members are asked to agree to the following fees:

The conversion of the former Barclays Bank in Chatteris to a museum.

The Council has obtained a cost for an architect to visit the site, take measurements, produce design drawings and draw up a Schedule of Works. The cost is £2,800 plus VAT. This will mean suspending standing orders as there is unfortunately not time to obtain three quotes for the work as the drawings and schedule of works are needed before the end of February.

The Council has also asked a local estate agent to value the building and there may a charge for this service.

The FDC Officer tasked with helping with the CPCA bid has pointed out that the Town Council also needs to consider the ongoing revenue costs of the new museum building. Given that revenue from the museum is currently £0, CTC will need to support the museum in the first instance until it possibly starts taking some revenue (which is unlikely). The Council already supports the museum through an annual grant which covers the museum's share of the bills for 14 Church Lane.

If the Council is able to purchase the leasehold for the first floor of Barclays Bank and the sitting tenants continue to use those offices that will bring in an income which will help to offset the costs of the museum. If the offices are vacated the Council will have to fund the museum until the first floor is either re-let as offices or converted into residential flats.

The possibility of extending 14 Church Lane, Chatteris (currently the Council Chambers and Museum).

The Council has received a quotation of £450 plus VAT to investigate whether it would be possible to build an extension over the existing single storey at the rear of the premises. The Council has been advised to allow a further sum of £300 plus VAT for the trial hole excavations which are being undertaken on Friday. An extension would allow the Council to develop another residential flat which would bring in revenue.

It is recommended that members **agree** to:

- a) Suspend standing orders and agree to fund the cost of drawings and a schedule of works for the former Barclays Bank at a cost of £2,800 plus VAT.
- b) Cover the costs of a valuation of the former Barclays Bank.
- c) Continue to support the museum financially when it moves to the new premises.
- d) Cover the costs of investigation work (estimated at £750) into the possibility of extending 14 Church Lane.

The Financial Officer informed members that the costs of exploratory works at 14 Church Lane could come out of the repairs and maintenance budget and the £2,800 from general reserves.

Cllr Murphy requested that more than one estimate was obtained for the likely costs of converting Barclays Bank. Cllr Hay suggested it might be possible to recoup the fees by including them in the bid to the Combined Authority. Cllr Gowler said the fees would be a good investment bearing in mind the funds which could potentially be unlocked from the Combined Authority.

Cllr Smith was concerned by recommendation c) as it appeared to be an open cheque book for the Museum. The Clerk said she would amend it to state the Council would continue to give the Museum a grant towards their running costs.

Members **resolved** to:

- 1) Agree to explore the new project idea of converting the former Barclays Bank to a museum.
- 2) Suspend Standing Orders and agree to fund the cost of drawings and a schedule of works for the former Barclays Bank at a cost of £2,800 plus VAT.
- 3) Cover the costs of a valuation of the former Barclays Bank.
- 4) Continue to give the museum a grant towards its running costs when it moved to the new premises.
- 5) Cover the costs of investigation work (estimated at £750) into the possibility of extending 14 Church Lane.

## **208) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (**copy attached**).

Cllr Smith requested a slight amendment to the minutes. Under item L45 Cllr Smith said the problems with parking in Victoria Street were historic and she was unsure if they were still exacerbated by parents collecting and delivering boys to the scout hut. Cllr Carney said people parking on both sides of the street and on double yellow lines was an on-going problem and to try and drive a bus along Victoria Street was often quite interesting. Cllr Hay said she had contacted Highways to enquire if it would be possible to install bollards on the path and the likely cost.

L43 Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Carney named the lady responsible for the caterpillar trail of decorated pebbles.

L40 Bins: The Clerk had received an update on the rubbish bins. The damaged bin in Furrowfields Road was not replaced immediately due to a delay with the delivery of new bins but this had now been replaced as had the damaged bin on Farriers Gate.

The Clerk had also forwarded complaints about a refuse collection van which had driven either side of the footpath around Wenny Recreation Ground and had created “a right mess with mud everywhere”. The FDC officer confirmed that the paths had been swept and cleansing staff were no longer driving on to the site, work was being carried out on foot. The Clerk had also received confirmation that the damaged seat near Spectacular on the High Street was to be replaced and the FDC officer responsible promised it would be replaced as soon as possible.

L44 Council’s Website: The Council’s website designer had confirmed he could update the website as suggested. He explained that it would probably be necessary to change the website’s theme and then test it to see how it met the accessibility guidelines and write the accessibility page accordingly. He anticipated it would take 2 days work at a maximum cost of £400. Members **agreed** this was acceptable and gave the Clerk the go ahead to order the work.

## **209) Traffic Issues**

LHI Scheme: Highways Officer Victoria Bailey had submitted a suggested solution to the problems at the junction of East Park Street and Wenny Road and the junction of South Park Street and Wood Street.

The suggestion was: “From the junction of Wenny Road with East Parks Street, extend the Double Yellow Lines up to and including the junction with South Park Street. On the west side of East Park Street, the Traffic Regulation Order could include "No Loading at Any Time" particularly in the vicinity of the electricity sub-station. Consider the need for implementing one or more disabled bays.

At the junction of South Park Street and Wood Road, consider bringing the give way line forward to improve visibility. This would however have the effect of taking up the advisory cycle lane. A small kerbed build out near to Burghley House would further reinforce this measure, together with parking restrictions, but is likely to be too costly. On East Park Street consider installing a fully marked advisory cycle lane in place of the intermittent cycle symbols (where there is currently no footway). This would have the effect of narrowing the carriageway and deterring parking. Highlighting this cycle lane in red surfacing material, together with the cycle lane across the junction of South Park Street would add a further £2k to the cost estimate. A mini roundabout at the junction of Wenny Road and East Park Road may be feasible, but would require a greater depth of speed and vehicle flow analysis and the design process would be outside of the scope of the LHI feasibility process.”

A long discussion on the suggestions took place with Councillors pointing out the problems turning into East Park Street from Wenny Road around a blind bend and then meeting oncoming traffic as it passed parked vehicles; the problems with schoolchildren crossing the road safely if the parked cars were removed and the traffic speeded up; the question of where cars would park if the double yellow lines were removed and the problems for cars leaving South Park Street as the view right along Wood Street was restricted.

Solutions were discussed and it was eventually agreed to ask Ms Bailey to look into the idea of a scheme which changed the priority in Wood Street by moving the give way lines from

the South Park Street junction to across Wood Street. Councillors argued this would make it safer for vehicles leaving South Park Street as the vehicles would have the right of way. Vehicles progressing along Wood Street would have to slow down and check no vehicles were leaving South Park Street. Councillors also suggested the double yellow lines in East Park Street should be extended by just one car length. This would allow cars to pull into the road and have time to stop if they met cars were passing parked vehicles.

It was agreed that either Cllr Benney or the Clerk would pitch the scheme to the LHI panel meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> March.

A141 Speed Reduction Measures: Highways Officer Mr Matt Staton had responded to the Council's follow up letter regarding speed reduction measures on the A141 and A142. He had explained that the A1303 project was funded because it was highlighted as the highest risk section of A-road in the East of England. Mr Staton also highlighted funding which had been spent on the A141/142 in recent years including: a speed limit reduction on the A142 at Chatteris; junction improvements on the A141 at Wimblington and Gaul Road, March; upgrading of the safety camera site at Chatteris; junction safety improvements at Mepal and a planned expenditure of £300,000 on route improvements to the A142 between Chatteris and Ely by improving lining, signs and safe roadsides. Councillors pointed out this did not include any improvements to the A141 Chatteris to Warboys road which had been the original cause of concern and suggested asking again for average speed cameras along that section of road.

Road Closure: Notification had been received of a temporary road closure order to stop all traffic along the B1050 London Road from Wood House Farm to Stocking Fen from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

A47 Guyhirn: Information had been received about major plans for improvements to the A47/A141 junction at Guyhirn due to begin in February 2021 with completion in April 2022. The Clerk had also been invited to a briefing about plans to close the A1101 at Welney for flood barrier works but had not taken up the offer as the site was so far from Chatteris.

Roadworks: The latest bulletins listing road works and events affecting the highway had been received along with the IHMC incident report for December.

## 210) Correspondence

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

## 211) Reports

Pride in Fenland Awards: The Mayor and Cllr Ashley had attended the virtual Pride in Fenland Awards ceremony in January. An FDC report gave details of two award winners from Chatteris - The Friday Club, nominated by Cllr Smith, had won the Group, Club or Organisation Benefiting the Community Award, and Ernie's Amateur Boxing Club, nominated by the Mayor, was a runner up in the Sport in the Community category.

Fens Biosphere Conference: Cllr Murphy and the Clerk had attended the virtual Fens Biosphere Conference. Mr Ian Mason, who had also attended, had submitted a report on the Biosphere project and the reasons behind it from information given out at the conference. This information had been passed to councillors.

**212) Items for the Next Agenda**

No items were put forward for the next agenda.