

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021

2167

1 of 13

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 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, M Petrou and J Smith.

### 238) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr I Taylor.

### 239) 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

### 240) Open Forum

There was just one member of the public present who made no reply when he was asked if he wished to speak so it was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

### 241) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 242) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 224) Connections Bus: The Clerk had received notification that the Connections Bus Project would begin detached youth work again in the town on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April and when the van was ready the group would seek the appropriate permissions from FDC about the use of sites and start using the new facility.

The Council had also received an email from a director of Youths of Fenland C.I.C, a community interest company, who had apparently been doing detached and outreach work in Chatteris for the past 18 months funded by the County Council. Two events were planned during the Easter holidays, one of which was a graffiti workshop, and detached work would continue until the summer and there was funding for a summer programme. Councillors queried why they had not been made aware of the work and what exactly Youths of Fenland had been doing for the past 18 months. They pointed out it was ridiculous the Town Council had been paying for detached youth work if the County Council was also funding such work as the money could have been spent elsewhere. It was also agreed to contact the County

Council expressing the Town Council's disappointment that the Town Council had not been informed about the work as there had been a cost to the Town Council.

#### **243) 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 had forwarded by email. The report followed a meeting between Sgt Lugg, the Mayor and other Council leaders from the Fenland area held on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Sgt Lugg had also sent a confidential email to members in reply to the concerns raised by Councillors about the drugs problem in Chatteris.

##### **Neighbourhood Alerts**

8/3/21: Plea for the public to report any suspicious activity which could be linked to attempted dog thefts so the police can build a picture of who is responsible. Also advice on how to best protect pet dogs from thieves.

10/3/21: Request from Neighbourhood Watch for people to complete a survey designed to understand the public's perception of dog theft, enforcement and the prosecution of offenders.

11/3/21: Update from neighbourhood officers confirming they have been patrolling and tackling incidents including anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, bike security and traffic matters.

11/3/21: Notification that plans for a new policing hub on the outskirts of Milton have been given the go ahead.

15/3/21: Warning about scam text messages and emails which claim the individual owes the Post Office £2.99 for an outstanding delivery charge. When they log onto a web site to settle the matter their bank account is emptied.

22/3/21: Notification that Action Fraud received 15,214 reports of email and social media account hacking in one year and advice on how to secure accounts.

31/3/21: Notification that Neighbourhood Watch has launched a Protect Your Car Campaign.

Drugs: Cllr Benney was not satisfied with Sgt Lugg's confidential reply to the concerns raised about drug dealing. He said there was no evidence the police were being pro-active on drug problems and he found it hard to believe there were no reported drugs crimes in Chatteris. He said if the council wished to clean up the town the police needed to take action and pointed out drug taking led to other crimes being committed. Cllrs Gowler and Petrou backed Cllr Benney and supported his call for a meeting with Sgt Lugg. The Mayor said she would go back to Sgt Lugg and attempt to set up a meeting.

#### **244) FDC, Street Scene, Section 106 and CCTV Updates**

No updates had been received.

**245) Financial Officers Report**

Financial Statement

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 showing expenditure of £155,210.49 and income of £173,579.54 (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 Financial Officer's report be noted and approved.

**246) Payment of Accounts**

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

**Payments up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Flying Fysh	Deep clean office	80.00
CPPF Civic Society	Vol org grant Bricstan noticeboard	100.00
Viking	Stationary	64.40
CGM Group	Tree Survey	360.00
Silicon Bay	Redesign website	480.00
GM James	Electrical work, light in Council Office	96.96
Clerk	Reim Zoom	14.39
CPRE	Membership renewal	36.00
One Com	March phone bill	76.80
M Edgley	Boiler service Council offices	102.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,410.55</b>

**Payments from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

Financial Officer	Payroll April 2022 (695.32 creditor)	1,781.71
Clerk	Payroll April 2022(516.28 creditor)	2,093.34
Pension Fund	Payroll April 2022(523.72 creditor)	1,423.92
HMRC	Payroll April 2022 (846.62 creditor)	1,490.33
Came & Co	Insurance Renewal	1,869.08
Barclays Bank	Charges (Feb-Mar) (creditor)	6.50
Zen Internet	Website Apr-May	10.79
British Gas	Gas Bill (Dec -Mar) (creditor)	694.57
R J Warren	Tree works Bridge Street (creditor)	300.00
R J Warren	Dry Pond gravel top up Pocket Park (creditor)	86.40
R J Warren	Transportation of allotment plainings (creditor)	144.00
R J Warren	Collection & delivery large seating logs Pocket Park (creditor)	216.00
Rose Fire & Security	Bi annual Fire alarm service (creditor)	210.00
RFO	Reim agenda postage	23.49
CA Chubbock	Allotment annual rent	275.00
R J Warren	Gardening services March (creditor)	727.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,352.63</b>

Members were advised that on the approved schedule of payments for March the payment to T&JM Hussey for £626.40 re: test bore holes at the Council Offices & the old Barclays Bank building had been reduced to £338.40. This is because no bore holes were dug at Barclays. The invoice for payment was reduced accordingly.

#### 247) CAPALC Membership

A membership renewal invitation for 2021-2022 had been received along with a leaflet explaining the benefits of membership and the range of services provided. The leaflet had been forwarded to members for consideration.

The membership fee had risen by 3% to £1,255.30 a year and there was also the opportunity to join a Data Protection Officer Membership Scheme at £50 a year.

The Clerk and Financial Officer recommended renewing the membership, particularly in light of the new work involved with the Growing Fenland project. CAPALC's advice had been sought in the past year and the information sent out almost daily from NALC had been invaluable during the pandemic. The Clerk said it was impossible to obtain information from NALC without belonging to CAPALC and NALC issued guidance on policies, standing orders, etc.

Cllr Hay said with Covid still ongoing it was important to be able to obtain advice and guidance and Cllr Haggata said concerns about GDPR had been expressed during officers' appraisals and he therefore recommended joining the Data Protection Officer scheme.

Members **agreed** to renew the Council's membership of CAPALC and to join the DPO scheme at a total cost of £1,305.30.

#### 248) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were advised that the Cambridgeshire library's co-ordinator had contacted the Financial Officer advising her that due to the Covid-19 pandemic the libraries were closed during the summer holidays and consequently the Summer Reading Challenge did not go-ahead last year.

The £350 grant that the Town Council approved to go towards the Summer Reading Challenge in 2020 had not been used. The library co-ordinator asked if the council would have any objections to the grant being used for this year's Summer Reading Challenge. Members agreed that the grant should be used for this year's Summer Reading Challenge. (Cllr Smith declared an interest)

It was **RESOLVED** that the request be approved.

Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October and January meetings each year. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at

a level where, on their own, they can sustain a group's financial viability. The approved budget for grants in **2021/22 was £4,000.**

There was just one application and the recommendation was:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommended Grant</b>
Suffolk & Cambridgeshire Bloodrunners Grant requested towards running costs.	£200

Members **agreed** that a £200 grant should be approved, however, they wanted to know more about the organisation, its running costs and specified areas where it operated.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she would find out more information and report back to them at the next full council meeting in May.

#### **249) Tree Survey & Tree Works**

The Clerk had received a report following the arboricultural survey of all the trees on Chatteris Town Council-owned land carried out by the CGM Group.

Members had received a copy of the tree schedule which showed urgent work was required to remove a hanging branch and crown lift a Lime tree at the Bridge Street amenity area. The Council's gardening contractors had submitted a quote (£250) to carry out the work and had been given the go ahead.

A further six trees would require some minor works within 9 months and the Clerk suggested this should be commissioned in the autumn.

The report was noted and the works **approved.**

#### **250) Planning**

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (**copy attached**).

Members had made recommendations on planning applications a) to o) (as shown on the **appended list**) and these were ratified and it was agreed to return the applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Noted
- b) Support, request swift nesting places be incorporated into the buildings
- c) Noted
- d) Noted
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Noted

- i) Noted
- j) Support
- k) Recommend Refusal, there is no evidence of the tree being unhealthy and there is no valid reason to remove it. Removal could cause damage to a very old wall.
- l) Support
- m) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- n) Support
- o) Support

### **251) Growing Fenland Project Update**

Members had received a copy of the following press release:

‘Chatteris Town Council is delighted to announce that it has been successful in securing funding for a Renaissance Scheme for the centre of Chatteris. The Council has been awarded funding by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to improve the town centre with the ultimate aim of revitalising the town’s retail area post Covid-19 by attracting more customers and more businesses. The project is part of the Growing Fenland scheme and is an exciting opportunity to improve the visual appearance of the town. Part of the fund will be spent on re-painting and repairing the street furniture which was installed 17 years ago. The remaining fund will be open to applications from business/retail unit owners and leaseholders in the centre of Chatteris. The money must be spent on refurbishment works such as re-painting, minor repairs and initiatives to improve the appearance of empty properties. The premises, which are the subject of a grant, can either be trading as a business or currently empty. Applicants must pledge to contribute 40% of the total cost of the works proposed and the maximum level of grant is £5,000; there is no lower limit. Business/retail owners with premises in the High Street, Market Hill, Park Street and East Park are being contacted and invited to contact the Town Council for a form to apply for a grant.’

Members had also received a copy of the schedules of work, contracts and agreements which had been sent out by the Financial Officer to companies who had expressed an interest in quoting for the street furniture refurbishment contract.

The Clerk said quotes had been obtained for the re-painting of streetlight posts in the town centre and there had already been four enquiries about the fund open to businesses. Thanks to the assistance of Fenland District Council, the Town Council’s letter alerting businesses to the fund had been sent out to the owners of all business/commercial premises in the town centre.

Cllr Murphy reported that the skills bid to the Combined Authority, for £36,000 of funding, had been successful. Cllr Benney explained the funding was for computers, etc., for use by the community at the new training centre being built on Stainless Metalcraft land. The centre would not only be for apprenticeships but also for adult education and for upskilling workers. He described it as a big opportunity for the town and Fenland. He added there was a great deal of funding going in to Chatteris at present.

Unfortunately the Council's bid for funding to purchase the former Barclays Bank in Chatteris and convert it to a new home for the museum and to extend and re-configure the Council Chambers had not gone before the March board meeting of the Combined Authority as further information was required. This had not been conveyed back to the Town Council and Mr Hughes in time to obtain the information. The information was now being compiled and the plan was for the bid to go before the June meeting of the Combined Authority.

### **252) 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 9<sup>th</sup> March (**copy attached**).

L56) Victoria Street Bollard: Cllr Hay pointed out a fault in the minutes where the Clerk had recorded that the householder met the Highways Officer. In fact it was Cllr Hay who met the Highways Officer and then passed on the information to the householder.

L62) Doctors' Surgery: The Council had received an email asking if the Town Council was aware of any funding which might be available for an extension to the George Clare surgery. The Practice Manager said space for clinical staff was becoming a significant problem. The surgery had the room to expand so it could continue to offer additional community services such as Everyone Health, Camquit and mental health and it had also managed to recruit a new GP but it was looking for funding to expand. The letter mentioned Section 106 funding. The Clerk said she had advised the Practice Manager to contact Fenland District Council. Councillors pointed out the Town Council did not have the funds to help the surgery. Cllr Benney offered to look out for possible funding streams with the help of the District Council.

Cllr Haggata said the community needed to get behind the planned large housing schemes as that was the only way funding would be found for such projects.

Cllr Smith reminded members that the last time expansion of the doctors' surgery had been discussed, with the now retired Dr Szekely, it had been stated that the surgery was large enough, the problem was recruiting staff.

Cllr Murphy warned that Section 106 funding was not the way to go as that was "out of the window" and the surgery should be advised that they needed to look at other ways of funding.

At the Leisure meeting it had been recommended that the Council should write to the surgery stating complaints had been received about the difficulty in getting appointments, the lack of face to face appointments and people being made to wait outside the surgery in all weathers.



Cllr Hay said she had been unhappy to conduct a review of her asthma treatment over the phone and when her husband required a procedure he had been directed to go to A and E. Cllr Gowler had been concerned that when he was ill he had been advised to get a Covid test even though he did not have the symptoms. Councillors were concerned that the surgery appeared to be advising people to go elsewhere so they could reduce the risk of infection. However, Cllrs Benney and Haggata spoke up for the NHS and the doctors pointing out if you were seriously ill you would be treated.

Cllr Smith pointed out the service had been under pressure due to Covid but she said the problems with the appointment system existed before the pandemic and needed to be solved and Cllr Hay said the surgery was putting more pressure on hospitals by referring minor problems to A and E.

The Clerk agreed to write to the doctors' surgery regarding the funding and the concerns.

### **253) New Allotments at Queensway**

The Clerk informed members that she had now signed the Licence to Occupy agreement to take over the six allotments at Queensway from Clarion Housing. The Housing Association had begun the process of handing the allotments over to the Town Council.

The allotment holders occupying three of the allotments had been sent agreements to sign and invoices for half a year's rent (£12.50). The Clerk had begun the process of finding tenants for the remaining three allotments and would pursue Clarion's offer to tidy up the allotments prior to them being let.

### **254) Proposed Amendment of Recording of Meetings Policy**

Members were informed that following a discussion at the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021, it was agreed that the following should be put forward to the full council.

It is **recommended** that the following are added to Chatteris Town Council's Recording of Meetings Policy:

- 1) Recordings of Chatteris Town Council meetings held via Zoom will not be published on Youtube or other social media channels;
- 2) The Council will keep Zoom meeting recordings until the minutes of that meeting are approved and the recording will then be deleted.

The recommendations were **agreed**.

Cllr Carney commented that he believed in the spirit of transparency anyone attending a Zoom meeting of the Council should identify themselves by turning on their camera, at least for a while, as they would be seen if they turned up at a face to face meeting of the Council. Cllr Haggata agreed. The Clerk said there was unfortunately no necessity in law for those attending a Zoom meeting to identify themselves.

## 255) Midsummer Festival Update

Members had received the following briefing from the Clerk:

‘The Midsummer Festival steering group has been busy making plans for this year’s Festival. Initially the group came up with a series of plans based on different levels of lockdown measures and the lifting of all restrictions.

At the March meeting a decision was taken on which plan to pursue and it was agreed to follow the scheme which means there will be no festival events on the Saturday but there will be family orientated events on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June.

The Alternative Chatteris Midsummer Festival will feature the first ever Colour Fun Run in Chatteris, a dog show, food vans and music during the afternoon.

Members, guided by advice from FDC, agreed that it would be best not to rely on all restrictions being lifted on the 21<sup>st</sup> June. This could lead to disappointment and extra costs if planned attractions have to be cancelled at the last moment.

There were concerns that a scaled back weekend of events could attract the same numbers of visitors but with fewer attractions and this would inevitably lead to longer queues and more frustration.

It is also likely that there will be insufficient members of FDC staff available to help set up the Festival and probation will also not be around to help with the fencing. There will be no charge for the event as the site will not be fenced and in order to keep the temporary infrastructure to a minimum there will be no marquee or gazebos. Visitors will be warned that there will be no shade or cover. Toilets and first aid cover will be provided.

It is hoped the Colour Fun Run, which is being sponsored by Jacks, will prove to be very popular and will become an annual attraction. It is also hoped that families will bring along their own picnic blankets and set up a space on the field to enjoy the food and music whilst socially distancing from others if needed.

The steering group is aiming for a low key day of fun which abides by any restrictions still in place.

Any offers of help on that day would be greatly appreciated!’

CLlr Carney said he was pleased that something was planned but was concerned that picnics could become boozy. The Clerk explained that there would not be a bar but visitors would be able to bring on their own alcohol as the site would not be fenced and there was no ban on public drinking in Chatteris. It was hoped because it was a daytime only event with families that alcohol would not be a problem but there would be stewards to look out for problems and the festival committee was deciding if security measures were needed.

The Festival committee was thanked for working hard to bring something together which was permissible under the covid restrictions.

## 256) LHI Applications Update

The Clerk had received a copy of the LHI scoring spreadsheet which showed the Council's application for improving the Wenny Rd/East Park St/Wood St/South Park St junctions was below the red line and was not, therefore, successful and would not be funded.

Cllr Smith said although it was a difficult problem to address councillors were agreed the problems required tackling and Councillors argued County officers should have come up with a viable solution. It was pointed out there were no Chatteris representatives on the LHI judging panel.

It was agreed the Clerk should write to the transport committee at the County Council saying the Town Council was disappointed its scheme was turned down, especially when Wisbech and Whittlesey each had two schemes approved and March one and pointing out the LHI panel should be more inclusive and have representatives from the whole area.

## 257) Traffic Issues

Huntingdon Road: Cllr Hay had been approached by a business owner in Huntingdon Road upset that double yellow lines had been removed near his yard entrance resulting in two extra car parking spaces. She had promised to get the visibility splays checked and to bring it up at the Town Council meeting as the scheme had been approved by the Town Council. The Mayor pointed out there had been long consultations on parking in Huntingdon Road and members had taken time to consider where lines should be positioned and the Town Council had paid for the TRO. Members agreed it was unlikely to satisfy everyone but stood by the decisions.

St Martins Close: A resident of St Martins Close had written to Cllr Hay claiming the hedge of a garden in St Martin's Road created a blind corner as you turned in to St Martins Close causing a danger to motorists and pedestrians and she asked if it would be possible to make St Martins Close a one way system. Cllr Carney agreed it was a narrow road which could be made into a one-way street although he said cars tended to go carefully into and out of the close. The Clerk said such a scheme would be delivered under an LHI or residents could fund it themselves. The Council could consider it when they were deciding which LHI scheme to put forward for next year. Cllr Smith suggested the Council should be looking to put forward schemes which benefitted the most residents and pointed out St Martins Close was not on a main route and was a small crescent. Cllr Hay agreed the Council should put forward schemes of most benefit and said she would inform the resident it would be rated against other LHI scheme ideas. Cllr Benney said he would favour a speed reduction scheme along Doddington Road/Curf Terrace/Willey Terrace especially with the new development planned at Womb Farm. Cllr Carney agreed pointing out the scheme had been put forward in the past. Cllr Smith asked about the MVAS signs at Curf and Willey Terrace and was informed they were not user friendly.

Haighs Close: The Clerk had been emailed about cars continually parking on the path at the corner of Haighs Close and Clare Street forcing pedestrians to walk on the road and the

consequent dangers. The resident had asked about double yellow lines. Cllr Gowler said double yellow lines along Clare Street had worn off and if clearer might help the problem. Members pointed out cars should not be parking on a junction and it was down to enforcement. It was hoped that once civil parking enforcement was brought in it might be able to tackle such problems.

Temporary Traffic Order: Notification had been received that London Road, north east of Stocking Drove, would be closed for a couple of days in June for a new water connection.

Speed Cushions: The speed cushions in New Road had been inspected and found to be the correct height and the resident complaining about the unacceptable noise and vibration had been advised to follow the County Council complaints procedure.

Bus Services: Notification had been received that Transport Authority functions had now been transferred from the County Council and Peterborough City Council to the Combined Authority. This meant the Combined Authority was now responsible for public transport services, including bus services, community transport and concessionary travel. As a result the Clerk had been advised to request the Combined Authority look into the possible extension of the new V2 service so it also ran on a Saturday. The Clerk had also been notified of minor timetable alterations to the bus service between Chatteris and March.

Tour of Cambridgeshire: Notification had been received that the Tour of Cambridgeshire bike race scheduled to take place in June had been put back to the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

A47: The Clerk had received the latest updates on the A47 Guyhirn roundabout improvements.

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

## 258) Correspondence

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

Old Railway Line: The Mayor said following the problems with the motorcycles and vandalism at the Pocket Park the police had agreed to patrol the area when possible.

## 259) Reports

TAG: Cllr Haggata reported that he and Cllr Newell had attended a Fenland Transport Access Group meeting which they had found very useful as there were a number of influential people on the group who were able to make things happen. The issue of cycling in March and Chatteris was raised and Cllr Haggata offered to be part of the cycling and walking strategy group. Cllr Haggata asked members with ideas about how cycling and walking in Chatteris could be improved to contact him. He was hopeful that being on the committee would help put forward the case for Chatteris and pointed out as Chatteris had had no representation on the group in the past schemes were going forward which the Town Council was unaware of.

Cllr Smith asked if the group had any connection to a meeting she attended at Shire Hall regarding bus services. Cllr Haggata said it was not directly connected but there was a line to people who made decisions.

Cllr Hay said the Combined Authority was currently conducting a bus review and was looking into future plans, including another bus route from March to St Ives, through franchises or partnership with bus companies.

Engagement Event: Thanks to Cllr Smith members had received a copy of the minutes of the Cambridgeshire Local – Fenland Local Engagement Event she attended. Cllr Smith warned there were a few errors in the minutes which she had reported back to the organisers. She said the actual sessions were interesting in looking at what had happened during the pandemic, identifying the challenges and looking at the way forward post Covid. It had been pointed out Town Councils did not necessarily know everything that went on in their community and were often informed when there were problems but not when things were going right. Cllr Smith said she had learned that the Salvation Army lunch club had been continuing to deliver meals to its members during the pandemic. Cllr Smith said she was willing to attend another meeting and would welcome others attending. The Clerk asked about the reference to plans for a new VCS peer support network. Cllr Smith explained this referred to the meeting the Town Council had organised with representatives of volunteer groups in the town (when the idea of a Good Neighbour Scheme was considered) and plans to build on that meeting and set up a support group.

#### **260) Items for the Next Agenda**

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

