

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 7th September 2021

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd August 2021 at the King Edward Centre, Chatteris.

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

90) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney, A Charrier, W Haggata, M Petrou and I Taylor. Cllr Benney joined the meeting at item 108) having represented the Council at a meeting with Sgt Lugg.

91) 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.

92) Open Forum

Three residents of Chatteris attended the meeting and one, a girl guide, expressed an interest in addressing the Council

The guide said she did not wish to see Wenny Meadow built on. She said she and her siblings loved running in the meadow and viewing the nature and trees. Building on the site would ruin the nature. Her family went to the meadow for picnics and the area held many memories. She also commented that she had an app which helped her to identify birds and animals by their sounds and it could not be used elsewhere in Chatteris as it was too noisy. She pointed out children were advised to get off screens and she suggested Wenny Meadow was the only place young people could go to experience nature. The guide said over 1,000 adults had signed a petition against the development.

She said her brother's class had visited the meadow and when she had told fellow guides of plans to build on the site they were devastated.

Councillors thanked the Girl Guide and congratulated her on her speech.

93) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

94) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 83) Meeting with George Clare Surgery Representatives: The meeting, due to take place on the 19th August, had been postponed to the 16th September due to the Mayor being unwell. The meeting was now due to be held by Zoom and the Mayor read out a list of questions which would be put to the representatives. She said if members had further questions they should be emailed to the Clerk by the end of the week. The Clerk would then send the questions to the George Clare representatives ahead of the meeting.

Min 87) Youth Club: The Clerk had received an email from Pc Kurt Allen who was trying to find a venue for the youth club which was held temporarily at the Emmanuel Church over the summer holidays. Pc Allen had hoped to secure a building in the centre of the town but negotiations were ongoing. He was keen to see the youth club continue, as there had been a significant drop in ASB related calls, and asked if Councillors were aware of any unoccupied buildings which could host the youth club on a permanent/semi-permanent basis. Councillors suggested possible alternatives were the Bricstan Room at the church, the scout hut or the masonic hall.

Min 74) Connections Bus: Project Manager Mr Alan Webb had reported that the youth buses were not quite ready for use. However there were plans to continue running the van sessions at the Wenny Recreation ground. Members had received a report on the youth club's activities in Chatteris over the summer holidays and an invitation to the Connections Bus AGM on the 26th October.

Min 85) New Road: The council had been copied in to further correspondence between the resident of New Road complaining about the speed humps outside his home and County Highways. Cllr Ashley said she believed some work had been carried out to the humps including painting warning signs on them. Highways had spoken about lowering the humps but the resident was keen to see them removed. Cllr Hay pointed out the humps were installed for safety reasons and Highways thought lowering them would be a good compromise.

Min 84) Leisure: Cllr Murphy spoke about open space areas which had apparently not been cut by FDC contractors. He explained that Clarion Housing and County Highways also had responsibility for cutting areas and people became muddled about who was responsible. In addition there were areas which did not belong to any of the three. Cllr Hay said she had received a complaint from a visually impaired lady about the fallen apples on the path at Ash Grove and the Clerk had received a complaint about overhanging vegetation at a parking area in St Francis Drive. Cllr Murphy agreed to investigate. It was reported that Highways would be cutting their areas again in September/October.

Cllr Hay and the Clerk said they had been disappointed to hear that Mr Nick Munns was to no longer be the Highways officer responsible for Chatteris. He had been a great help and knew the area well as a lifelong resident of the town.

95) Police Matters

Members had received the following report based on information received in the past month:

‘Local Police

Cllr Benney will be attending the meeting between Sgt Richard Lugg and Council leaders at the start of the September Council meeting and will report back when he arrives at the meeting.

Neighbourhood Alerts

5/8/21: Notification that, following the execution of a drugs warrant, a Chatteris drug dealer appeared at Magistrates' Court and was ordered to carry out unpaid work.

7/8/21: Warning from ActionFraud about vaccine passport scams following reports about fake emails purporting to be from the NHS.

17/8/21: Neighbourhood Watch Impact Report 2020/21.

23/8/21: Notification that a man was due in court in connection with an armed robbery at a service station in Chatteris.

6/9/21: The September edition of 'Our News', the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.'

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

Members noted the latest FDC, Street Scene, CCTV and Section 106 Updates (**copy attached**).

97) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 31st August 2021 showing expenditure of £94,315.18 and income of £87,290.10 (included a half 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.

98) External Auditors Report 2020/21

Members had before them a copy of the External Auditor's (PKF Littlejohn) report and a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the year end 31st March 2021.

Members noted that the audit report was 'clear', in that there were no matters that the auditor wished to draw to the Council's attention.

Members were advised that to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the notice of conclusion of audit, which detailed the rights of public inspection in line with the statutory requirements, along with Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Annual Return would be displayed for a period of 14 days from 14th September 2021 and copies of the full Annual Return would be available. As with last year, it was not proposed to charge for copies.

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

99) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll September 2021	1,325.48
Clerk	Payroll September 2021	1,845.34
Pension Fund	Payroll September 2021	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll September 2021	996.01
Chatteris Museum	Packing materials	1,304.71
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	6.50
Zen Internet	Website Sept-Oct	10.79
Portalplanquest	Planning application fee re Town Council offices	490.00
Connections Bus	Detached & van sessions youth work	2,340.00
Viking	Stationary order	112.73
Viking	Stationary order & packing materials Growing Fenland	362.63
Chatteris Community Car Scheme	Grant Voluntary Organisations	500.00
Onecom	August Telephone bill	61.98
R J Warren	Gardening services	1,034.70
Denis Harrington	Elizabeth's Florist business refurb. Growing Fenland	4,734.72
J Melton Clerk	Mileage & Zoom Reim.	41.39
P K F Littlejohn	External Auditors Fee	480.00

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Evolve Tax & Accountancy	Business premises refurb. Growing Fenland	720.00
J Papworth	Autumn term Youth Club	1,200.00
CAPALC	Clerk Conference fee	75.00
Total		18,768.19

100) Planning

Cllr Gowler (Vice-Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 31st August 2021 (**copy attached**). Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to h) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered three further applications. Cllr Murphy left the room while matters were discussed and Cllr Hay declared an interest in applications d) and g).

It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Fully support the application, happy with the design of the houses. Look forward to the payment of Section 106 funds being honoured so the money can be used for the benefit of Chatteris residents. Instead of supplying play equipment would prefer to see funds spent on enhancing the nearby Wenny Recreation Ground play area as local councils not prepared to take responsibility for further play areas in the town. Would like to see the inclusion of swift bricks in houses.
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support

101) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported applications were still being received from businesses for renaissance grants and a few schemes had been completed. One had attracted attention and had resulted in further enquiries about the scheme. There were still funds available and it was hoped even

more businesses would apply. The street lampposts had been re-painted and work had begun on the street furniture. Due to problems sourcing new barriers some old barriers which were bent had been repainted but they would eventually be replaced.

Cllr Smith asked if, in view of the ongoing work to smarten up the centre of the town, there had been any news about work on the cast iron street signs which were in need of renovation. The Clerk said FDC had promised to undertake the work and she would chase them. Cllrs Smith and Gowler said they would be happy to clean and re-paint the signs.

102) To Consider Requesting Re-Opening of Chatteris Community Hub

The Mayor said a number of complaints had been received because the FDC Community Hub in Chatteris Library had still not re-opened to the public.

Cllr Smith, who works in the library (which has re-opened to the public), confirmed a number of people had come in anxious to see someone in person but had been unable to do so. Many were from the older generation who were not able to go on line to make payments and send enquiries and had found it very difficult to get through to someone using the telephone number. They were getting lost in the system.

The Mayor said she found it difficult to believe that FDC had yet to re-open the service and their employees were still working from home. People wanted a face to face service and she was disappointed to learn even the self-service machine was not working.

It was agreed to write to FDC officer Ms Anna Goodall and ask why the hub had not re-opened and express disappointment at the continued closure. It was also agreed to ask when the hub was due to re-open and why it was still not possible to use the self-service machine. It was agreed to copy in council leader Cllr Chris Boden.

103) Salem and Lyons Court Maintenance Issues

The Mayor explained she was concerned by the appearance of the sheltered housing complexes Salem and Lyons Courts and described the aspect on to Huntingdon Road as “a disgrace”.

Members agreed standards had slipped since Clarion took over and the high standards which people had been used to were no longer present either inside or out. Cllr Hay said Clarion were due before FDC’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December and she would make sure the issue was raised then.

104) Pride in Fenland Awards Nominations

A press release from FDC had stated the Pride in Fenland 2021 Awards nominations were now open and there was the opportunity to put forward unsung community heroes. This year

there would be just three categories to allow for more nominations related to the coronavirus response. The categories were: Community Group, Good Friend and Young Person in the Community.

The Mayor said she wished to nominate the Chatteris Community Car scheme for their sterling work throughout the covid crisis and after. Members agreed the group should be nominated for the Community Group category.

Members were asked to contact the Clerk if they wished to propose a nomination for the other two categories.

105) Traffic Issues

Bridge Street: Cllr Hay said parking problems had been created in Bridge Street outside the former Swifts Adhesives building. Employees used to park on the site but the parking area was now being used for storage so cars were parking on the road. There were no double yellow lines but cars often parked on both sides of the road and this was creating a dangerous situation. Cllr Hay asked if the police could have a word with the employer and said she would be raising the issue at an FDC Overview and Scrutiny meeting in case they had contact details for the employer.

Disability Access: Councillors had received a copy of an email from a disabled resident concerned that she was unable to cross the High Street as the raised crossings were blocked by vehicles. She pointed out there were no matching dropped kerbs so the only way for wheelchair or mobility scooter users to cross the road was via the three raised walkways and these were increasingly being used as parking spaces. The resident called for a solution either in the form of matching dropped kerbs or the installation of bollards on the raised crossings. Cllr Murphy pointed out the raised humps were not walkway crossing points or zebra crossings. But he said when civic parking enforcement came into force it would be able to tackle illegally parked cars. The County Council had approved the idea but now needed to carry out work ensuring all the yellow lines and signs were correct so it would be a while before the scheme was introduced. Another councillor pointed out there was a zebra crossing at one end of the High Street.

Screen: Cllr Smith informed members that there was now a large TV screen in the foyer of the library which was visible when the library was both open and closed. It gave information on when buses were due, the weather and details of trains from Manea station.

Reports: The IHMC incident report for July had been received as had details of planned events which would affect the Highway, information about changes to bus services in Cambridgeshire (mainly busway changes) and a copy of the quarterly Stagecoach East newsletter.

106) Correspondence

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

107) Reports

The Clerk and the Mayor reported that the four Summer Fun shows, organised by the Council, had gone very well and the annexe at the King Edward Centre had been packed with children and their parents and grandparents. The children had loved the live shows. On two occasions the audience had enjoyed tea, coffee, squash and cakes thanks to Jacks supermarket and the Centre's caretaker.

108) To Agree Wording of LHI Application

This item had been put back to allow Cllr Benney to participate.

Members had received a copy of a letter from residents of Doddington Road who stated they had signed the petition for the speed limit to be reduced to 30mph but were firmly against the proposed buildouts. They argued these would cause chaos along a very busy road and would result in pollution as cars and lorries waited at the buildouts. They believed speed signs should be sufficient and also argued that the speed limit from Leonard Childs bridge should be 30mph.

The Clerk had looked into possible speed reduction measures for the road and the options were as follows:

- 1) Reduce speed limit to 30mph plus introduce buffer zone (400m in length, 40mph) in to town (ie. before Curf and Willey Terraces). Cost £4,500 to £16,000.
- 2) Gateway (draws motorists attention to speed limit and fact they are entering a residential area) - £2,500 to £4,500.
- 3) Priority narrowing build outs - £8,000 to £12,500.
- 4) Lane markings – hatching in centre of road - £3,000 to £5,500.
- 5) Speed tables (large) - £14,000 to £20,500.

She said the Council could apply for up to £15,000 from the County Council under the LHI scheme and the Town Council had to commit to contributing at least 10% of the cost.

The Mayor said she had been advised by a lorry driver that buildouts were not a good idea. Members fully discussed the other options.

They agreed that the LHI application should call for the following:

- 1) The reduction of the speed limit in Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces to 30mph and a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph from Leonard Childs bridge to town.
- 2) A gateway on the verge at the entrance to the town (its positioning to be determined by existing planning approvals).
- 3) Lane markings, including hatching in the centre of the road and markings on the road for vehicles leaving the Slade End roundabout.

Councillors agreed the Council should initially commit to contributing £2,000 to the scheme.

109) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.