

Notes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council's Planning Working Group held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 23rd February 2021.

Present: Cllrs W Haggata (Chairman), L Ashley, A Gowler, F Newell and J Smith.

P35 20/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs I Benney & J Carney sent apologies for absence. Cllr Carney submitted comments on applications a) to f) ahead of the meeting.

P36 20/21 Appeals, Decisions and Withdrawn Plans

The following plans had all been granted approval by Fenland District Council: Change of use of the Age Concern offices at 2 Victoria Street to three dwellings; works to the listed Mile Post in London Road; erection of extensions to 102 Westbourne Road; erection of an extension to the existing clubhouse at Bowling Green, Wood Street and change of use of land to a children's moto cross track at land north of 136 London Road.

P37 20/21 Applications and Revised Applications

- a) F/YR21/0111/RM - Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR19/0760/O to erect a 3-storey, 5-bed dwelling with detached garage/gym above (plot 3 only) at 130 London Road – **Support**
- b) F/YR21/0108/TRCA - Fell 1 Goat Willow tree within a Conservation Area at The Old Cock, 41 London Road – **Support**
- c) F/YR21/0129/A - Display of 2 externally illuminated lettering fascia signs at 10 High Street – **Support if it is in keeping with the area**
- d) F/YR21/0130/F - Change of use and subdivision of retail shop and 3-bed flat to retail shop, hot food takeaway and 3-bed flat including formation of a new shop front and installation of air conditioning unit to rear of takeaway at Aspinalls Newsagents, 10 High Street – **Support (majority 4-2 in favour) if the hours of operation are reduced to 11am to 11pm Sunday to Thursday and 11am to 12.30am Friday and Saturday and would like to see remaining features of the old frontage (roundels (?) near the door) preserved.**
- e) F/YR21/0150/F - Erect a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling at 24 Marian Way – **Support**
- f) F/YR21/0169/TRCA - Works to 1 Monterey Cypress tree within a Conservation Area at 87 High Street – **Support**
- g) F/YR21/0196/PNC04 – Prior Approval for change of use from agricultural building to a 2-storey, 2-bed dwelling (Class Q a) and b) at barn north of Cawthorn Farm, Stocking Drove - **Support**

P38 20/21 Any Other Business

Conservation Area Proposal

Members discussed a motion which had gone before Fenland District Council that day which recommended commissioning an external partner to provide guidance and recommendations on how the Council could amend current Conservation policy and practice in Fenland to cover such considerations as:

A review of the geographical extent of each conservation area in Fenland;

A review of the validation list for listed buildings, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets;

A review of how FDC could be more flexible with materials requirements.

The suggestion was that no review of a conservation area should take place without prior consultation and agreement of the Town or Parish Council and no change should be implemented without the Town or Parish Council's agreement.

The external partner would also be asked to recommend how each Town and Parish Council could initiate an external professional appraisal of conservation areas within their area, subject to no such appraisal having taken place in the previous five years, and subject to the Parish or Town Council sharing the cost of any such appraisal equally with Fenland District Council.

Members broadly welcomed the motion as the Council had been calling for an appraisal of the conservation areas in the town. Cllr Smith pointed out architects and applicants were picking up that there had been no appraisal of the conservation areas of Chatteris since 2008. She was anxious to preserve some of the character of the town whilst also allowing the town to grow and move forward. Cllr Gowler said if an appraisal was carried out properly it would give a clear message about what was and was not acceptable and clarity was required. It was agreed the Clerk should contact the councillor behind the motion and state if the motion was carried Chatteris Town Council would be interested in learning more about the proposals as a conservation area appraisal was long overdue and planning applicants were now highlighting this point.

Regeneration Document

Members had received a copy of a confidential document headed: 'Chatteris A Town ready for Regeneration' submitted by a planning researcher who had lived in the town for many years. The document outlined the past history of development in the town, its status in relation to neighbouring towns, its suitability for urban extension and the need for a rural travel hub.

Members agreed the document provided food for thought and on the whole had picked up well on the development of the town over the years and its current position, although some facts were missing. There were also concerns that the need to provide transport infrastructure before further development was unlikely to happen and unfortunately the Town Council had no powers to make it happen.

The Clerk suggested it should be considered by the Local Plan team and it was agreed to thank the researcher for his interest and let him know that the Town Council agreed with some parts of the report.

Bartlett's

Cllr Haggata commented that the recent news that Alan Bartletts and Sons Ltd planned to close its food packing plant in Chatteris in June with the loss of up to 300 jobs was a big blow for Chatteris. Members agreed and there was speculation on the future of the Bartlett's site.