

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 4th January 2022

2262

1 of 11

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 4th January 2022 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

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

179) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney, A Charrier, F Newell and I Taylor.

180) 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.

181) 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.

182) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

183) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 172) Queen's Platinum Jubilee: The Council had received an email from the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire reminding members that the Queen would become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee (70 years of service) in 2022 and encouraging local councils to organise events to recognise the milestone over the extended Bank Holiday from 2nd to 5th June. The Clerk was still waiting to hear if the Church PCC would agree to the Council staging a Queen tribute concert in the Church on the 2nd June.

Min 175) Grassed area in Wenny Road: Following a request from a resident the Clerk had received permission from County Highways and Fenland District Council (who maintained the area) for the resident to put a border around the grassed area outside numbers 28 to 32b Wenny Road to stop people using it as a shortcut. The agreement was that the resident would have to maintain the area in future and remove the border and inform the councils if she was no longer in a position to maintain it.

184) Police Matters

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

‘Local Police

The meeting between Council leaders and Sgt Joe Punton has been delayed, possibly until the 12th January 2022. A reminder that there is a virtual round table meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Darryl Preston, on Monday 10th January from 6pm to 7.30pm.

Neighbourhood Alert

7/12/21: December issue of Our News, the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter for supporters.

18/12/21: Advice on where to report scam messages – report@phishing.gov.uk

21/12/21: Information about the Neighbour of the Year Awards organised by Neighbourhood Watch.

22/12/21: Notification that a home CCTV system caught a convicted burglar trying to break into a home in Peterborough.’

The Mayor said she would pass on the confidential minutes of the meeting with Sgt Punton when she received them and she asked to be notified of any issues members wished her to raise at the meeting.

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

No updates had been received.

Cllr Murphy urged the Council to think seriously about the costs and effectiveness of the CCTV system. He said it appeared that whenever anything happened the CCTV cameras had failed to catch the culprit. Cllr Gowler agreed but was against removing the system at present as he was worried about public perception if something happened once it was removed and he suggested it might act as a deterrent. A meeting with those controlling the CCTV cameras was suggested to ask how many incidents had been captured and reported to the police while Cllr Benney suggested possibly cutting back the coverage area to the centre of the town. Cllr Smith said one of the problems was that a specific time frame was required for the CCTV evidence to be examined: there was a specific officer assigned to go through CCTV evidence.

The idea of helping shopkeepers to install their own CCTV, via a grant scheme, and then creating a shopwatch web was suggested by Cllr Petrou. It was pointed out the footage would have to be available for all to see. The Financial Officer said the Council was currently tied in to a three year contract to fund the CCTV system but Cllr Benney suggested preparing an exit strategy and asking CAPALC if any other councils had stopped contributing to a district wide scheme.

186) Financial Officer’s Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 14th December 2021 showing expenditure of £181,894.08 and income of £189,437.44

(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.

187) To Approve Final Budget & Precept for 2022/23

Members had the finalised budget precept report for 2022/23 for consideration and approval.

[1] Purposes of Report

The main purposes of the report were to: -

- [a] Highlight variations in the current year (2021/22).
- [b] Approve the base Budget for 2022/23
- [c] Approve the Precept for 2022/23

Members were reminded that the precept was the amount levied on Fenland District Council to be recovered from Council Tax payers in Chatteris to cover the Town Council's net general expenses as shown in the General Fund Budget. The Town Council's Precept was included in Council Tax bills along with the County Council and Police Authority Precepts, and District Council charges.

[2] Variations 2021/22

Additional Costs not included in the 2021/22 budget:

Allotments Road repair	1,500
Willow Figure additional grant to mark In Bloom's entry	1,200
Staff Salary due to additional work load re Growing Fenland	8,279
Decrease in Income re EVC Points Grant	7,000
Total Additional Costs	17,979

Savings in 2021/22 are as follows:

Electric Vehicle Charging	-10,000
Cycle Path	-10,000
Business Rates – Small Business Rate Relief	-1,950
Gardening Services	-2,225
Insurances	-384
Premises	-900
Playgrounds & Rec	-500
Mayor's Allowance	-1,250
Summer Fun	-300
In Bloom Watering Service	-700
Connexions Bus	-900
Officers Travel & Training	-300

2265

4 of 11

Tree Works	- 200
Remembrance Parade	-1,295
Civic Newsletter	-650
Citizen Advice Face to Face	-2,616
Various small budget savings	-750
Total Savings in Year	- 34,920

Net Expenditure Total 2021/22 **-16,941**

Original Budget **189,234**

Probable out turn **172,293**

Members were advised that the uncommitted balance in the General Revenue Fund at the 31st March 2022 was likely to be in the region of £68,052 which was considered more than adequate for current financial commitments of the Council.

[3] Budget 2022/23

Members were advised that Appendix A showed detailed figures for the original budget 2021/22 and proposed Budget for 2022/23, summarised as follows: -

	£
Original Budget 2021/22	189,234
Proposed Budget 2022/23	249,517
Difference	60,283

The main variations were as follows: -

Increased / Additional spending

	£
[a] Salaries & Employers Oncosts	14,983
[b] Premises Fuel light & cleaning	1,000
[c] Office Equipment	1,500
[d] Queen's Platinum Jubilee	2,000
[e] Growing Fenland Pledge	55,000
	74,483

Less Non-Recurring Items/Reduced Budgets

[i] Remembrance Parade	1,000
[ii] Town Promotional Leaflet	-200
[iii] Electric Vehicle Charging points	10,000
[iv] Cycle path	-10,000
[v] No income budget for EVC points	7,000
	14,200
Net Additional Expenditure Total	60,283

The Budget reflected items [a] Salaries & Employers Oncosts- increase in Employers NIC contributions and additional hours forecast for Growing Fenland project. [b] Premises fuel light & cleaning- increase in utility bills forecast. [c] Office Equipment- new office computer. [d] Queen's Platinum Jubilee- new budget to celebrate this event in the town [e] Growing Fenland Pledge- Council required to match fund as part of this project.

The spending powers relevant to the detailed budgets were shown in Appendix B.

[4] Precept 2022/23

Savings have been made on items: [i] Remembrance Parade - budget reduced as road closure costs not as high as anticipated. [ii] Town promotional leaflet not required this financial year. [iii] Electric Vehicle Charging Points budget is not required as project not going ahead this financial year. [iv] Cycle Path along the Old Railway Line to Somersham project is not going ahead. [v] EVC Points income grant - no income budget will be sought as this project is not going ahead in this financial year.

On this basis the recommended funding of the 2022/23 budget is as follows:

	£
Proposed Budget	249,517
From Balances (includes rounding)	-39,517
From Leisure Capital Reserve	-55,000
Net Precept 2022/23	155,000

The Financial Officer advised Members that the proposed recommended Precept of £155,000 had an increase of only £4,000 from 2021/22 Precept. The increase had been kept to a minimum by transferring the above balances from the general fund and the Leisure Capital Reserve.

The uncommitted general fund balances on a full budget spend would still be considered adequate to carry forward into the next financial year.

The effect of the Net Precept (i.e., the figure recovered through Council Tax) was as follows:

	Net Precept	Tax Base	Band D Effect
2022/23	£155,000	3,384 Est	£45.80 Est

The comparison of Net Precept (i.e., the figure recovered through council tax) was as follows:

	Net Precept	Tax Base	Band D Effect %
2022/23	155,000	3,384Est	45.80
2021/22	151,000	3,357 27	44.98 0.82 1.79%

Due to the increase in the Tax Base and the small increase to the Precept the Band D cost effect had only increased by 1.79%. (0.82p per year).

Members were advised that the Tax Base figure provided by Fenland DC was current estimates. FDC had advised any changes to these figures would be notified by the end of December 2021. The Financial Officer told Members that she had received no amendments to the tax base figure to date and therefore would expect the original estimated tax figure to be the final figure.

[5] Fund Balances

Members were advised that it was appropriate, as part of the budget preparation exercise, to remind Members of the forecast balances at the 31st March 2022 on the Council's other reserves and funds:

	£
Old Railway Line Development Fund	20,615
General Capital Reserve	23,152
Leisure Capital Reserve	41,146
Closed Circuit Television Reserve	25,479

[6] It was RESOLVED that:

- [i] Probable savings in 2021/22 be noted;
- [ii] A Net Budget for 2022/23 of £249,517 be approved;
- [iii] A Precept of £155,000 be approved for 2022/23
- [iv] Estimated Reserves and fund balances at the 31st March 2022 be noted.

188) Payment of Accounts

The Mayor said the Christmas Party for Over 70s organised by the Council was a massive success and all those who attended really enjoyed it. She thanked all those who helped to organise the event, who supplied the food and assisted on the day, in particular Housden's Caterers, Cllr Petrou, Jack's supermarket, the Financial Officer, the Clerk, officers from FDC's Golden Age team, Cllr Smith and King Edward Centre employees. The elderly had enjoyed meeting new and old friends and were particularly grateful for the goody bags they took home. Several thank you cards, e-mails and phone calls had been received.

Entertainment included a sing-a-long with duo Topaz and a bingo session run by the Mayor who said she hoped it would be possible to arrange a similar event in 2022 as it had been so popular.

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

Financial Officer	Payroll January22	1,325.68
Clerk	Payroll January22	1,845.34
Pension Fund	Payroll January22	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll January22	995.08
Cllr Ashley	Mayors Donation to the High Sheriff Charity	50.00
Amy Carney	Reim sundries xmas party	75.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services	727.50
Iris payroll software	Renewal of license	406.80
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Pest control formula	64.29
Cllr Ashley	Reim Mayors xmas lunch staff	21.50
King Edward Centre	Youth club hire of room & hall	197.50
King Edward Centre	Grant money balance paid re towards running costs	7,778.76
J Papworth	Youth club service Dec -Mar final period	1,622.00
Camguard F&Sec	To repair fault	78.00
S Gibb	Council offices clean	62.50
Fact Transport	Membership	15.00
Chatteris Museum Trust	Reim of Insurance	110.34
Onecom	Monthly phone bill	70.50
British Gas	Elec Bill	60.81
British Gas	Gas Bill	322.00
Zen Internet	Jan/Feb website	11.99
Barclays	Bank Charges	22.00
Cllr Petrou	Reim towards xmas party costs	80.00
Total		17,068.80

189) To Approve Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were advised that no grants had been received for consideration.

190) Detached Youth Work Sessions

Director of Youths of Fenland, Ms Debbie King, had acknowledged the Council's agreement to fund fortnightly detached youth work sessions until the end of March but had asked if it would be possible for the Council to fund weekly sessions as these were found to be more

beneficial to young people as they had continuity of service. The Financial Officer confirmed there was sufficient money in the budget to fund weekly sessions and members pointed out they had been criticised for not providing a youth centre. Members **agreed** to fund weekly detached youth work sessions until the Easter holidays and to request regular reports on how the sessions were going.

191) Planning

Councillors considered applications a) to g) (**as shown on the appended list**) and agreed to return them to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Councillors can certify the building has been used by TP24 for storage and as a retail showroom for over 10 years.
- b) Support
- c) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- d) Support, welcome additional industrial units
- e) No further comments
- f) Support
- g) Support

The Clerk also updated councillors on the latest planning decision from Fenland District Council. The following were all granted permission: change of use from offices to 1 dwelling at 2 Victoria Street; change of use of dwelling to dwelling and dog grooming parlour at 36 Wenny Estate; erection of 2-storey, 3-bed dwelling at land east of 20 Station Street; insertion of first floor window at 26 Wenny Road; change of use of ground floor to museum and internal and external works to a listed building at 2 Park Street. The outline application for the erection of up to 6 dwellings at land south of 19 Blackmill Road was refused permission.

192) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk and Financial Officer said there was little to report on progress on the Museum project as they were still waiting for the solicitor to come back with an update on the purchase of 2 Park Street.

The signed contract for the project from the Combined Authority had been received just before Christmas. As planning permission had been granted, the architect had applied for Building Regulations and was in the process of producing a schedule of works which it was hoped, would go out to contractors at the end of January with a reply date at the end of February. The architect had warned most contractors were busy and asked for a steer on who should be approached for a quote. He also asked if any changes had been proposed since the planning application was submitted.

It was agreed to explain that the Council wished to convert the ground floor room currently occupied by the accountants to a meeting room with toilet facilities and create a separate entrance to the accountants' space at first floor level from a communal entrance hall.

The architect also asked about a sign for the new museum and Cllr Benney said he would approach Stainless Metalcraft to enquire whether they would be able to design and create a sign. This would be the subject of a separate planning application.

The Mayor said in future the museum would be run by a management team instead of a curator. The volunteers were working well together on preparing for the move from 14 Church Lane.

193) Wish List Ideas

Members were reminded that they had been asked for ideas for a new wish list for Chatteris as part of the Place Shaping project being organised by Fenland District Council and financed by MP Mr Steve Barclay. They put forward the following ideas:

Cllr Smith suggested premises for youth work- either a drop in centre or an internet café – and an arts centre.

Cllr Hay said a cycleway from Chatteris to Sutton to link in with the existing cycleway to Ely.

Cllr Benney wished to see alterations to the Slade End roundabout near the Apple Green garage (the introduction of lanes so traffic flowed better) and the roundabout near Jacks.

Cllr Gowler was keen to see the Station Road/Station Street junction improved.

Cllr Petrou wished to see confidence in the doctors' surgery restored and a shift in attitude to the provision.

Cllr Murphy was keen to see schemes which had received planning permission delivered and potential developers not allowed to simply sit on the land.

Cllr Haggata was anxious to see more housing built and decent transport connections, particularly good bus services to train stations. He was also keen to see a cycleway from Chatteris to Sutton, the purchase of land to create a countryside park and a café for the youth.

194) Cherry Tree Locations

The Clerk had sought members' ideas on where six cherry trees, being donated by the Japanese Government via MP Mr Steve Barclay, should be planted in the town. She had also consulted Fenland District Council, who had kindly agreed to use their contractors to plant the trees, the Vicar and Chatteris In Bloom representatives.

It had finally been agreed that the trees should be planted in the churchyard, the garden area in Huntingdon Road, the roundabout at Wenny Estate, the grassed area near Glebelands School and in Wenny Recreation Ground (to replace a tree which had failed at the rear of Hazel Close). The planting would be carried out on Wednesday 12th January.

195) High Sheriff's Visit

The Mayor told members the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Caroline Bewes, would be visiting Chatteris on Tuesday 14th February and she asked for ideas for an itinerary for the visit. Suggestions included Stainless Metalcraft to view the new training school under construction, Aerotron, Bartletts' business park, the children's centre in Larham Way and the King Edward Centre.

The Mayor had also been invited to nominate local organisations for the High Sheriff's award (a framed certificate presented by the High Sheriff to recognise individuals, volunteers, charities and or companies who went above and beyond to support the local community). The Mayor suggested putting forward Stainless Metalcraft and Jacks supermarket, who were both big supporters of the local community, the Christmas Lights and the In Bloom committees and the Army cadets. These were agreed.

196) LHI Application Update

Members had already signified via email that they were happy with the project feasibility study for the LHI application for Doddington Road. The proposal was to reduce the existing 40mph limit in the residential area (including Curf and Willey Terraces) to 30mph with a gate-way feature at the 30mph terminal signs and additional linage to make the road seem narrower. Although it would not be feasible to reduce the speed limit from the Leonard Child's Bridge to the town to 40mph, a 40mph buffer zone would be installed for 200m from the new 30mph terminal/gateway signs.

Members had also agreed to make a contribution of £2,000 towards the cost of the scheme which was estimated to be £14,531.96.

It was agreed the Clerk and the Mayor would speak in favour of the scheme when it went to the LHI panel of the County Council for decision.

197) Traffic Issues

Notification had been received of two proposed road closures.

The first was the Mepal viaduct on the A142 from 8.30pm on Fridays to 5am on Mondays over the three weekends 25th to 28th February, 4th to 7th March and 11th to 14th March. The reason for the closures was that the bridge joints needed to be repaired. The proposed diversion route sent motorists via Huntingdon.

Members pointed out that local motorists would use diversions routes either via Sutton Gault or via Earith both of which were liable to flooding at that time of year and this would lead to problems. There were also plans for some roadworks at Haddenham at the same time.

The second proposal was to close London Road for 262 metres south west from Stocking Drove from the 14th to 18th February. The proposed diversion route was via Warboys.

198) Correspondence

Members had a list of correspondence received since the last meeting (**copy attached**). Since drawing up the list the Clerk had received an email from the Chairman of Chatteris In Bloom stating the group had been invited to participate in the Britain in Bloom competition again.

In 2022 it was hoped there would be a judging visit which would mean CIB would have two judging days to contend with. CIB were meeting that evening to decide whether to take up the invitation but the Chairman pointed out there had been a lot of extra work for the virtual campaign in 2021 and a physical visit could make a huge extra workload. She said there would need to be very high standards of general housekeeping around the town as these would be seen by the judges on route. Chatteris In Bloom would therefore need extra support from the Town, District and County Councils.

The letter sought the comments and input of councillors. Cllr Murphy agreed it would cost money and time, particularly on the part of FDC and he said Wisbech had backed out of the competition due to the commitment. The Britain in Bloom judges would look at everything from bins to seats to planters. The Clerk pointed out the Council had already spent money, granted by the Combined Authority, on repairing and re-painting the street furniture.

It was agreed the Town Council would try to support Chatteris In Bloom with whatever decision they made. Councillors were concerned about a seat in the High Street which was now looking unsafe.

199) Reports

There were no reports.

200) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.