

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

2273

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

**Present:** Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), J Carney, A Charrier, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy, J Smith and I Taylor

### 201) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs I Benney & A Gowler (who had Covid), F Newell and M Petrou.

### 202) 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.

### 203) 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.

### 204) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

### 205) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 183) Grassed area in Wenny Road: Having obtained permission for the residents of 28 to 32B Wenny Road to fence off and maintain the grassed area outside their homes, the Clerk reported the residents had decided the solution would not stop people taking a short cut over the area and they would not be proceeding with the project.

Min 194) Cherry Trees: The Clerk was able to confirm that the information contained in an FDC press release about the planting of Cherry trees was correct. The trees, which were part of the Japanese Sakura Cherry Tree project, had been planted in Wenny Recreation ground, on Wenny Estate roundabout, in the churchyard, near Glebelands School and in the gardens in Huntingdon Road. The planting was carried out by Tivoli and supervised by the Clerk, Cllr Murphy and FDC officers.

193) Wish List: The Wish List ideas had been passed on to FDC and the Place Shaping Project organisers and FDC officer Ms Jo Blackmore confirmed the organisers, thinkingplace, were currently drafting a summary report.

## **206) Police Matters**

Members had previously received a copy of the presentation viewed at the meeting between Council Chairmen and Sgt Joe Puntton on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and a copy of the minutes of the meeting. Cllr Hay requested the information be forwarded to her again.

Pc Dave Lawrence was welcomed to the meeting. He explained he had joined the Neighbourhood team after a period as a response officer.

In his update on the work of the neighbourhood team, Pc Lawrence said he had visited Kingsfield School and spoken to parents about parking safely near the school. Cllr Hay confirmed there was a great deal of concern from local residents due to irresponsible parking and she and the Mayor would be meeting with the head of the school on Thursday to discuss the problems. Councillors commended those parents who parked in Jack's car park and used the underpass and the Mayor pointed out it was also possible to park in Furrowfields car park and walk down the cinder path. The Clerk said she had received complaints from residents of Burnsfield Street that cars were being damaged because parents drove into the street too quickly and met on-coming traffic.

Pc Lawrence said the neighbourhood team had also been engaging with the youth of the town and the situation was far more positive. It had gone from youths throwing items at the police to engaging with and talking to them.

At Cromwell Community College there had been issues with older youths trying to supply pupils with drugs at the entrance to Wenny Recreation Ground so the police had been patrolling. Drugs cases before the courts had been adjourned again.

The team had also been working on the security of ATMs following the theft of the ATM from Nisa. With six officers now in the neighbourhood team it was possible to achieve more.

Cllr Hay asked how often the police used information from the CCTV cameras as despite having the second highest number of cameras in Fenland, the Chatteris cameras had apparently only helped with one arrest recently. Pc Lawrence said the camera evidence was used if there was an incident. Cllr Hay said the Town Council was deciding if the cameras represented value for money.

Cllr Murphy said at a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner he had learned that there was a problem with anti-social behaviour by children in every town.

**207) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates**

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC, Street Scene and CCTV updates (**copy attached**).

Flies: Cllr Smith asked what was happening with the flies in the empty shop in Market Hill which were unsightly and still a problem. The Mayor had spoken to the Street Scene officer and shown her the problem and she had contacted the owner who was quite rude to her but had promised to take action.

Cllr Hay confirmed there were still live flies and it was agreed the Clerk should ask environmental health for an update as the shop was close to food premises.

Football Pitch: The Mayor had reported problems with the football pitch at the rear of the Sportsman. The pitch had been churned up by a car after the football club had spent many hours and their funds maintaining it. The incident had been reported to the police and FDC and the football club was now planning to install posts to prevent vehicles from gaining access to the pitch.

**208) Financial Officer's Report**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 showing expenditure of £214,312.64 and income of £190,314.47 (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.

**209) Payment of Accounts**

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

Financial Officer	Payroll February 22	1,325.48
Clerk	Payroll February 22	1,845.14
Pension Fund	Payroll February 22	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll February 22	996.21
UK Safety Management	Pat Testing	276.95
The Old Bakery Tea Room	60% grant re: GF Business premises fund	216.00
Ringway	Remembrance Sunday Road Closure Management	842.58
Wave	RHS Allotments water rates	96.36
Wave	LHS Allotments water rates	103.83
Wave	Office water bill	50.03
Housdens Outside Caterers	Reim: Food Xmas Party	165.55
Mason T/A UK Tribute Show	Jubilee Concert Deposit	300.00
South Norfolk DC	Building Control Plan Charge	324.00
Chatteris Comm Archive	Mayor's Calendars	55.00

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		247.20
cfcorporate	Photocopier lease	
Warren Access	Xmas Lights Platform hire	360.00
St John Ambulance	Xmas Lights Switch On first aid provision	172.80
KECCA	Room hire for meetings	127.50
The Connections Bus	Outdoor youth club	1,188.00
Zen	Renewal of Domain name & Monthly fee re website	26.98
Camguard Fire & Security	Service agreement re. security system	345.60
Rural Cambs Citizens Advice	Face to Face service	1,374.48
Viking	Stationary	159.91
Viking	Stationary	58.91
Financial Officer	Reim: Petty cash	70.00
Clerk	Reim: Zoom & Mileage	23.39
R J Warren	Tree Works	876.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services	727.50
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	8.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>13,490.11</b>

## 210) To Consider Additional Grant for Chatteris Christmas Lights

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received a grant application from the Christmas Lights Committee for help towards improving the external appearance of their new premises at the Empress Swimming Pool and providing a level of security required to protect the display which was currently valued in excess of £150K.

Members were reminded that at the December meeting they requested additional information about the group's plans for the building, in particular the cost of works to the outside of the building.

The group's treasurer Mr Reg Tibbitts had provided a copy of the last year's audited accounts, a completed grant application form and estimates for the provision of a roller shutter and personal access door, £2,988, and repairs and cladding for the outside of the building, £6,083. Total cost £9,071. He advised they would also be applying for a grant from Court Leet towards the costs.

Mr Tibbitts said the committee, along with local volunteers, had worked hard and very effectively to make the move as low cost as possible. Local businesses had donated materials and labour to help with the move.

Mr Tibbitts estimated the costs of the works already completed would have been £8,000 if labour and materials had not been donated. With all this work completed the committee were now faced with the general insecurity of the building. Despite reinforcement, the folding access doors were inadequate and in a poor state of repair. The committee wished to replace these with a roller shutter and personnel access door.

The Financial Officer and the Clerk recommended that the Council offer a one-off grant of £3,000 towards the costs of the work as this would not only protect the Christmas Lights collection but would also help improve the look of a significant building in the town.

Such a grant would then allow the Christmas Lights Committee to apply for a grant from the Growing Fenland Renaissance Fund. They would be able to apply for the maximum grant of £5,000 as the works proposed met the criteria of the Fund.

Councillors agreed they needed more information before they could make a decision: the term of the lease between the Christmas Lights Committee and the Empress Swimming Pool; if planning permission was required and what type of cladding would be used.

Cllr Hay proposed that the decision should be deferred until the next council meeting to be held in March.

It was **RESOLVED** the above be noted.

### **211) To Consider Grant for All Seasons Mums & Toddlers Group**

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received a grant application from the organiser of the All Seasons Mums & Toddlers Group to help towards running costs, materials, equipment and soft mats.

The mums and toddlers group was run by a very dedicated hard-working lady with ambition to grow the service and expand on the type of services she offered. She was a resident of Chatteris and had real Community spirit. The group was held at the King Edward Centre and due to popular demand, the organiser had had to increase the number of sessions to accommodate demand. The group brought mums and toddlers together and gave them interaction with each other, something a lot of the group members would not have without the group.

The Financial Officer said it was a non-profit, voluntary organisation that was run for the community of Chatteris. The group organiser was looking at other grants to help with the costs of new equipment and different accessories such as: sensory, outdoor and safety equipment which she had to hire in at the moment. She had received no other grants to date but had spoken to FDC who said they might be able to give a grant in the new financial year. She was planning to do fund raising and fun days to bring funds in.

The Financial Officer said the organiser was looking to make over an outdoor area at the back of the KEC. She had been offered some artificial grass to put down as a rolled carpet and was also looking to obtain some safety play tiles. She hoped to get a mud kitchen and other outdoor equipment to add to the collection so she could then offer outdoor activities to the group.

The Financial Officer asked Councillors to strongly consider approving a grant of £1,000 from the underspent Voluntary Organisations budget for the group. The grant would enable the group to expand the sessions, help towards the running costs, buy new equipment and make additional sessions available for mums and toddlers in Chatteris,

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommended grant of £1,000 be approved and the report noted.

## 212) Planning

There had been insufficient plans to justify a meeting of the Planning Working Group so Cllr Haggata requested members make decisions on planning applications a) to d) (**as shown on the appended list**).

It was agreed to return them to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support

The Clerk had received notification that four planning applications for Chatteris were to be considered at the FDC Planning Committee meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February. The recommendation from officers was to refuse all four. The applications were:

Erection of two dwellings on plot 2 land south east of 1 Curf Terrace and change of use of existing garage/playroom to annexe for use of plot 2;

Change of use of museum/offices at 14 Church Lane to ground floor offices with 2 x 2-bed flats at first floor level involving erection of a first floor extension;

Installation of 2 x 8m masts with 5 aerials for amateur radio at 32 Birch Avenue;

Erection of a dwelling at land west of 43 Lindsells Walk.

The Council had recommended refusal of the first plan but had supported the last two.

The Clerk updated members on the latest planning decisions from Fenland District Council.

The following had been granted permission:

Single-storey extension to 12 Fairway;

First-floor rear extension to existing dwelling at 21B West Street;

Change of use from agricultural storage and distribution to packing and distribution of flowers at A Bartlett & Sons, Huntingdon Road;

Erection of 3-storey, 5-bed house at land south west of 24 Doddington Road;

Erection of up to 9 dwellings involving demolition of existing dwelling at 2 Doddington Rd.

Erection of 6 dwellings at land west of 98-102 High Street;

Erection of three dwellings at land west of 130 London Road;  
Erection of two dwellings at land south of 26 Wenny Road;  
Works to 2 Lime trees at 51 London Road.

The erection of a dividing boundary fence at 22 Lode Way was refused permission and FDC refused a Certificate of Lawful Use for the use of the building for storage and retail showroom at TP24 West Park Street. Councillors had certified the use and were angry that their claims had been ignored especially as most had lived in Chatteris for many years. They asked the Clerk to query what evidence the FDC officer had to dispute the claims of councillors and the applicant.

### **213) Growing Fenland Project Update**

The Clerk and the Financial Officer updated members on progress on the Growing Fenland Project.

After much chasing the Financial Officer had finally spoken to the Council's solicitor that afternoon who had assured her that work was being undertaken in the background. The searches had come back and showed nothing untoward. The building had received an EPC grading of D and an air con report had been received. The solicitor was now awaiting answers to some additional questions from the freehold and leasehold owners. The Financial Officer had stressed the desire for the purchase of the building to be completed within the current Financial Year and said both those selling and the Combined Authority were pressing for the sale to be concluded. In the meantime the Financial Officer had submitted, to the Combined Authority, claims for money already spent under the project and the sum required for the purchase of 2 Park Street. She pointed out it was essential the money was in the Town Council's account before the Council completed on the purchases. The solicitor had confirmed the date was "doable" but warned she was going on holiday. She promised to email the owners of the building, the leasehold owners and the accountants seeking final information and to copy the Council in to all correspondence.

The Clerk reported that the architect had visited 2 Park Street again to check on the work required in preparation for sending out a schedule of works to builders for quotes. This time he had received a steer from museum volunteers on walls, ceilings, door openings, etc. Cllr Benney and the Clerk had also pointed out the desire to create a meeting room, with toilet facilities, on the ground floor area of the building currently occupied by the accountants and to create a new entrance to the accountants at the bottom of the stairs. Works proposed also included a new gas heating system for that part of the building. The architects had already submitted a building control application for the building, on behalf of the Council, and would be submitting a new Listed Building Consent application to FDC for the works proposed. The planning application for the extension and conversion of 14 Church Lane (to include residential accommodation and a community room) would be considered by FDC's planning committee later in the month with a recommendation to refuse planning permission.

## 214) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (**copy attached**).

L52) Armed Forces Covenant: The Clerk had been sent an updated list of possible pledges for the Covenant which would be considered at the next Leisure meeting.

L53) Wenny Recreation Ground: Cllr Taylor reported there had been another fire in the spinney and the Clerk said she had yet to receive a response to her query about the replacement of the bench by a double waste bin. Members queried if the bench could be reinstated in another position.

L53) FDC Update: Cllr Murphy said he had asked for the trees at the rear of Jubilee Gardens to be cut down so it was possible to see what was going on in that area.

L54) Street Furniture & Caterpillar: Cllr Smith reported that the new Perspex on two of the town's signs had cracked. The Clerk said she would report this to the contractors. Cllr Smith said it was proving difficult to get the wood promised by Travis Perkins for the caterpillar trail frame.

L56) Mooring: Cllr Murphy queried who would be responsible for the upkeep of the mooring, if it was created on the Forty Foot. Cllr Haggata said it was hoped Middle Level would take responsibility.

## 215) Chatteris In Bloom & Britain In Bloom Entry

The Chairman of In Bloom, Miss Tina Prior, had written to confirm the group would be taking up the invitation to participate in Britain In Bloom 2022. The new head gardener would be introducing methods to work smarter not harder and produce areas of relatively low maintenance but high impact.

Having walked the proposed judging route, Miss Prior and the head gardener, highlighted areas where external support would be needed and areas where help from the Town Council would be appreciated.

Most of the areas highlighted were the responsibility of other organisations and businesses (including the Church, the King Edward Centre and TP24). The Clerk had directed Miss Prior to those responsible and had confirmed it might be possible to re-locate the cycle rack near the Empress Swimming Pool which was a temporary structure and that she would raise the flower beds issue at the King Edward Centre with the Trustees.

Miss Prior also said In Bloom were hoping to take the judges to the Pocket Park, which had the potential to be a gem in their crown, and she asked if FLAPP could liaise with In Bloom to help ensure it reached its potential.

The Clerk said FLAPP members continued to do what they could at the park and there were plans to plant trees at the entrance to the park from the Old Railway Line to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. FLAPP would make sure the park was looking its best for judging day. The Council would continue to pay contractors to maintain the park.

The Clerk also pointed out the Town Council had spent a considerable amount of Combined Authority money on street furniture improvements and FDC would be planting Cherry trees in the town.

Cllr Murphy said In Bloom had asked to introduce different planting projects on FDC land so the council was asking them to sign a memorandum of understanding as they would not be able to simply hand the areas back when they no longer wished to maintain them. By that time it was likely that the Council's contractors would have been assigned to other tasks. This had happened in Wisbech. Three people originally concerned with In Bloom had retired and no-one had taken over so the gardens in Wisbech no longer looked pristine. Cllr Murphy warned the judges would look at everything in town, not just the planting.

### **216) Arrangements for 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Queen's Accession to Throne**

The Royal British Legion had written to say they had acquired a Platinum Jubilee flag which they proposed flying at the war memorial during the Jubilee year. It was planned to raise the flag at 12 noon on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne and the RBL asked if the Town Council wished to be involved.

It was agreed the Mayor would say a few words to mark the occasion and the RBL would give the Royal Salute by dipping their standards. The event would be advertised on Facebook.

### **217) Traffic Issues**

LHI: The Clerk confirmed that she and the Mayor would be attending (by Teams) the LHI panel meeting the following day pitching the Town Council's bid for funding for the Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces speed reduction scheme. A written submission had already been sent in in case it was not possible to join the meeting.

Mepal Bridge Closure: Following the last meeting when notification had been received of plans to close Mepal Viaduct on the A142 for three weekends to carry out bridge repairs, the Mayor had written in support of concerns raised by County Councillor Lorna Dupre. Cllr Dupre had pointed out if alternative local diversions were blocked by flood water this would not be popular and she had called for the work to be re-scheduled. A County officer had replied to state that the council would be monitoring weather conditions and should there be any flooding issues the works would be postponed to a more suitable weekend.

New Road: The resident of New Road had written again to the County Council stating the reduction in the size of the speed cushions outside his home had had no discernible impact on the noise and vibration when heavy vehicles went over the cushions and as a result he would continue his fight to get the cushions removed. It was reported there were now plans to replace the asphalt cushions with rubber ones.

Huntingdon Road: Cllr Hay had been notified of proposed works at the Huntingdon Road roundabout to facilitate the opening of the training centre. Anglian Water had carried out their works but the traffic lights would return when other works were required.

Roadworks: The latest bulletins listing events affecting the highway had been received along

with A47 Guyhirn roadworks updates and the IHMC report for December.

**218) Correspondence**

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

**219) Reports**

Members had received a copy of a report submitted by Cllr Gowler following his attendance at a George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group meeting, substituting for Cllr Benney. Issues raised included the difficulty recruiting new receptionists and plans to recruit another partner to replace Dr Woods. The surgery averaged 300 telephone consultations a day and GPs were doing more face to face consultations. 88% of Chatteris residents had had at least their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine and 85% had received all three, notably higher than the national average and higher than the Fenland average. Cllr Gowler said he had found it a very positive meeting and, on behalf of residents, thanked everybody involved in the surgery for their work during the pandemic.

**220) Items for the Next Agenda**

No items were put forward for the next agenda.