

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 7th December 2021

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th October 2021 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

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

155) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr A Charrier.

156) 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.

157) Open Forum

The only member of the public present was the Trustee of the Cyril Haigh Trust draw who did not wish to speak and it was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

158) Cyril Haigh Trust Draw

Trustee Mrs Ann Grainger was welcomed to the meeting. Mrs Grainger asked Councillors to draw 30 names from those who had entered the draw and said each would receive £20. She explained that there were additional names to draw as the draw had not taken place in 2020. It was likely next year would be the final distribution as the funds were almost depleted. Councillors drew out the names and agreed to distribute the money.

159) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

160) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 114) Re-opening of Chatteris Community Hub: FDC officer Mrs Anna Goodall had responded to the Council's second letter about the community hub when the Council queried if the telephone in the library was working and asked if a drop in service with face to face appointments could be reinstated at least once a week. Mrs Goodall confirmed the telephone was working and said customers could contact FDC via the web site or contact centre to arrange a face to face appointment on any weekday at the customer service centres or

community hubs. Mrs Goodall said take up of the drop in service was very limited and staff had to be available “just in case” which limited their availability to answer calls. It was agreed to ask how many appointments had been made to speak to customers at the community hub in Chatteris.

Min 148) Fenland Strategies: Notification had been received that residents and visitors to Fenland could now take part in a consultation on FDC’s new Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy. There was also an opportunity to put questions about the strategy to the Council’s Transport team via Microsoft Teams on the 20th December, 5th and 11th January. Chatteris Town Council’s submission on the Fenland Accessibility Study had been received by the County officer and acknowledged.

Letters: At the request of the Mayor the Clerk had written on behalf of the Council to Major Norman Larke thanking him for his dedicated work with the Royal British Legion throughout his 20 years in the town and to the head of Kingsfield Primary School congratulating the school choir on their performance at the Community Sing in the Parish Church on the 3rd December. The Mayor said the choir was really good and it had been a lovely community event.

161) Police Matters

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

‘Local Police

Members have received a copy of the confidential minutes of the December meeting between Sgt Joe Punton and Council leaders which the Mayor attended representing Chatteris Town Council. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 6th January 2022.

An invitation has been received to attend a virtual round table meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Darryl Preston, on Monday 10th January 2022 from 6pm to 7.30pm. The meeting will provide the opportunity for the Commissioner to share his new Police and Crime plan, which sets policing and crime priorities for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for the next three years. It will also be an opportunity for councillors to share any local community safety concerns on behalf of residents. Does anyone wish to attend?

Neighbourhood Alerts

5/11/21: Notification that a man from Chatteris has been arrested and charged with drug offences. The man was remanded in custody by magistrates for a plea and trial preparation hearing at Peterborough Crown Court.

8/11/21: Tips to make life easier and online accounts more secure following revelation that 23 million people use 123456 as a password!

8/11/21: Notification of the publication of the November 2021 Our News newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters.

9/11/21: Notification that the discovery of a cannabis farm in Fenland, worth more than £500,000, has resulted in a man being jailed.

11/11/21: Invitation to register for two webinars one on ASB and the other on the creation of the webinars.

19/11/21: Advice to enable two-factor authentication to improve the security of online accounts.

23/11/21: Warning to take extra care when shopping online as 28,049 shoppers were conned out of their money when shopping online over the 2020 Christmas period.

24/11/21: Advice on how to protect yourself from lottery scams.

25/11/21: Notification that the Force is supporting International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and White Ribbon Day which calls to end male violence against women and girls.

29/11/21: Information from the Police and Crime Commissioner on his new Police and Crime Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

1/12/21: Preventative tips on how to protect property and keep burglars away at Christmas time.

6/12/21: Invitation to attend a webinar on Thursday 9th December, 5pm to 6pm, on Counter-Terrorism Policy and Community Vigilance.’

Cllrs Benney and the Mayor expressed an interest in attending the meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner on the 10th January and the Mayor said Sgt Punton was interested in all information on criminal activity.

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

Members had received the reports (**copy attached**) which were noted. On the question of bins the Clerk asked if the bin at the Church Lane car park was to be replaced as the railings and street furniture had been repainted and the bin was a mess. Cllr Murphy agreed to enquire. The Mayor reported a new bin had been installed at the cemetery and had been well received.

Councillors did query the value of the CCTV cameras pointing out the number of incidents recorded in Chatteris from August to October was just 22 and there were no arrests over that period. Cllr Murphy said it had been argued in the past that they were a deterrent. Cllr Hay asked if they covered Lindsells Walk where there had been a lot of trouble and Cllr Petrou suggested putting one or two screenshots on social media to show how clear the images were as there was a perception that the cameras were not monitored. He also suggested making it known that the cameras had been upgraded and the definition was now very good.

163) Financial Officer’s Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 30th November 2021 showing expenditure of £177,842.01 and income of £189,385.80 (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 report be noted and approved.

163) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll December2021	1,325.48
Clerk	Payroll December2021	1,845.14
Pension Fund	Payroll December2021	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll December2021	996.21
Chatteris Parochial Church Council	Headoverheels hire of church	150.00
Financial officer	Reim xmas party over 70's sundries	229.45
R J Warren	Gardening Services	1,241.10
Avanti	Traffic management Xmas lights switch on	1,866.00
Clerk	Reim Bullguard & Zoom	126.38
GM James Electrical	Repair elec works lanterns & Museum switch	157.46
RBL Poppy Appeal	Poppy wreath Remembrance	17.00
CARC	Face to Face service Aug/Sep	916.32
King Edward Centre	Youth club hire of room & hall	280.50
Cambs acre	Renewal membership	57.00
Cllr Ashley	Reim Mileage & Remembrance lunch	37.40
Cllr Carney	Reim Mayors Poppy	25.00
I Mason	Reim Flapp tree stakes and guards	76.97
SLCC	Membership renewal	215.00
Ethos	Pcopier printing over contract	2.62
Financial officer	Reim Chaperone license renewal Summer Fest volunteer	30.00
FDC	CCTV Maintenance renewal	21,270.00
Onecom	Monthly phone bill	68.14
Milestone Infrastructure	Street furniture Refurb	24,401.92
Milestone Infrastructure	Street furniture Refurb	5,241.28
Viking	Stationary Order	58.13
Viking	Stationary Order	36.42
Viking	Stationary Order	174.49
Viking	Stationary Order	245.11
Zen Internet	Dec/Jan website	11.99
Cromwell Fire	Service of Fire extinguishers	94.22
Financial officer	Petty Cash Reimbursement	70.00
Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
Total		62,401.44

164) Precept & Budget 22/23

(1) Draft Precept Budget 2022/23

The Financial Officer presented Members with a proposed draft Precept budgetary control sheet for their consideration, comments and approval. (**See Attached**).

Members were advised that the Precept had not been increased since 2018/19 when it was increased by 10%.

The draft budget proposed an increase of £4,000 to the Precept. Members were advised that this would have an impact of 0.82p per year, 1.79%, on a band D household based on the estimated tax base of 3,384. The annual precept for a band D household would be estimated at £45.80.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the budget reflected many benefits to the residents of Chatteris at the cost of a small increase to the Precept.

Cllrs Benney and Gowler raised strong objections to increasing the Precept; other Members agreed that it wasn't ideal to increase the Precept but Cllrs Murphy and Haggata spoke in favour of a small increase and pointed out the positive input to the community made by the Town Council. The Financial Officer advised that since Covid everything was costing more and this had a huge impact on all expenditure including utility bills, Employers National Insurance, along with contractors' costs and materials.

Members were reminded that the Town Council had already pledged £55,000 to fund match the Growing Fenland Museum and new community room projects. These funds would be taken from the Leisure Reserve account. The budget also showed a projected figure of £38,517 coming from the general fund account on a full budget spend for 22/23.

The Financial Officer advised Members that it was her job to keep the Council solvent and therefore a very small increase of 0.82 per year should be considered as the residents of Chatteris would benefit from many of the activities that were included in the budget.

Cllr Newell proposed to increase the precept by 0.82 per year and Cllr Taylor seconded it. Six councillors voted for, three abstained and two were against.

It was therefore **resolved** that the Precept should be increased by £4,000, equivalent to £0.82 per year based on a Band D property with an estimated tax base of 3,384.

(2) Financial Statement

Members were advised that, as per SLCC advice, they needed to consider projects which might require funding in the next financial year to ensure sufficient provision was included in the Precept budget.

Under the Local Government financial regulations any new project to be included in the Precept budget normally required a written report.

(3) New Budgets

Members were advised that there was one new budget proposed for the next financial year - a budget of £2,000 for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The new budgets which were set for the current financial year, one for a cycle path along the Old Railway Line and one for the Electric Vehicle Charging Points, were not used. The Financial Officer proposed that these budgets should be transferred into the Old Railway Line holding account to be used to extend the existing made-up footpath to the entrance to the Pocket Park.

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

166) Tree Works Quotes

The Clerk had obtained two quotations from the Council's contractors for tree works which had been highlighted in the tree survey carried out in February. The report had recommended that works be carried out to trees at the Bridge Street amenity area and along the Old Railway Lane footpath. The Clerk warned if the works were not carried out the Council's insurance might not be valid if one of the trees was to fall and cause damage.

Members **agreed** to accept the quotations of £730 plus VAT for the works to trees at the Bridge Street site and £340 plus VAT for works along the Old Railway Line.

167) To Consider One-Off Grant for Help with Christmas Lights Move

Members had received the following report:

“Members will recall that at the last meeting the Clerk reported that the Christmas Lights Committee had found a new home and would in future be storing all their equipment in the former showroom in front of the Empress swimming pool in Park Street.

The Lights Committee will move all the Christmas decorations into the former showroom when they are taken down next month but some works are required to make the new premises suitable for storing the equipment.

The inside will need fitting out by boarding the walls and fixing a racking system, a ramp will be needed (this may be forthcoming from Stainless Metalcraft) and the access doors will need to be secured/replaced.

The cost of materials for boarding the walls and fixing a racking system is estimated at £1,500; the work will be carried out by the lights volunteers. The group have also been asked

to make improvements to the outside of the building.

The outside of the building is definitely in need of TLC and if the Lights Committee were to find 40% of the costs they would be eligible to apply for a grant from the Renaissance Fund to cover the remaining 60%.

It is **recommended** that the Town Council offer a one-off grant to the Lights Committee to help with the costs of their move. The suggested sum is £2,000 part of which would be spent on the exterior.”

Cllr Benney said the building required a lot of work to make it safe and members were concerned how much would have to be spent to make it secure and safe and where the additional funding would come from. They requested further information particularly the cost of works to the outside of the building.

168) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 30th November 2021 (**copy attached**). Members ratified the group’s recommendations on applications a) to h) (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) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Noted, is it in accordance with the deeds?
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support. Suggest the A141 requires a sign stating “Caution traffic turning right” just before the entrance to the site as motorists approach Chatteris from Huntingdon.
- i) Support
- j) Support

169) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that planning permission had now been granted for 2 Park Street (the former Barclays Bank) to be converted to a museum. There were a number of conditions imposed following consultations with the conservation officer. The application to extend 14 Church Lane and carry out conversion works was recommended for refusal.

The Financial Officer reported she and the Clerk had been chasing up the purchase of 2 Park Street. The Council’s solicitor was still awaiting information from the solicitors of those

selling the freehold and the leasehold but it was possible some of the information was not required. The Financial Officer had warned the solicitor that she would need at least a month's notice of a completion date to arrange for the purchase money to be released by the Combined Authority. The sitting tenants occupying the first floor of 2 Park Street were currently going through a new leasehold contract which had been drawn up by the Council's solicitor following discussions with council representatives.

170) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 16th November 2021 (**copy attached**).

L46) Poppies on a Lamppost: Cllr Carney reported he had initially raised £930 for the Poppy Appeal through the project and a local businessman had then offered a grant to bring the amount raised to £1,000 so eventually £1,010 was handed over.

L47) Old Railway Line: The Clerk reported that Think Communities had confirmed they were happy to help with way marking the Old Railway Line footpath and the Clerk was awaiting further communication.

L48) New Entrance Signs: Cllr Carney had suggested the wording for the new signs at the entrances to the town should be as follows: "Four times Anglia in Bloom Gold Winners & Highly Commended by RHS Britain in Bloom 2021, Home of the renowned annual Christmas Lights display". Cllr Smith had then suggested adding "Centre of Engineering Excellence". The Clerk said this was too wordy and asked for suggestions on how to reduce the number of words.

171) Wish List for Chatteris

Members were informed that as part of the Place Shaping project being organised by Fenland District Council and financed by MP Mr Steve Barclay, the Fenland towns were being asked to develop a place story and marketing approach for the Fenland area.

This included how the towns could grow, attract inward investment, create jobs and support existing businesses. The project would ensure the district was ready to bid for Government funding in the future.

To this end, Cllr Hay suggested that Chatteris Town Council should decide what the town would need in the future and draw up a fresh wish list (as some items on previous lists had either been delivered or were no longer viable). Among the ideas which could be included were an arts venue and a youth centre.

Members were asked to put forward ideas so a new wish list could be drawn up.

172) Report on Welcome Back Fund Event & Idea for Queen's Jubilee Event

The Mayor reported that the Abba tribute concert held in the Parish Church on Christmas Lights Switch On night had been a great success with all those attending enjoying the event. Although numbers were slightly down on expectations as it was such a cold, wet night, those who did attend danced and sang along (including the Vicar). It had even been broadcast outside the Church which had helped to bring in guests. The event had been financed by the Government's Welcome Back fund.

The success of the evening had given the Mayor and the Clerk an idea for an event to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee which would be easy to organise but could be enjoyed by all ages. They suggested putting on a Queen tribute band concert in the Church and again broadcasting it outside so people gathered in the church grounds could also listen and dance along. As before people would be able to bring in their own alcohol (decanting from glass into plastic cups) and it might be possible to have a food stall in the church grounds. If the event was held early evening on the Thursday (2nd June) those gathered could then watch the beacon being lit at 9.15pm. The cost of a band was likely to be about £1,500 and there would then just be the cost of hiring the Church and hiring security.

Members supported the idea and gave the Clerk the go ahead to pursue the notion and seek permission from the Church.

173) Youth Work in Chatteris Update

The Mayor and the Clerk had attended the latest meeting of the Chatteris Focus on Youth Group, held on the 24th November, when youth work in Chatteris was discussed and submitted the following report:

“Connections Bus: Mr Alan Webb, the Connections Bus Project Manager, reported that fortnightly sessions began again on the 12th October and were advertised on all the usual platforms. Despite this attendance at sessions had been low or non-existent (for the last two sessions). There were a few suggestions for reasons including ASB (which might stop youngsters being allowed out), the cold weather, the dark nights and a fall out between two friendship groups. Connections Bus was also struggling to recruit staff and Mr Webb, therefore, suggested the sessions should be halted and begin again in the spring (this was subsequently agreed by the Mayor and the Clerk). There was a suggestion that Youths in Fenland could use the money to do more detached youth work and the Clerk asked for details of proposals and a cost.

Youths in Fenland: The group also reported low attendance at the clubs held weekly at the Emmanuel Church. However the group was still looking for a more suitable venue and was carrying out some detached youth work. They were also supporting the NCS programme at Cromwell Community College, where they ran workshops on a range of life skills.

Junior Youth Club: The Clerk reported this was going well and attendance had built up to 17 at the last session but more helpers were needed and there was a real possibility the current staff would be unable to continue running the club by the New Year or the new financial year as they had taken on different employment. Youths in Fenland expressed an interest in taking on the club.

Other youth work: It was reported that the Place Shaping group would be running a session for young people on the 8th December, the Fenland Youth Advisory Board had held a Question Time event at Cromwell Community College and a new peer mentoring project was being developed. This would be based in March and would train young people aged between 14 and 18 as peer mentors. It was hoped some of these young people might eventually become youth workers.”

The Clerk had subsequently contacted Ms Debbie King, of Youths in Fenland, to ask for quotes to organise detached youth work until the Connections Bus started operating again and to run the junior youth club from April 2022.

The cost of detached youth work was £88.55 per session and the cost of delivering the youth club was £116.05 a session (a total of £2,437.05 for 21 sessions during the year). The Financial Officer confirmed both quotes were within the budget.

Members **agreed** that Youths of Fenland should be asked to deliver six detached youth work sessions from January to the end of March (at a total cost of £531.30) and the junior youth club sessions from April 2022 to March 2023 (at a total cost of £2,437.05). The Town Council would continue to pay separately for the hire of the King Edward Centre as the venue for the junior youth club sessions.

174) ICO Complaint Conclusion

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by the Information Commissioner’s Office again following another complaint by the person who had lodged the first complaint against her. On this occasion the complaint, registered in May, referred to an information request to the Town Council on the 7th April regarding a recording of the town council meeting.

The Clerk explained to the ICO officer that she had been unable to send the recording to the person requesting it as the file was too large (this had been explained to the person making the request) but she had offered him the opportunity to come into the office, at a mutually convenient time, to view the recording.

The ICO officer asked if the Clerk still had the recording and if the offer still stood. The Clerk confirmed the recording was still available and the offer still stood. As a result the ICO officer had sent a letter confirming there was nothing further to investigate and she was closing the case.

175) Traffic Issues

Disabled Persons Parking Bay: The Town Council had been asked for its view on an application to Cambridgeshire County Council to install a disabled persons parking bay for a local resident in Tithe Road (on the parking bay area opposite 2 Tithe Road). Members confirmed they had no objections to the application. Cllr Hay said a bay could only be installed if the applicant had a vehicle (or someone living at their property had a vehicle).

Speed Cushions New Road: Cllr Hay reported that work had been carried out to the speed cushions in New Road which were the subject of a complaint by a local resident.

Grassed area in Wenny Road: A resident of Wenny Road had written asking if it would be possible to put a border round the grassed area outside numbers 28 to 32B Wenny Road to stop the heavy footfall of parents and pupils using it as a shortcut to Cromwell Community College. The resident had offered to maintain the area. Members agreed the request should be passed to Highways who owned and maintained the land.

Surface Treatment Works: Notification had been received of plans to micro asphalt the following roads in Chatteris sometime between the 4th January and 3rd July 2022: Burnsfield Street, Fairview Avenue, Fairview Crescent, Fairview Drive, Fairview Gardens, Green Park and Windsor Close. None of the works involved would require road closures.

Consultations: Notification had been received of the opportunity to comment on a draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Making Connections proposals for greener travel.

Bus Services: Information had been received about Stagecoach bus services over the festival period and notification that the fares and ticketing structure would change from the 4th January 2022. There was also notification from the Combined Authority that it was now possible to renew concessionary bus passes on line. A poster had gone on the public noticeboard.

Communications: The IHMC incident report for October had been received, as had the latest Road Safety Education Newsletter 'Way to Go', the latest newsletter from the A47 Guyhirn scheme and the Highways Events Diary for December.

176) Correspondence

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

177) Reports

The Mayor reported that the Financial Officer had been working hard on organising the Christmas party for the Over 70s which was due to be held on the 10th December. Cllr Petrou and Housden's Caterers would be helping with the food and FACT were providing transportation.

178) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

