

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 5th October 2021

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th October 2021 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), J Carney, A Charrier, A Gowler, W Haggata, P Murphy, F Newell M Petrou, J Smith and I Taylor.

110) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An Apology for absence had been received from Cllr A Hay.

111) 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.

112) 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.

113) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

114) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 102) Re-Opening of Chatteris Community Hub: A letter had been received from Ms Anna Goodall, the FDC officer responsible for the Customer Service Team, in response to the Town Council's letter asking why the community hub had not re-opened and when it was due to re-open. Ms Goodall insisted the hubs had remained open during the pandemic offering a dedicated individualised face to face appointment service to customers. Ms Goodall put forward arguments in favour of the appointment system and explained how customers were able to book an appointment. She also gave details of a dedicated telephone appointment system. On the self-service machines Ms Goodall said customers were able to pay for Council services at any PayPoint location and gave examples of how this was a more accessible service. She did acknowledge that customers might not be familiar with, or clear about, the Paypoint option and agreed to improve the information available on the service. The Mayor said people were still missing the opportunity to speak to someone face to face and Cllr Smith queried if the phone, which connected visitors to the library to the County and

District Councils and the Anglia Revenue Partnership, actually worked. She said it definitely no longer provided access to Clarion. She said the phone was at least helpful but elderly people still appreciated being able to speak to someone face to face.

Cllr Benney agreed there should be a push to return to face to face working as there was definitely a need.

Cllr Smith said it would be a beneficial service, even if it was only offered once a week. At least customers could be advised to return on a specific day if they wished to see someone.

It was agreed to request a drop in service with face to face appointments at least once a week.

Min 103) Salem and Lyons Court: The Clerk had complained about the appearance of Salem and Lyons Court to a contact at Clarion Housing who had stated that the Housing Association did not always maintain properties based on external appearance as sometimes the money was better spent on internal fittings. However she did agree to pass on the Council's concerns to the maintenance team and request they send a surveyor to assess any required works.

Min 94) Connections Bus & Youth Work: The Clerk reported that the Connections bus was returning to Furrowfields car park. There had been a short break while the bus was prepared as it was too dark for the van to continue at Wenny Recreation Ground. The bus would be open on Tuesday evenings from 7pm to 9pm. The Clerk also reported the junior youth club at the King Edward Centre was doing very well and picking up new attendees. The Mayor and the Clerk had attended a Focus on Youth meeting when it had been reported that the youth club being organised by Pc Kurt Allen was still looking for a permanent home, which it would not have to share with other users, as the Emmanuel Church was not an ideal location and, as a result, attendance figures were low.

Min 104: Pride in Fenland: The Mayor, assisted by the Clerk, had completed the form and nominated the Community Car Scheme in the Community Group category of the Pride in Fenland awards 2021.

115) Police Matters

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor reported that they had met with Insp Ian Lombardo, Sgt Richard Lugg and an FDC officer to discuss policing in Chatteris. Although the meeting was private Cllrs Ashley and Benney were able to report back that there was a lot of police work underway in Chatteris that they were not aware of.

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

Local Police

Members have received a copy of the minutes of the September meeting between Sgt Lugg and Council leaders which Cllr Benney attended representing Chatteris Town Council. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 28th October.

Neighbourhood Alerts

9/9/21: Warning for people to be vigilant after cold callers targeted an elderly woman in Peterborough who then paid more than £1,000 for unnecessary work.

14/9/21: Information about Neighbour of the Year competition.

14/9/21: Information about free cyber security workshops for businesses, charities and education establishments.

16/9/21: Request from Inspector Lombardo for information on what concerns people most in their area.

20/9/21: Information about a podcast which shows the impact on those nearest and dearest to the victim of a fatal collision.

4/10/21: October edition of Our News, the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.’

116) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

Members had received the reports (**copy attached**) which were noted.

Cllr Taylor reported the dyke between St Stephen’s Drive and Furrowfields Recreation Ground needed to be cleaned out again and the Clerk said a hedge along a cut through between Farriers Gate and Bridle Close needed cutting back as brambles were overhanging the footpath.

117) Financial Officer’s Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 28th September 2021 showing expenditure of £104,554.05 and income of £87,385.93 (includes a Half year’s precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the Good Companions group had sadly made the decision to fold due to a lack of volunteers, low numbers attending and lack of new Members joining. The group had donated £500 to Chatteris Town Council to be used to benefit the elderly in the Chatteris community.

Councillors had several ideas on ways to spend the money which included a small hamper for individuals - blankets and warm socks, gloves, slippers etc.- to aid keeping warm in the winter months, a Christmas meal or the grant to split between other active groups in the town. There was discussion on how the individuals who would benefit from this could be identified, and also how the benefits could be delivered. The Financial Officer offered to look into this and report back at the next council meeting.

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

118) Grants To Voluntary Organisations

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 could sustain a group’s financial viability. The approved budget for grants in **2021/22** was **£4,000**

Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, with recommendations as listed below:

Organisation	Amount Recommended
Chatteris Branch Royal British Legion	£200
Grant requested to host and pay for ATC Band and provide refreshments on Remembrance Sunday	
Chatteris RAF Memorial Committee	£200
Grant requested to host and provide refreshments for the unveiling ceremony of the Memorial for RAF Personnel who crashed their planes during WW2.	
Magpas	£500
Grant requested towards running costs and equipment.	

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

119) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll October 2021	1,325.48
Clerk	Payroll October 2021	2,352.78
Pension Fund	Payroll October 2021	1,352.57
HMRC	Payroll October 2021	1,355.98
King Edward Centre	Room Hire re meetings & Summer Fun	128.00
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	8.50
Zen Internet	Website Oct-Nov	10.79
PC OK	Upgrade & maintenance work on Office computer	110.00
ICO Renewal	Data Protection renewal fee	40.00
Viking	Stationary order	179.93
Onecom	September Telephone bill	67.94
R J Warren	Gardening services	986.70
J Melton Clerk	Zoom reim	14.39

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Connexions Bus	Youth work outdoor sessions	5 of 10 900.00
CF Corporate	Photocopier lease	247.20
Iliffe Media	Fact Bus Advert	155.70
Warren Access	Christmas Lights Van Platform Hire	1,080.00
Chatteris Garage Ltd	Renaissance Grant fund for business refurbishment	1,980.26
British Gas	Gas bill	0.14
Total		12,296.36

120) Allotment Rents 2022/23

The Clerk proposed that the allotment rents for 2022/23 should be increased from £30 to £32 for a full allotment and £15 to £16 for a half.

Members asked if the allotments broke even and the Financial Officer said they would not in the current year due to expenditure on the roadways. Cllr Petrou said the allotments should be seen as a business and should break even as other council tax payers should not subsidise them.

The Clerk admitted she had a waiting list for allotments with some people on the list from other towns and villages. It was agreed priority should be given to Chatteris residents. The Clerk said she had had a fast turnover of some allotments and as fast as she was re-letting them others were being given up or not maintained.

It was agreed that the Clerk should enquire about the prices charged for allotments by other town councils and the Financial Officer should look at the price which should be charged to ensure they broke even.

121) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 28th September 2021 (**copy attached**). Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to k) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered two further applications.

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

- a) Access still a problem
- b) Fully Support
- c) Fully Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support

- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support
- l) Support
- m) Support Tree Officer's Recommendation

122) Growing Fenland Project Update

Members had a copy of the following written report from the Clerk and Financial Officer:

'Street Furniture & Lighting Columns Refurbishment

The re-painting of the lighting columns is complete and the cost of the works, £5,291, has been reimbursed by the Combined Authority.

Work on re-painting and refurbishing the street furniture is well underway and the contractors are doing a good job. Market Hill gardens are looking particularly impressive. There has been a delay in getting new barriers but once we have received an invoice we will inspect and ensure all the work is complete.

Business Premises Refurbishment

Grant applications totalling £27,096 have been agreed but to date just £6,840 has been claimed and the Financial Officer is chasing re-imburement from the Combined Authority.

The budget remaining is £22,903 and the Clerk and Financial Officer will be chasing those who have yet to claim the agreed grants and promoting again to those who haven't approached the Council.

Chatteris Museum & Community Space Project

We are in the process of chasing the former Barclays Bank owner and leaseholder as our solicitor has yet to hear from their solicitors. We are assured by the leaseholder that he is pushing his end.

The Financial Officer is looking into the VAT implications not only for the purchase of 2 Park Street but the refurbishment works to both 2 Park Street and 14 Church Lane and the new build at 14 Church Lane. It may be necessary to seek professional advice.

The biggest concern is the length of time the plans will take to go through the planning process. The Clerk and Cllr Benney have been chasing the planning department at Fenland District Council. The plans for the former bank have been registered and the plans for 14 Church Lane have been submitted but have yet to be registered.

The Clerk has sent initial information to the Conservation Officer, including the milestones programme, and has stressed the critical timelines to guarantee the funding remains available.

She has also met with County museum officers to discuss the museum move.'

The Clerk and Financial Officer further updated members on discussions which had taken place with the Council's solicitor that day. The solicitor who was originally responsible for

overseeing the purchase of the freehold and leasehold of 2 Park Street appeared to have left the company but the person assigned to the case had been in contact and had said she was chasing the solicitors of both the freehold and leasehold owners for missing paperwork. She had suggested both parties needed to be talking to one another.

The Financial Officer said she would be seeking advice from CAPALC on the VAT implications for the refurbishment and new build works.

123) Report on Meeting with George Clare Surgery Representatives

Members had received a copy of a confidential report on the meeting with the George Clare Surgery when the representatives had answered all 13 of the questions posed by the Town Council.

Following the meeting, which all those present had agreed was very useful and informative, the Chairman of the Patients Participation Group invited the Town Council to send along a representative to the PPG meetings. She explained that the meetings gave a useful insight into what was happening at the surgery and planned changes. It was also a forum to discuss non-medical issues and provide support for the surgery and its patients.

The Chairman said a Council representative would be able to bring up suitable issues which had been brought to Councillors' attention and this would allow the surgery to respond in a timely manner. She also offered an email address which could be passed to people who had an issue so the PPG could try and assist.

Cllr Benney offered to be the Council's representative on the PPG and this was agreed by all.

Councillors remained disappointed that many appointments were over the phone but Cllr Haggata reported a good experience regarding a hospital appointment.

124) 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 14th September (**copy attached**).

L33) Moorings: Cllr Smith suggested it would be good to get the price of a mooring for future reference. Members **agreed** with the recommendation that the Council ask Middle Level to consider a mooring at Carters Bridge and obtain costings for the scheme.

Cllr Benney said he had been asked to look at footpath schemes as part of FDC's walking and cycling strategy and had put forward the link into town from Carters Bridge, and new footpaths along one side of Doddington Road, Wenny and Church Lane. The priority remained extending the cycleway from the travellers' site to the Jacks supermarket site. Cllr Murphy said the aim was to create footpaths and cycleways on verges as the roads were too

narrow to accommodate them. Cllr Smith suggested improving road surfaces would aid cyclists.

L30) Street Name Plates: The Clerk had approached FDC Senior Engineer Mr Kevin Gove about re-painting the street name plates. Mr Gove had admitted his was struggling to find an appropriately qualified contractor willing to refurbish the historic, wall-mounted street name plates. The works needed to be undertaken in situ for fear removal might result in damage to the building fabric so mobile platforms or cherry pickers were needed. One quote had been obtained which was over budget. At Mr Gove's request the Clerk had put him in contact with the contractors who were carrying out the street furniture refurbishment work as part of the Renaissance project.

L31) Platinum Jubilee: Cllr Petrou asked if anything was planned other than the beacon lighting. Cllr Smith explained it was too close to the Midsummer Festival and the same people would be working on both but groups would be encouraged to put on events. It was agreed the article asking organisations if they had anything planned would go out before Christmas.

L34) Cows and Signs: The Clerk said she had looked into the cows but found the creators only appeared to work on large commissions, not one-off requests. She would take forward the signs idea when it was known how Chatteris fared in the Britain in Bloom finals.

125) Remembrance Sunday Arrangements

Councillors had received the following report from the Clerk:

‘Chatteris Town Council is now responsible for organising the road closures for Remembrance Sunday so the Clerk has been working in conjunction with Major Norman Larke, of Chatteris RBL, to organise this year's event.

Timings

The parade will muster at Furrowfields car park at 2.30pm on the 14th November and will parade along the High Street to the war memorial in Market Hill where a wreath laying ceremony will take place followed by a service in the Parish Church at 3pm.

Arrangements

The Clerk has successfully applied for a temporary road closures order from Cambridgeshire County Council and has engaged Ringway to carry out the road closures.

A risk assessment has been drawn up using Major Larke's previous assessments and the Council's insurance company have been informed.

The police, Safety Advisory Group and the Armed Forces Covenant Board are all aware of the arrangements.

The only thing remaining is to put out a letter to residents informing them that their road will be affected by the road closure. It is the Clerk's intention to post that letter on lampposts in streets affected in the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday.

Major Larke will be responsible for organising the parade on the day and the wreath laying ceremony.

Members are encouraged to take part in the parade and to meet in Furrowfields car park shortly before 2.30pm. The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the Council at the war memorial.’

Information had also been received about plans for the unveiling of the new RAF war memorial on Armistice Day, the 11th November. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be in attendance along with members of the Memorial committee, including Cllrs Murphy and Smith.

126) To Consider Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant

Councils had been approached asking if they would sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant was a statement of mutual respect between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community and its purpose was to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing within the town and to recognise and remember the sacrifices they made. From the Armed Forces Community point of view the covenant encouraged them to integrate into civilian life and help their local community.

Members agreed to start the process of signing up to the Covenant.

127) Christmas Lights Switch On Event

Members were informed that the Chatteris Christmas Lights Switch On event would take place on the 27th November and roads would be closed from 12 noon to 10pm (at the latest). As an added attraction the Midsummer Festival Committee had been offered Welcome Back funding to stage a musical event and had chosen to stage a concert by Abba-tribute band Head Over Heels in the Parish Church. The Vicar was fully behind the idea and the PCC had granted permission.

There would be no charge for the event, which would be open to all, and the aim was to encourage people to shop locally and to promote next year's Festival.

128) To Nominate a Deputy for the Council's Museum Trustees

The Mayor said a deputy was required in case any of the three councillors who sat on the Museum Trustees was unable to attend a meeting. She nominated Cllr Benney and this was agreed by all.

129) New Bus Service to Peterborough

Unfortunately there had been a poor take up for the new monthly bus service to Peterborough run by FACT. It was believed only 2 people had taken advantage of the service but it was agreed to give it another go. It was suggested if a meal was organised for the elderly using the money from the Good Companions, FACT could be asked to pick up elderly residents from their homes, deliver them to the King Edward Centre and collect them later.

Cllr Haggata encouraged fellow councillors to make use of and promote the V2 bus service to St Ives. He said it was a brilliant service but was in danger of being cut if people did not support it.

130) Fenland Accessibility Study – To Consider Representation

It was agreed to discuss the Fenland Accessibility Report at the Leisure Working Group meeting on the 19th October.

131) Traffic Issues

LHI: The Clerk reported she had submitted the LHI application for Doddington Road as agreed at the September meeting. The deadline for applications had been extended to the 14th October.

Disability Access: The author of the original email about problems encountered by the disabled when trying to cross the High Street had responded to the Council's reply by suggesting the humps were "raised pedestrian walkways" as they had textured/bobbled paving slabs at each end to direct blind people that it was safe to cross. She suggested the zebra crossing was half a mile away but was pleased to hear of the plans for parking enforcement. She also said she and her husband were busy compiling an accessibility report for the town which she would forward when complete and also offered councillors the chance to use a wheelchair to see Chatteris from a different perspective. Cllr Murphy was adamant the humps were not raised pedestrian walkways and said the textured paving was simply to tell people a hump was there. Cllr Haggata said disabled access to the chemists remained a problem but the company were not interested and were pushing their on-line service.

Parking problems: Cllr Taylor said parking outside the Clarence House nursery in Bridge Street was a problem as all the cars from the former Swifts Adhesives site were now parked on the road making it very narrow. Councillors said Cllr Hay had also raised concerns about the area. Cllr Taylor was also concerned about cars parked on yellow lines at the Blackhorse Lane junction and Cllr Ashley reported cars were parked on the newly repainted lines at the junction of St Peter's Drive and New Road. Cllr Murphy pointed out the police were not taking action on parking issues but it would be possible to start ticketing people when civil parking enforcement was introduced. However there was still a lot of work to be completed before this could be introduced and it was likely to take 18 months to two years.

Reports: The IHMC incident reports for August and September had been received as had details of planned events which would affect the Highway and information about upcoming roadworks on and around the A47 upgrade of the Guyhirn roundabout.

132) Correspondence

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

133) Reports & 134) Items for the Next Agenda

There were no reports or items put forward for the next agenda.

