



Chatteris Town Council

Annual Report

Year To April 2022

This is the first annual report for three years because Covid -19 meant the inevitable cancellation of annual town meetings.

The pandemic has, of course, impacted on the Council's work – most notably the Midsummer Festival – but the Council has soldiered on regardless thanks in part to new technology, especially the wonders of Zoom.

From May last year the Council has been forced to meet in person even though restrictions were originally still in place. In an attempt to keep members safe most meetings have been held at the King Edward Centre as the Council Chambers were too cramped but the Council has now returned to the Chambers.

It has been an exciting time for the Council as it was invited to apply for £1million worth of funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and, thanks to assistance from Fenland District Council, the Council was delighted when that bid was successful. The Council, in particular its officers, have been busy working on two projects - the Town Centre Renaissance Fund and the Museum and Community Space Project. The former has seen street furniture and lampposts in the centre of the town refurbished and grants offered to town centre businesses to improve the appearance of their buildings. The latter will see the museum move into the former Barclays Bank, which will be renovated for the purpose, and new community space and residential accommodation created at the Town Council's premises 14 Church Lane. There will be more on both of those projects during the presentation later in the meeting.

The Council has also:

- a) Funded a junior youth club and outreach work with older youths.
- b) Funded a Christmas dinner with entertainment for Senior Citizens.
- c) Applied for an LHI fund grant to reduce the speed limit and improve road safety in Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces.
- d) Organised, with FDC, a scaled down Midsummer Festival which included a very popular colour fun run and dog show.
- e) Successfully organised four Summer Fun shows for children in August.

- f) Agreed to extend the made-up surface along the Old Railway Line Footpath and Bridleway.
- g) Met with representatives of the George Clare Doctors' Surgery to discuss concerns.
- h) Agreed to sign an Armed Forces Covenant.
- i) Financially supported Chatteris In Bloom when they took part in Anglia In Bloom for the first time.
- j) Taken on new allotments at Queensway.
- k) Given grants to the Christmas Lights Committee, In Bloom and other organisations in the town.
- l) Put forward a wish list for Chatteris as part of the Place Shaping Project.
- m) Tried (unsuccessfully) to launch a new monthly bus service to Peterborough.
- n) Taken over traffic management duties for the Remembrance Sunday parade.
- o) Sent a letter of condolence to Buckingham Palace following the death of HRH Prince Philip.
- p) Helped local residents with issues, including traffic matters.
- q) Put forward suggestions where Cherry trees, donated by the Japanese Government, could be planted.
- r) Called for the re-opening of the Chatteris Community Hub at the library.
- s) Put forward nominations for the Pride in Fenland awards.

The Council

Cllr Linda Ashley was re-elected Mayor for a third term in May 2021. Unfortunately Cllr Ashley's term of office has been impacted by Covid but she has represented the Town whenever she was able and in particular has supported the Royal British Legion at their events and accompanied the High Sheriff on her visit to Chatteris. She nominated local organisations and companies for a High Sheriff Award.

Cllr Ian Benney has served as Deputy Mayor throughout Cllr Ashley's term as Mayor and has often accompanied Cllr Ashley on official duties.

There have been 12 meetings of the full council and shown below is the number of meetings Councillors have attended (Covid has impacted on attendances). Many members have also attended monthly meetings of the planning and the leisure working groups and councillors have represented the Council on outside bodies.

L Ashley	12	I Benney	10
J Carney	4	A Charrier	5
A Gowler	10	W Haggata	11
A Hay	11	P Murphy	12
F Newell	9	M Petrou	7
J Smith	10	I Taylor	6

Planning: The Council's planning working group, chaired by Cllr Haggata, made recommendations on planning applications and these were ratified by the full council. In total the Council made recommendations on 119 new and revised planning applications to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Leisure: The Leisure Working Group, chaired by Cllr Smith, has been very busy.

Speakers at the meetings included:

Adam Garford and Hayley Wynn on the work of Think Communities - the Clerk is now working with the officers on new signs for the Old Railway Line footpath;

Rosemarie and Abraham Coetzer, Rights of Way Volunteers for Chatteris;

Tommy Kelly, Armed Forces Covenant Officer – the group has been working with Mr Kelly on pledges for a Covenant the Town Council has agreed to sign;

Members also met with representatives of the Middle Level Commissioners to discuss future plans for moorings on the Forty Foot river.

The group also discussed:

Plans to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee;

Progress at the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park and the Old Railway Line footpath including the official opening of the park and tree planting events which took place in November and march with the help of the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park and the cubs;

The creation of the Caterpillar Trail display as a memorial to the pandemic;

Updates from Fenland District Council on open space and recreation grounds maintenance and updates from the Clerk on the Renaissance Project;

New entrance signs for the town;

Plans for the annual town meeting;

The Fenland Accessibility Study and cycle routes.

Special thanks must go to Mr Tony Salmons and family for all the tree planting they have undertaken, at their own expense, along the Old Railway Line.

Open Forum: The Town Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month and the first 15 minutes are an Open Forum for members of the public to raise issues. Those attending the Open Forum included:

Two residents of Willey Terrace requesting a reduction in the speed limit;

A girl guide asking for Wenny Meadow to be saved from development;

A resident calling for the Town Council to change its decision to support the Wenny Meadow development.

Police: The Mayor has attended the monthly meetings for Council Chairmen organised by the police. The confidential meetings give updates on police work and Cllr Ashley has been able to raise matters of concern initially with Sgt Richard Lugg and then with his successor Sgt Joe Punton. New neighbourhood police officer Pc Dave Lawrence attended a Council meeting.

Officers: The Council continues to employ two part-time members of staff, the Clerk and the Financial Office, and contractors carry out grass cutting, maintenance work, etc.

The Clerk and the Financial Officer found themselves working extra hours on the Growing Fenland project and will almost certainly continue to do so in the year ahead.

The Clerk carried out the wishes of the Council, administered the allotments, helped to organise the scaled-down Midsummer Festival, organised the Summer Fun and Welcome Back events, oversaw work on the pocket park, recorded meetings, acted as an intermediary

between councils, was instrumental in the creation of the Chatteris Focus on Youth group, organised Zoom meetings, helped to organise the Remembrance Parade and passed on residents' concerns to the relevant authorities. The Clerk was twice referred to the Information Commissioners Office who found there was no case to answer on either complaint.

The Financial Officer prepared the final accounts and annual governance statement for the annual audit which was passed with no issues raised. She also administered the accounts as per the financial regulations, advised on the precept, prepared the budget, undertook a financial review, organised contracts and re-invested the Council's assets. The Financial Officer also organised the Christmas meal for Over 70s in the town.

For more information on the Council visit the website www.chatteriscouncil.info

Joanna Melton
Town Clerk
April 2022