

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 1st March 2022

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 1st March 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, F Newell and J Smith.

221) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs I Benney, A Gowler, M Petrou and I Taylor.

222) 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.

223) 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.

224) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2022 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

225) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 195) High Sheriff's Visit: The Mayor reported the visit to Chatteris had gone very well. The Clerk read out a letter of thanks from the High Sheriff Mrs Caroline Bewes who said she and her husband Nicholas had loved meeting everyone and learning more about the groups and individuals in Chatteris. They had also been grateful for the opportunity to hand out awards and recognise some of the outstanding work and volunteering roles in the community. She thanked the Clerk for organising everything so well and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for making all the introductions. She ended by stating "We simply loved it and were encouraged to see such a brilliant community in action."

Min 210) Christmas Lights: The Clerk reported the Christmas Lights committee would be seeking planning permission for the proposed changes to the outside of the Empress Swimming Pool building.

Min 185) CCTV Monitoring: The Clerk said she had found NALC guidance on using CCTV in public. Under Sec 31 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 a local council, in order to prevent or detect crime, was permitted to:

Install and maintain any equipment (including CCTV cameras);

Establish and maintain any scheme; or

Assist others to install and maintain any equipment or to establish and maintain any scheme.

The Mayor said both Whittlesey and March Town Councils were, like Chatteris, not satisfied with the CCTV scheme they financially contributed to which was operated by FDC. The Mayor suggested part of the problem was that operators in Peterborough did not know the Fenland area and only Wisbech appeared to be getting a good service.

Cllr Hay said she had brought the concerns to the attention of the FDC Crime and Safety Partnership pointing out a number of incidents in Chatteris had been recorded but had resulted in just one arrest. She had warned that Chatteris Town Council was considering if the scheme represented value for money.

Cllr Haggata said it appeared there were problems at the monitoring centre but Cllr Smith said on previous visits to the base it appeared the operators were giving the same attention to all towns. Councillors queried if incidents were being picked up and acted upon by the police. It was suggested perhaps the police were having problems getting to Peterborough to view the CCTV footage. Cllr Haggata said the idea of the system was to catch people while they were committing crimes, not later.

It was agreed to ask Mr Aaron Locks to attend a meeting of the Council to answer Councillors' concerns.

226) Police Matters

Members had received a copy of the confidential minutes of the online police meeting between Sgt Joe Puntton and local council chairmen (including the Mayor) held on the 10th February 2022.

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

No CCTV update had been received but members had a copy of the FDC, Street Scene and Section 106 Updates (**copy attached**).

Cllr Murphy said the new play areas at Larham Way and Huntingdon Road were nearly complete and it was hoped the work would be finished within the next couple of weeks.

The Senior Health Officer at FDC had informed the Clerk that the owner of 4 Market Hill had managed to gain entry to the premises and had now cleared the flies. Apparently there was nothing of note in the premises.

The Street Scene officer, Mrs Dawn Rae, had looked again at cars parked in Furrowfields Car Park going over the time limit, in particular one man's vehicle collection. She pointed out FDC only had powers to remove abandoned vehicles and these vehicles were taxed and MOT'd. Although the car park had a 24 hour parking limit at present she had no enforcement powers to deal with this. In addition she suggested the cars caused more issues when they were parked on the road. Mrs Rae had persuaded the owner to move the vehicles away from

the Covid testing site and remove them when the car park was likely to be busy, for example on Festival weekend.

Cllr Murphy was concerned that the resident was being allowed to use a public car park instead of getting business premises.

(Cllr Carney joined the meeting at this point).

228) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 22nd February 2022 showing expenditure of £224,944.20 and income of £222,522.35 (included 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.

229) Financial Review

Members had before them the Financial Review for 2022.

[1] The purpose of the report was to review the Council's financial activities, as required to be undertaken annually under the Financial Regulations Clause 1.5, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement and in preparation for the 2021/22 audit.

[2] Financial Regulations

Members were reminded that the Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved by resolution at the February 2019 meeting and revised regulations were published. (Min 221). The Town Council had adopted Capalc/Nalc's Model Financial Regulations – (The England updated version May 2016). Since then, Capalc/Nalc had revised and published a 2019 Model with minor changes.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she was in the process of reviewing the Financial Regulations and would draft any amendments for approval at April's Full Council meeting.

[3] Risk Management

Members were reminded that The Council approved a Risk Management Policy in August 2002 and revised wording was approved in February 2014 (**Appendix A**).

[4] Insurances

Members were reminded that they had agreed to a long-term agreement policy of 3 years at the 4th February 2020 Council meeting (Min 211).

Members were advised that the renewal policy premium of £1,923.65 (which included a standard £50.00 admin fee) had been received.

The premium had increased by 3% i.e., £54.57 and was based on the discounted long-term agreement to be automatically renewed on the 1st April 2022.

[5] Protection of Assets

A copy of the Council's Register of Assets is attached (**Appendix B**).

Members were reminded, that the value of assets were not contained in the balance sheet they were just listed as a memorandum item in the supporting information, it had been discussed and agreed with the internal auditor that it was not necessary to pay a District Valuer for a re-valuation of any assets unless the Council intended to sell the assets.

The notional value of the Council Building, street furniture and office equipment and contents were updated annually for insurance purposes and this would suffice.

[6] Internal Controls

Members were reminded that the new Financial Regulations 2019 approved under resolution by Members at the February Council meeting (Min 221) included everything that was appended in the Internal Controls (**Appendix C**). It was therefore no longer necessary for it to be included as a separate appendix in the Financial Regulations. The Internal Controls were reviewed every year under the Financial review.

Appendix C had been revised due to the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits & standing orders for process of payments. Under the Financial Regulations this approval should be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. This renewal was approved at the February 2019 full council meeting (Min 222).

Members were advised that The Financial Regulations, the Internal Controls and the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits & standing orders for process of payments were in the process of being reviewed for approval at April 2022 full council meeting.

[7] Internal Audit

Members were reminded that under current regulations, an annual review of effectiveness of internal audit was no longer required. It was, however, still necessary to re-appoint an Internal Auditor annually. Members were advised that the current Auditor, Mark Saunders, had confirmed that he was willing to carry out the internal audit for 2021/22 for a fee of £350, an increase of £50 from last year.

The Financial Officer advised Members that this was the first increase for Internal Audit fees for 6 years.

[8] Investments

Members were advised that the Council's Register of Investments, including yields, was attached at **Appendix D**.

Members were reminded that at the full council meeting held on June 2021 (Min 34) Members of the Council considered and **approved** reinvestment of £85,000 with Nationwide Building Society at 0.30% fixed for 1 year.

Members also agreed to defer reinvest of the £85,000 that was held in Lloyds Bank and it was approved that it should be transferred into Barclays instant access account UFN.

[9] Risk Assessment

Members were advised that risk assessments were carried out by the Clerk on a needs basis for all events organised by the Town Council.

[10] It was RESOLVED that: -

The Financial review be noted and approved;

[i] the Council's Risk Management Policy (Appendix A) be noted and approved;

[ii] the Register of Assets (Appendix B) be noted and approved;

[iii] the Internal Controls (Appendix C) be noted & approved;

[iv] Mark Saunders be offered re-engagement as Internal Auditor for the 2021/22 audit at a rate of £350.00

[v] the updated Register of Investments (Appendix D) be noted and approved.

229) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll March 22	1,325.48
Clerk	Payroll March 22	1,845.34
Pension Fund	Payroll March 22	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll March 22	996.01
All Seasons Mums & Toddlers	CTC Grant	572.00
Xmas Lights	CTC Grant	1,301.00
Asbestos Surveys & Advisory	Barclays Bank Survey Growing Fenland	1,320.00
Zen Internet	Summer Festival Domain name renewal	11.99
Zen Internet	Feb-Mar Website & Domain name renewal CTC	26.98
Chatteris Museum	Reim Packing materials	120.98
Viking	Stationary	182.35
Viking	Stationary	92.34
Chatteris In Bloom	Watering service Reim from grant	2,415.00
Onecom	February phone bill	68.84

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Onecom	January phone bill	70.10
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Town Crier costume	44.33
RJ Warren	Gardening Services	727.50
RJ Warren	Clear area Railway line	384.00
RJ Warren	Tree Works	408.00
All Seasons Mums & Toddlers	Grant for equipment	428.00
F/O	Reim Petty Cash	70.00
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	8.50
Total		13,544.95

230) To Agree Quotation for Grounds Maintenance Contract 2022/23

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had received quotations from the gardening contractor for the 2022/23 ground maintenance services in Chatteris and Little Acre Pocket Park. Members were advised that the costs to provide these services for 22/23 were listed below: -

Grounds maintenance per annum £7,420.44 to be paid in 12 monthly instalments of £618.37. The last two years costs were £7,275 per annum paid in monthly instalments of £606.25. This was an annual increase of £145.44.

Little Acre Pocket Park maintenance per annum £881.28 to be paid in 12 monthly instalments of £73.44. Any Additional cuts would be at £110.16 per cut. The last two years costs were £864.00 per annum and were paid in 12 monthly instalments of £72.00. Any additional cuts were £108.00 per cut. This was an annual increase of £17.28.

The Financial Officer advised Members that the current gardening contractor had always delivered an excellent service to the CTC and the Clerk was more than happy with the standard of work and support that they had provided.

It was **recommended** that Members approved the renewal quotations for 22/23 as a rolling contract.

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

231) To Consider Quotations and Agree Contractor for Footpath Extension

The Clerk had obtained three quotations for the extension of the made up path along the Old Railway Line Footpath and Bridleway as far as the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park and the repair of the existing footpath.

The original quotations had been discussed at the Leisure Working Group meeting. They were as follows:

Contractor A £11,780; Contractor B £21,437; Contractor C £24,064 plus VAT.

The Clerk was concerned the cheaper quotations were using inferior materials and the footpath would not last as long as the existing footpaths. Members had been prepared to go with the most expensive quote as the contractors had a proven record having installed the footpath at the Pocket Park.

However the Clerk and the Financial Officer had met with Contractor C and had asked if his price could be lowered and he had sent back a new quotation of £17,540 plus VAT. Members asked why the price was lower and the Clerk explained the original quote was a year old and materials were now cheaper; in addition she had confirmed the spoil did not have to be removed from site and could be spread along either side of the footpath.

Members **agreed** to accept the quotation of £17,540 plus VAT from Contractor C and requested the work go ahead as soon as possible.

232) To Consider Renewing Membership of CAPALC

Members had received a copy of the letter and accompanying paperwork from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (Capalc) asking Chatteris Town Council to consider renewing its membership for 2022-2023. The letter stated fees had increased by an average of only 2% to help meet inflation. The fee was based on the Council's electorate. A leaflet listed the benefits of membership, including access to the National Association of Local Councils.

The Financial Officer said the Council had used Capalc's services in the past year and was very likely to do so again in the near future due to the Growing Fenland project.

Members **agreed** the Council should renew its membership of Capalc at a cost of £1,273.47 and should also continue to be a part of the Data Protection Officer Membership Scheme at a cost of £50.

233) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 22nd February (**copy attached**). Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to i) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered four further applications.

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

- a) Noted (approved original plan)
- b) Noted (approved original plan)
- c) Support
- d) Support

- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Support
- l) Support
- m) Support

The Clerk reported that applications a) and b), the conversion of the Former Coach House, London Road, to a 2-storey, 3-bed dwelling, would be considered by FDC's planning committee on Wednesday 9th March 2022 and the recommendation was to refuse. The Council had been invited to send someone to speak about the applications at the meeting.

234) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk said there was little to report as the Council's solicitor had been on holiday and apart from notifying the Council that she had received more paperwork from the vendors she had no update. The Financial Officer had attempted to contact her that day without success.

The Clerk was able to report that the planning application for the extension and conversion of 14 Church Lane, had been granted planning permission, subject to one condition, despite an officer recommendation to refuse. The condition was that the Council should enter into a unilateral agreement that the Museum would not be left homeless if the purchase of 2 Park Street did not go ahead. The Clerk had drawn up an agreement and was now waiting to hear from the planning officer if it was acceptable.

Cllr Murphy said he did report to the planning committee that the museum was getting packed up so it was ready to move when the new building was complete.

235) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 15th February 2022 (**copy attached**).

L63) Entrance signs: Cllr Carney had received information about signs which would be acceptable from the Highways officer and working on the guidance had produced four possible signs for members' comments. It was agreed the black and white sign was the most striking and the suggested wording on the sign was agreed with a few minor amendments for capital letters. Across the bottom of the sign there would be the usual symbols for toilets, petrol stations, museum, accommodation and places to eat. The sign would read:

“Welcome to Chatteris

Historic Fenland Town Home to:

The Renowned Christmas Lights
Anglia in Bloom Gold Winners
Farming & Engineering Excellence”
Cllr Carney was congratulated on his designs.

L64) Armed Forces Covenant Pledges: Members agreed that the following pledges should be adopted:

2.1 We recognise the value of serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families; and will aim to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by seeking to:

- Appoint an **Armed Forces Champion**, who is a member of the Royal British Legion, to promote support for the Armed Forces community.
- Promote the fact that we are an **Armed Forces-friendly Council**, to our members and wider public; celebrating the work of the Armed Forces and encouraging positive interaction between them and members of the public; maintaining our War Memorial.
- Work with the Royal British Legion to support the Commonwealth War Graves Commission with the upkeep of war graves.
- Find out where the nearest Royal British Legion branch is, promote it and support events.
- Support **Military Veterans**; recognising that they are a valued part of our community; facilitating and encouraging their participation in civic and community events; providing a link to the Veterans Gateway on our website; encouraging local businesses to support the employment of veterans.
- Encourage support for the **Reserves Forces**; encouraging local businesses to support the employment of Reservists.
- Find our nearest cadet detachments; promote and encourage support for, and membership of, local cadet units.
- Support and promote support for **Armed Forces Events** such as local Breakfast Clubs, Coffee Mornings, Armed Forces Day/Week, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities.
- Support and promote support for **Armed Forces Charities**.
- 2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and on our website.

L65) Old Railway Line Walk: The joint walk along the Old Railway Line was now planned for the 8th May and Cllrs Smith, Carney and Gowler had agreed to be involved. The Clerk extended an invitation to the tree planting for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee by the cubs and members of FLAPP on Saturday 5th March.

L66) Festival: It had been agreed that the Festival Prince and Princess would be chosen ahead of the celebrations on the 2nd June but they would be crowned on that day. The children would be contacted through their schools and would be invited to say why they wished to be the Festival Prince or Princess.

L67) Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Smith reported that the caterpillar trail was due to be created with the assistance Cllr's Ashley's husband on the 28th March. FDC Open Spaces Manager Mr Simon Bell was happy with the design (the pebbles to be laid in a concrete bed at ground level) and offered to produce a sign to go on the existing signboard explaining the significance of the trail.

L68) Annual Town Meeting: The suggested date of the Annual Town Meeting had been changed to Friday 29th April 2022 at the King Edward Centre. The planned programme was agreed.

L70) Map: Members **agreed** that a map of Chatteris should be purchased at a cost of £269 plus VAT.

L71) Date of Next Meeting: It was agreed to alter this to Monday 21st March 2022.

236) High Street Arts Project

Mr Richard Savage had sent details of his plans for an art project to get people back to the High Street. The idea was for people to make and/or decorate shopping bags. He was also considering asking businesses to add business cards, vouchers, offers or advertising. He was even considering a mini trade show. Mr Savage asked if the Council could get behind it in some way. Cllr Smith had suggested supplying some town guides for the bags and publicising the project but she correctly pointed out that a mini trade fair should be organised by the businesses themselves. Cllr Hay had the idea of asking FDC Golden Age to provide information leaflets from their partners on help available for the elderly.

Members agreed the Council would be to promote the event but could not commit to anything further, particularly in view of the tight time frame.

237) Youth Work Updates

The Mayor and the Clerk had continued to attend meetings of the Chatteris Focus on Youth Group. The group was now looking at two possible venues for a permanent youth club. In the meantime the outreach work by Youths of Fenland was going well, particularly since they started giving the youngsters hot chocolate. The Clerk had received four reports on progress from Youths of Fenland.

The last junior youth club to be run by Joe Papworth-Moore would be held on 10th March. The Council expressed thanks to Joe for running the youth club. The Financial Officer said it had been difficult to get children back after Coved. Joe would be inviting Debbie from Youths of Fenland along to the final meeting so she could meet the children ready to take over after the Easter holidays.

238) Boundary Commission Briefing

Members had received an invitation from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and FDC to a virtual briefing on the current electoral review of Fenland. The 15 minute presentation on the 16th March would be followed by a question and answer session.

239) Traffic Issues

Burnsfield Street: The Mayor reported that the fire engine and ambulances had had difficulties getting down Burnsfield Street at the weekend due to all the parked cars. She had reported the matter to the police who had said they had visited during the day when there did not appear to be a problem. She had suggested they visit during the evening. Cllr Murphy said it was a long running problem.

Closures: The Council had received notification of the traffic order which closed London Road between the 14th and 18th February.

It had also received notification that the planned works at Mepal Viaduct from 25th to 28th February would not be going ahead due to potential flood events and information about five weekends of closures for roadworks as part of the improvement of the A47 Guyhirn roundabout.

New Road: The Council had been copied in to further correspondence between the New Road resident complaining about the speed cushions outside his home and Highways. Highways had agreed to remove the asphalt speed cushion and replace it with a bolt down cushion. The resident had asked for serious consideration to be given to the location of the new cushions as they should be 8m from the nearest dwelling.

Report: The IHMC report for January had been received.

240) Correspondence

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

The Clerk asked members if they had any ideas how to mark the achievement of Chatteris boxer Jordan Gill who had won the European Featherweight Championship at the weekend. It was agreed to initially send a letter of congratulations from the Council.

241) Reports

There were no reports.

242) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

