

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

2305

1 of 9

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 1) Election of Mayor

Cllr Taylor proposed Cllr Ashley be re-elected Mayor for a fourth year; seconded by Cllr Newell. It was agreed the pandemic had continued to impact on the role of Mayor hence the nomination for a further term of office. Members unanimously agreed Cllr Ashley should continue as Mayor for a fourth year.

Cllr Ashley thanked members for their nomination and gratefully accepted the role as she agreed she had been unable to enjoy to the full extent the position of Mayor. She said she was keen to see the museum move to its new home and re-open within her term of office.

(Cllr Carney joined the meeting)

### 2) Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Ashley said Cllr Benney no longer wished to continue as Deputy Mayor and nominated Cllr Hay; seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by all. Cllr Hay was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.

### 3) Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4) Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Petrou and Smith sent apologies for absence. Cllrs Benney and Murphy sent apologies they would be late as they were attending another meeting.

### 5) Appointments to Outside Bodies & Election of Working Groups

Members agreed to represent the Town Council on outside bodies as follows:

King Edward Centre Trustees – Cllrs Ashley and Newell

Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Benney (to be confirmed), Carney and Gowler

Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay  
Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllrs Murphy and Smith (to be confirmed)  
Isle of Ely Blind Society – Cllr Murphy (to be confirmed)  
Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley, Hay and Newell  
Midsummer Festival – Cllrs Ashley and Charrier  
Transport Committee – Cllrs Haggata and Newell  
Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Newell and Smith (to be confirmed)  
Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay (Cllr Smith as substitute)

Cllr Carney said he was prepared to serve as a Feoffee Charity trustee if Cllr Smith was unable to continue.

Members also said they were willing to serve on the working groups as follows:

Leisure and General Purposes: Cllrs Ashley, Benney, Carney, Charrier, Hay, Newell and Smith.

Planning: Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Gowler, Haggata, Newell and Smith.

#### **6) To Approve Mayor's Allowance**

Members were reminded that at the January 2022 Council meeting Members had agreed the Mayors Allowance budget of £1,550 as part of the final 22/23 budget. At the May meeting it was required to confirm the previously agreed Mayor's budget for the newly elected Mayor.

#### **7) Open Forum**

There were no members of the public present. A representative of the press was welcomed to the meeting. It was agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

#### **8) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record. Members had also received a copy of the draft minutes of the Annual Town Meeting for their perusal.

#### **9) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Min 254) Youth Services: Youths of Fenland had confirmed the Wednesday youth sessions would start on the 27<sup>th</sup> April and promised to send in monthly reports. Connections Bus said they would be in touch when they were able to offer the youth bus during term time and said the summer holiday programme had spaces.

Min 258) Bus services: Cllr Hay said she was still waiting for information on the V2 bus service.

Min 258) High Street bench: It was reported that the bench in the High Street on Crown land had been removed for renovation. It was agreed to ask FDC if permission had ever been

sought for the bench and councillors were concerned that allowing such a bench could set a precedent.

Min 259) Annual Town Meeting: The meeting date had been moved to 28<sup>th</sup> April.

## 10) Police Matters

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

### “Local Police

Invitation from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Darryl Preston, for councillors to join a virtual roundtable meeting. The meeting for Fenland and East Cambridgeshire will take place on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June from 6pm to 7.30pm.

Email from the new chairman of Crimestoppers for Cambridgeshire, Mr Colin Dobbins, seeking volunteers to serve on a Crimestoppers committee for Fenland.

### Neighbourhood Alert

6/4/22: Information about the dangers of remote scams and how to protect yourself.

11/4/22: Notification that 14 officers from Cambridgeshire’s Neighbourhood Support Team have been awarded with commendations for their contributions to the success of disrupting organised crime groups.

25 & 28/4/22: Latest update from Neighbourhood Watch and an invitation to complete an insights survey.”

The Mayor said she had a police liaison meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> May and would be raising several issues. Cllr Gowler asked her to mention the concerns about drug dealing in Huntingdon Road which were raised at the Annual Town Meeting.

Cllr Gowler said during the Annual Town Meeting he had called the police having witnessed youths jumping on the roof of the garages at the top of Horsegate Gardens. Cllr Hay said she had received complaints about the actions of youths in the area which included throwing stones on to the footpath. Those complaints had also been reported to the police by the Mayor.

Councillors discussed the parking problems in Burnsfield Street which had been raised on social media. Parking problems near Glebelands School were also mentioned and it was agreed civil parking enforcement was needed.

## 11) FDC, Street Scene, CCTV & Section 106 Updates

Members had a copy of the FDC and Street Scene Updates (**copy attached**).

The Mayor reported that the tap at the cemetery had been repaired and problems with dog fouling in Meeks Cemetery had been reported to the Street Scene officer. It was reported there was also problems with dog fouling near Glebelands School.

(Cllr Murphy joined the meeting)

## 12) Accounts for Payment

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

Barclays	Bank Charges Apr 22	8.50
R J Warren	Gardening Services	883.64
The Firefighters Charity	Grant	300.00
Cambs CC	Summer Reading Challenge Grant	350.00
Balfour Beatty	Xmas Lights electrical testing	240.00
Citizens Advice Rural	Face to Face service	1,374.48
M Gillett	Materials & labour re: side door canopy & painting	95.75
CfCorporate	Quarterly lease for photocopier	247.20
D Stimson	Window Cleaner Council offices	180.00
Alan Simpson	labour/materials re new tap at allotments	30.00
British Gas	Electricity Bill	212.36
Came & Company	Museum Insurance	890.07
Zen Internet	May-June Website	11.99
Zen Internet	Apr-May Website	11.99
Onecom	April Phone bill	75.40
Running Imp	Engraving for Trophies for Summer Festival	3.46
Clerk	Reim. Re: Trophies for Summer Festival	314.38
C Day	Materials & Labour new door council offices	280.00
Wave	LHS Allotments water bill	120.27
Wave	RHS Allotments water bill	106.78
Wave	Council offices water bill	46.35
Clerk	Payroll May	1,854.75
Financial Officer	Payroll May	1,336.01
HMRC	Payroll May	1,079.82
Cambs Pensions	Payroll May	1,146.00
Clerk	Reim. Zoom & Sundries re Summer Fest	56.17
Financial Officer	Petty cash Reim.	42.28
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,297.65</b>

**13) Consideration and Approval of Annual Governance Statement Part 1 (AGAR 2021/22)**

Members had before them Section 1 of the Agar 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (**attached**).

The Financial Officer reminded Members that the Annual Governance Statement set out the assurances that Members were required to attest to in Section 1 of the AGAR 2021/22, together with qualification of each section to enable the Council to provide the required assurance over the signatures of the Mayor and the Clerk.

This was to be considered and approved in advance of the Accounting Statements (section 2 of the AGAR) and minuted accordingly. The paragraph numbers and the headings in bold corresponded to the individual parts of the Governance Statement contained in the 2021/22AGAR.

It was **Resolved** that: -

The Annual Governance Statement as detailed be considered and approved by the Members as a whole for signature by the Mayor and the Clerk prior to the approval of the Accounting Statements.

**14) Approval of the Accounting Statements (Section 2 Agar 2021/22) and the Annual Return with amendments**

**[1] Introduction**

Members had before them the Annual Return report and Accounting Statements (Section 2 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021/22) for Member's consideration and approval.

The Accounting Statements required approval after the Annual Governance Statement had been approved and both to be minuted accordingly.

**[2] Type of Audit**

Members were informed that the Council's accounts for 2021/22 attracted an Intermediate Level 4 Review audit as the total income & the total expenditure for 2021/22 exceeded £200,000.

**[3] Annual Governance (See Separately under Agenda Item No 13)**

This was considered and approved in advance of the Accounting Statements.

**[4] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2021/22)**

Members were advised that Financial Officer was required to certify and sign the document in advance of the Council meeting. The Mayor was required to sign the document after approval by Council. As required the Accounting Statement was approved after the approval of the Annual Governance Statement. The minute reference has been recorded for both accordingly.

**[5] Statement of Accounts**

**The detailed Statement of Accounts was enclosed (Balance Sheet).**

Members were asked to consider approval of the reports, balance sheet, and bank reconciliation as detailed in the Annual Return.

[6] It was **Resolved** that: -

[i] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2021/22) certified by the Financial Officer and endorsed by the Mayor be approved.

ii] The detailed accounts, bank reconciliation and analyses of the Annual Return for 2021/22, as submitted be noted and approved.

(Cllr Benney joined the meeting)

### 15) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (**copy attached**). (Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest as members of FDC's planning committee).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to d) and f), considered one further application and heard more information about plan e).

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

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Revision Noted
- d) Support
- e) Support the roller shutters as essential for security but would prefer to see a different form of cladding.
- f) Support
- g) Noted

### 16) Growing Fenland Project Update

There was little further to report as information was still required from the seller of the freehold for 2 Park Street before the sale could be completed but there did appear to be movement with an application received at land registry.

The good news was that Listed Building consent had been granted for 2 Park Street, albeit with many conditions.

Cllr Benney said the architect was still awaiting a decision notice for 14 Church Lane. The Clerk said she had submitted the requested unilateral agreement several weeks ago but had heard nothing since. Cllr Benney agreed to follow this up.

### 17) To Agree Meeting Dates

The following dates were agreed upon for full council meetings in 2022/23:

Tuesdays 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 7<sup>th</sup> March and 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### 17) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

The Vice-Chairman of the group, Cllr Charrier, presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (**copy attached**).

L86) FACT Bus services: Cllr Charrier asked for comments on the ideas she put forward for possible bus services (Cllr Carney declared an interest). Councillors asked if the bus service to Cambridge would be monthly or if it would only be when there were special events on. Cllr Charrier confirmed the idea was to run it monthly but to hopefully capture the main events which could be publicised. Cllr Haggata said it would be good if the bus could run in the evenings so it could be used for theatre trips, etc. and it was also suggested it would be helpful if the bus picked people up from Manea train station. It was agreed this would be the last idea put forward and if it did not work the money for the bus should go back to Tesco's.

L84) Old Railway Line Walk: The walk planned for the 8<sup>th</sup> May had been cancelled as Somersham had not been in contact. It was hoped it might be possible to arrange a walk on a different date. Cllr Hay suggested approaching the new administration at Somersham after the elections.

### 18) War Memorial Railings E-mail

The secretary of Chatteris RBL had e-mailed to say the group had discussed the state of the railings around the war memorial and had decided they were in desperate need of smartening up, with a re-paint as the bare minimum. The e-mail queried if FDC were responsible for the general maintenance of the war memorial and asked the Town Council to enquire if the work could be carried out. The RBL were also making enquiries but would need additional funding.

Cllr Murphy said he would make enquiries at FDC and the Financial Officer said there was a small sum of money left in the Renaissance Fund which could possibly be re-directed to the project.

### 19) Traffic Issues

Transport Strategy: Notification had been received from the County Council that parish/town councils would shortly be consulted on draft transport strategies for Fenland and Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire's Active Transport strategy.

Traffic Orders: Notification had been received of temporary traffic order applications to:

- a) close the A141 Fenland Way between 8pm and 6am from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June for road repairs;

- b) close London Road just north of Westbourne Road 24/7 from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July for a new connection.

Diversions were planned for both routes.

In addition the temporary order to close Stocking Drove for new water connection works between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May had been granted.

Road Re-Surfacing Works: The Clerk had been notified that residents of Windsor Close, Green Park, Burnsfield Street, Fairview Gardens, Crescent, Avenue and Drive would receive letters about road repairs just before works began,

Exhibition: Information received about of an online virtual exhibition room to provide information about the Ouse Washes Middle Level Barrier bank raising works.

Reports: The latest Highways events diary had been received, as had the IHMC incident report for March (which included the offer of training for councillors on how to use the one.network map) and information about planned roadworks and events in Chatteris in April and May.

Viaduct: Members were reminded the Mepal viaduct would close for repairs on three weekends in May. Cllr Carney said buses would be diverted and there would be a new timetable.

## 20) Correspondence

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

Cllr Benney had sent an email requesting a discussion on funding the upcoming parish poll which had been demanded by 31 people at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Financial Officer confirmed there was no budget for a poll, only for an election. In 2019 the Council paid £7,034.03 for an election on two wards and that had been a shared cost with FDC. It had been claimed in the press that the Council had suggested the cost of the poll would be £13,500 but that figure had been put forward by a member of the public. It was impossible to calculate the cost but the Clerk pointed out there would be the cost of hiring polling stations, manning stations, ballot papers, etc. FDC were responsible for organising the poll but would bill the Town Council.

It had been suggested on social media that the Council should have budgeted for a poll but Cllr Newell confirmed that in all her time as a councillor (over 40 years) there had never been a poll and the Clerk pointed out it was impossible to budget when you had no idea of the likely cost.

Councillors discussed various ways to cover the costs of the poll. They considered cutting grants to organisations such as Chatteris Christmas Lights, Chatteris In Bloom and the King Edward Centre but decided this was unfair as it could jeopardise the organisations and would impact on all the volunteers who worked so hard to make Chatteris a good place to live.

They decided the only option was to take the money out of reserves in the current financial year and unfortunately to put up the Council tax the following year. They expressed disappointment at having to do this especially as it would impact on the elderly and families at a financially challenging time but agreed they had no option as the poll had been demanded by 31 electors despite advice that this would impact on all electors in Chatteris.

Cllrs Benney and Murphy took no part in the following:

It was pointed out the poll, on the question “Would you like Wenny Meadow to be designated as a local green space and protected from development?”, was on a matter which could only be decided by Fenland District Council and it was not binding. It was unlikely to influence the emerging Local Plan.

Members had been copied in to a letter sent to the Mayor expressing disappointment that the Mayor had “accused” the Save Wenny Meadow Group of misleading the public about which bits of “Wenny Meadow” would and would not be built on. The letter claimed a leaflet asking people to object to the planning application showed the 93 homes and the open space. However the Mayor pointed out that the leaflet failed to state that a large part of “Wenny Meadow” would not be built on and would be preserved as public open space.

## **21) Reports**

There were no reports.

## **22) Items for the Next Agenda**

No items were put forward for the next agenda.