

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 2nd March 2021

2153

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 2nd March 2021 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, J Smith and I Taylor.

213) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr M Petrou.

214) 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

215) Open Forum

There was just one member of the public present who did not wish to speak so it was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

216) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

217) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 202) Garden Clearance: The Clerk reported that Clarion were still chasing up the clearance of rubbish from the garden of a bungalow in St Martin's Road. Cllr Haggata reported that the garden appeared tidier.

218) 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 held on the 25th February 2021.

Neighbourhood Alerts

2/2 & 2/3/21: Neighbourhood 'Watch Out News' newsletters.

3/2/21: Information about arrests for alleged hare coursing at Benwick.

12/2/21: Warning to be vigilant of unsolicited emails promoting cryptocurrency (Bitcoin) investment opportunities.

13/2/21: Information about a drugs find after police drugs dog called in.

15/2/21: A warning to beware of romance fraud with scammers setting up fake profiles to lure in victims by promising love and happiness.

24/2/21: Invitation to take part in a national survey seeking views on the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) in Cambridgeshire.

2/3/21: Stay In Speak Out Campaign. Request for members of the public to report any concerns or suspicious behaviour in their community as part of a new campaign to highlight crimes which may have previously gone unnoticed.'

After reading Sgt Lugg's report, Cllr Benney said he found it hard to believe that there were so few drugs crimes being investigated. Cllr Benney claimed councillors knew who was dealing drugs and asked why the police were not taking action. He said if the statistics showed there was little crime few resources would be allocated to dealing with the problem. He also queried why there had been no clamp down on drug driving. Cllr Gowler agreed with Cllr Benney's comments and said he had almost given up reporting crimes.

The Mayor initially promised to pass the comments to Sgt Lugg but then suggested asking him to attend the next Zoom meeting of the Council and this was agreed.

219) FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV Updates

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

Cllr Murphy assured members that even though the dedicated Street Scene officer for Chatteris had retired all reports to the service would be looked at and two members of staff had been transferred from other roles to help out. The vacancy would soon be advertised.

220) Financial Officer's Report

(1) Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 22nd February 2021 showing expenditure of £143,972.84 and income of £173,575.43 (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.

(2) Gardening Services

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received quotations from the gardening contractor for the 2021/22 renewal contracts for providing gardening services around the town and maintenance services to the Little Acre Pocket Park. The quotations were the same monthly costs as the previous year.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the current gardening contractor delivered an excellent service to the CTC and the Clerk was more than happy with the standard of work and support that they gave.

On this basis it was recommended that Members approved the renewal quotations as a rolling contract.

(3) Chatteris Youth Amateur Boxing Club FDC Business Grant

The Financial Officer advised Members that the Chatteris Youth Amateur Boxing Club had been successful in receiving the FDC business grant fund.

FDC had confirmed that the boxing club fully met the grant criteria and was eligible to receive the full grant fund that was available due to closed business premises during lockdown. The Treasurer of the boxing club thanked the Financial Officer and was so grateful for all that she had done to help the club claim the grant.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Financial Officer's report be noted and approved.

221) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll March 2021	1,086.39
Clerk	Payroll March 2021	1,577.06
Pension Fund	Payroll March 2021	900.20
HMRC	Payroll March 2021	643.71
Zen Internet	Website March - April	10.79
Zen Internet	Summer Fest domain name renewal	9.59
Clerk	Reim. Zoom, Eye test & contribution towards glasses	249.34
Onecom	February's phone bill	77.57
R J Warren	Gardening services	727.50
Cambs CC	Contribution Huntingdon Rd TRO	1,242.79
BA Baker	Old Railway Line gate	1,020.00
J Papworth	Youth Service Provision last term (Holiday Club)	1,243.25

Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	2156 4 of 14 6.50
Morton & Hall Consulting	Consultancy fees re Council offices	3,840.00
Morton & Hall Consulting	Consultancy fees re former Barclays Bank	3,360.00
T&JM Hussey	Test bore holes Council offices	626.40
Wave	LHS Honeysome Rd Allotments Water bill	154.24
Wave	Council Offices water bill	42.51
Wave	RHS Honeysome Rd Allotments Water bill	137.51
Total		16,955.35

222) Financial Review

Members had before them the Financial Review for 2021.

The purpose of the report was to review the Council's financial activities, as required to be undertaken annually under the Financial Regulations Clause 1.5, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement and in preparation for the 2020/21 audit.

[1] Financial Regulations

Members were reminded that The Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved by resolution at the February 2019 meeting and revised regulations were published. (Min 221). The Town Council adopted Cpalc/Nalc's Model Financial Regulations – (The England updated version May 2016). Since then, Cpalc/Nalc have revised and published a 2019 Model with minor changes.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the next Financial Regulations review is due in 2021.

[2] Risk Management

Members were reminded the Council approved a Risk Management Policy in August 2002 and revised wording was approved in February 2014 (**Appendix A**). See attached.

[3] Insurances

Members were reminded that they had agreed to a long-term agreement policy of 3 years at the 4th February 2020 Council meeting, Minute No 211.

Members were advised at the February 2021 full council meeting that the renewal policy premium of £1,819.08 (+£50.00 admin fee) was received and that the premium

was based on the discounted long-term agreement and would be automatically renewed on the 1st April 2021. See attached.

[4] Protection of Assets

A copy of the Council's Register of Assets is attached (**Appendix B**).

Members were reminded that the value of assets were not contained in the balance sheet they were just listed as a memorandum item in the supporting information. It had been discussed and agreed with the internal auditor that it was not necessary to pay a District Valuer for a re-valuation of any assets unless the Council intended to sell the assets. The notional value of the Council Building, street furniture and office equipment and contents were updated annually for insurance purposes and this would suffice.

[5] Internal Controls

Members were reminded that the new Financial Regulations 2019 approved under resolution by Members at the February Council meeting (Min 221) included everything that was appended in the Internal Controls (**Appendix C**). See attached. It was therefore no longer necessary for it to be included as a separate appendix in the Financial Regulations. The Internal Controls were reviewed every year under the Financial review.

Appendix C had been revised due to the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits & standing orders for process of payments. Under the Financial Regulations this approval should be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. This renewal was approved at the February 2019 full council meeting (Min 222).

Members were advised that The Financial Regulations and the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits & standing orders for process of payments were in the process of being reviewed for approval in 2021.

[6] Internal Audit

Members were reminded that under current regulations, an annual review of effectiveness of internal audit is no longer required. It is, however, still necessary to re-appoint an Internal Auditor annually. The current Auditor, Mark Saunders, had confirmed he was willing to carry out the internal audit for 2020/21 at the same rate as previous years.

[7] Investments

Members were advised that the Council's Register of Investments, including yields, was attached at **Appendix D**.

Members were reminded that at the full council meeting held on June 2020 Members of the Council considered and **approved** reinvestment of £85,000 with Lloyds Bank

at 0.30% and £85,000 with Nationwide Building Society at 0.40% both fixed for 1 year.

[8] Risk Assessment

Members were advised that a risk assessment was undertaken during the year for use of the King Edward Centre for Summer Fun activities.

It was Resolved that: -

The Financial review be noted and approved;

[i] the Council's Risk Management Policy (Appendix A) be noted and approved;

[ii] the Register of Assets (Appendix B) be noted and approved;

[iii] the Internal Controls (Appendix C) be noted & approved;

[iv] Mark Saunders be offered re-engagement as Internal Auditor for the 2020/21 audit;

[v] the updated Register of Investments (Appendix D) be noted and approved.

223) Britain in Bloom Entry – Grant Application

The Financial Officer advised members that Chatteris in Bloom had been selected to participate in the Britain in Bloom campaign.

This was a great achievement for the In Bloom organisation and its volunteers to have been selected to take part in the campaign and to have all their hard work recognised.

The Financial Officer advised members that she had received a grant application from In Bloom requesting additional funding to help towards the additional costs of the watering services. This was necessary as there would be extra areas in the town where additional planters and hanging baskets would be positioned.

In Bloom had also asked CTC to fund a fully human-sized willow sculpture for the Wenny Road roundabout. This sculpture would represent Chatteris' agricultural heritage and acknowledge farmers among the key workers during the pandemic.

In Bloom advised that this would be a long-term feature to be taken in annually & treated to ensure longevity.

The cost of the sculpture was £1,200 and the cost of the watering services in total would be approximately £2,450, weather dependant.

Members were advised that the watering budget for 2020/21 was underspent by £1,190. The agreed watering budget for 2021/22 was £1,500 making a total of £2,690. This budget should be more than adequate to cover the watering costs based on the In Bloom estimated figure of £2,450. If the full estimated cost was required, there would still be £240 remaining in the budget that could be used for plant feed, etc.

Previously the watering service had been paid retrospectively on production of invoice and the Financial Officer recommended that this process should continue.

The 21/22 In Bloom running costs grant was £4,500. This was an increase of £1,500 from the last year's budget of £3,000.

The budget was increased because the watering budget was decreased due to underspend. The In Bloom total budget increase for the new financial year was £1,000.

The Financial Officer advised members that this budget increase had come at the right time to help with the additional planters and running costs for the Britain in Bloom campaign, therefore members were asked to consider funding the Willow Sculpture from underspent budgets in the 20/21 financial year and not from the 21/22 In Bloom budget.

It was **resolved** that the report be noted and the recommendations approved.

224) Connections Bus Project – To Agree Way Forward

Members had received an update on the Connections Bus Project with details of detached youth work, the babysitting course and an idea for a new venture which could be provided before buildings or youth buses could return.

The idea was to have a custom fitted van with basic outdoor activity equipment, gazebo and facilities for making hot drinks. This could be parked at a recreation ground with youth workers present; allowing young people to gather safely under supervision.

The Mayor commended the new venture as an excellent idea and said young people were going to need such support after the pandemic and lockdown. She pointed out the Council had underspent budget for youth services and suggested the van could possibly alternate between Furrowfields and Wenny Recreation Grounds.

Cllr Hay said she was happy with the proposal if the service continued to follow social distancing and other requirements. Cllr Carney asked if the van would replace the bus.

227 Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 (**copy attached**).

Members had made recommendations on applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**) and this were ratified by members who then made recommendations on three further applications. It was agreed to return the applications to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support if it is in keeping with the area

- d) Support 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 old frontage (roundels near the door) preserved.
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support but council repeats its call for applicants to help contribute towards the cost of road safety improvements to the A142.
- j) Support, please ensure the offer to cut back the hedge along Church Walk is carried through.

228) Growing Fenland Update

Members had received the following report from the Clerk:

“Members will recall that at the February Town Council meeting they approved new project ideas for the Growing Fenland fund, namely:

- 1) The purchase of 2 Park Street and conversion of the former Barclays Bank to a museum;
- 2) The purchase of the leasehold for the first floor of the building to enable income from offices or flats on that floor to offset the costs of the museum on the ground floor.
- 3) Alterations to 14 Church Lane (if the museum moved out) to include a larger council chambers, two new offices, creation of a new unit to let and development of one or two residential flats on the first floor.

(All plans are dependent on the Council receiving grant funding from the Combined Authority).

Events have moved on a pace since that meeting and detailed plans have been drawn up, by an architect, for the conversion of the bank to a museum and for the extension and conversion of 14 Church Lane. The architect has also confirmed that it would be possible to extend over the single storey, flat roof part of 14 Church Lane.

As I write this report builders have been asked to provide estimations for the costs of the works shown in the plans and for repairs to the roof of 2 Park Street; which will be needed to ensure the building is water tight.

Thanks to negotiations by the Financial Officer, help from Cllr Benney and chasing by the Clerk, the Council now has in writing agreement on the cost to the Council to purchase 2 Park Street; the cost to the council to purchase the leasehold of the first floor of the building and a valuation of the building from a local estate agent.

All this information has been forward to Mr Phil Hughes at Fenland District Council who will be writing the bid to the Combined Authority seeking the release of funds from the

Growing Fenland pot to pay for the projects. Mr Hughes is now just awaiting the estimated costs of the works before submitting the bid.

In order to draw up the plans for 14 Church Lane, to building regulations and planning standards, it was necessary for the Mayor, the Clerk and the Financial Officer to agree to spend £900 plus VAT and £1800 plus VAT. This now requires the suspension of Standing Orders and a retrospective agreement by the Council for the expenditure. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to bring the expenditure to a full council meeting for agreement in advance due to the very tight time frames for submitting the bid to the Combined Authority.

Recommendation: Members are asked to back the Clerk, the Financial Officer, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor in their work on this exciting project and agree to the necessary expenditure, which has been committed, to drive the project forwards.”

The Clerk added that all the figures required had now been obtained and passed to Mr Hughes ready for him to submit the bid the following day.

Members **unanimously agreed with the recommendation.**

As there were matters to discuss regarding the bid which were **confidential** at this stage and sensitive in nature it was agreed the Council would go into **committee** at the end of the meeting.

229) 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 9th February 2021 (**copy attached**).

L49) Council’s website: The Clerk confirmed the Council’s website had been updated and was now as fully compliant with accessibility requirements as possible and had the necessary accessibility statement attached. She had received training on how to update the website and urged members to take a look at it.

L52) Face to Face Meetings: In response to a question the Clerk confirmed there had still been no extension to the regulations to allow remote meetings after the 7th May although the Government had stated the earliest date that all lockdown rules would be lifted would be the 21st June 2021.

L49) Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Carney reported that the organiser of the caterpillar pebbles trail had met with the vicar (and Cllr Smith) and the vicar had agreed the best place for the trail would be on a small stone or brick walled flower bed at the rear of the Churchyard near to the vicarage wall. The organiser was now seeking designs for the flower bed and Cllr Carney suggested these should go to Fenland District Council for approval.

230) To Elect a Town Council Representative on Museum Trustees

The Mayor informed members that Cllr Haggata had stepped down as a museum trustee and treasurer and after thanking him for his service said there was a need to elect a new representative.

Cllr Ashley suggested the Financial Officer could take up the position, if she was willing, as she had been involved in the CIO process. She asked for members views on this. Cllr Newell fully supported the suggestion.

The Financial Officer said she was willing to take on the role as she had been involved in the financial side of the Trust having audited the accounts (a role which would have to be undertaken by someone else if she was elected as a Trustee) and had helped the treasurer of the museum society prepare the accounts.

Cllr Hay said she believed the position should be filled by a town councillor, not an officer, and democratic processes should be followed.

The Mayor sought nominations to fill the vacancy on the Museum Trustees and Cllr Smith proposed Cllr Hay, seconded by Cllr Gowler. The Mayor proposed the Financial Officer seconded by Cllr Haggata.

On a majority vote Cllr Hay was elected to fill the vacancy and represent the Council on the museum trustees. Cllr Haggata said he would arrange to hand over the accounts to Cllr Hay.

231) Partnership Working Meeting

All town and district councils in Fenland had been approached by Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council and asked to nominate one or two representatives to attend an online session on the 4th March to look at partnership working.

The email said the session would explore how local councils, health, public services, the community and voluntary sector representatives could capture and build on the learning from partnership work which had taken place in the area over the last 12 months. Attendees would be asked about the local response to the pandemic, what future activity could have the biggest impact for people in the area and how everyone could continue working together going forwards.

Cllrs Smith and Gowler volunteered to represent Chatteris Town Council at the meeting.

232) Traffic

LHI: The Council's finally agreed submission to the LHI panel had been for the double yellow lines at the Wenny Road/East Park Street junction to be extended by at least one car

length (length to be determined by a Road Safety Audit) to give cars turning in from Wenny Road a waiting area while cars negotiate the parked vehicles along East Park Street. At the South Park Street/Wood Street junction the proposal was to bring the give way line forward to improve visibility (and, if necessary, to remove the advisory cycle lane along Wood Street) and to create a small kerbed build out near Burghley House which along with parking restrictions (to include double yellow lines opposite the junction) should improve visibility. The Clerk had sent in a written submission to that effect ahead of the LHI panel meeting. Cllr Benney said after initial problems connecting he had finally been able to speak at the panel meeting and he believed it had gone well.

Bus Service: The Council had received information, including a timetable, for the new V2 bus service from March to St Ives via Chatteris which had been launched the previous day. Cllr Charrier asked if the service would be lost if it wasn't used and Cllr Haggata called on the Town Council to request the service also be available on Saturdays as he believed it would be an asset to Chatteris.

Cllr Hay said she had been involved in the bus review at County Council working with the Combined Authority. She admitted in normal times the service would have been delayed until the end of lockdown restrictions but the funding had come from the Government and had to be used or it would be lost. She called on councillors to encourage people to use the service to get into Cambridge (principally for work or to access Addenbrookes) and said if it was successful there would be more ammunition to increase the service to include Saturdays. The service was due to run until at least September. She said she was also pressing for Chatteris to be on the metro route.

Councillors queried why a bus stop sign for the service had gone up in Victoria Street, a busy congested street, which stated it was the East Park Street bus stop. Cllrs Hay and Carney both offered to investigate why the East Park Street bus stop sign was in Victoria Street.

A141: The Clerk had been alerted to a consultation about planned improvements to the A141 around Huntingdon. Unfortunately the planned improvements did not stretch as far as Chatteris and Warboys. Cllr Gowler said he was disappointed the improvements did not reach as far as the road between Warboys and Chatteris as the Council had been calling for improvements to that section of road. He called on councillors and residents to complete the questionnaire and continue the call for improvements.

Doddington Road: The Clerk had been contacted once again by a resident of Doddington Road renewing his call for traffic calming measures and a reduction in the speed limit in Doddington Road. He also asked about the MVAS. The Clerk explained the MVAS had gone up in Willey Terrace and said she would mention the request when the Council was asked to submit its LHI bid for 2022/23. Cllr Benney admitted the MVAS had been the bane of his life as it had been so difficult to get it to work. He had spoken to an engineer at length and had been sent new software but had still been unable to get the device to connect to his computer so he could download the data, despite help from Cllr Gowler. He had also been unable to change the speed when the sign was activated so it was currently flashing at the wrong speed (30mph not 40mph). Cllr Benney said he would try and take down the device before the

battery ran out and would be attempting to check it was storing data. Cllrs Benney and Gowler were thanked for their efforts.

New Road: The Clerk had been copied in to continued correspondence between the resident of New Road and Highways regarding the speed cushions. Members had received a copy of the email in which the resident disputed Highway's findings that the cushions were within permitted tolerances. The resident was now hoping to meet with the local highways officer on site so the issues could be discussed as he said the environmental damage of noise and vibration was making his life a misery and was having a detrimental effect on his mental health and wellbeing.

A47: The Clerk had received the latest updates on the A47 Guyhirn roundabout improvements which she had forwarded to members.

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

233) Manea Railway Station Evaluation Information

Members had received a copy of an email sent to the Council by FDC's transport officer Ms Joanne Rose regarding the plans for Manea Railway Station.

The email sought the Council's views on the current provision of facilities (or lack of) at Manea Railway Station and the proposed changes – a car park on site, a planned bus service to Manea Station from Chatteris and more trains stopping at Manea.

Members agreed to broadly welcome the proposals and said they would like to see improvements to the road between Chatteris and Manea and sufficient provision made for buses to pull off the road and loop round so passengers could get on and off the bus safely. They suggested the station could be called Manea for Chatteris or something similar.

Cllrs Haggata and Charrier agreed they were happy to have their names put forward as contacts who could be approached about the proposals.

234) Correspondence

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

It was agreed FDC's new Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy should be discussed at the Leisure Working Group meeting and the meeting would be open to all councillors. Anyone not able to attend was asked to forward any comments to the Clerk.

235) Reports

Cllr Smith asked if there had been further information on the Conservation policy motion which went before FDC. Cllr Benney confirmed the motion had been carried and FDC were now finding ways to fund the scheme and take it forwards. Cllr Hay suggested the cost to parish and town councils should be based on the number of properties and conservation areas in each parish.

236) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

The following item (min 237) Growing Fenland Financial Implications) was taken **In Committee** due to the confidential nature of the information to be discussed.