

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022

2322

1 of 9

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 45) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Carney, Petrou and Taylor and the Financial Officer. Cllr Benney apologised that he would be late.

### 46) 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 and Cllr Hay declared an interest in planning application F/YR22/0789/F.

### 47) Open Forum

Four members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and indicated a wish to speak in Open Forum.

The first resident had posted concerns on line and had taken up an invitation to attend the meeting. He said he believed there was insufficient information coming from the Town Council.

He also spoke about nuisance youths, explaining he was a retired police officer and criticising policing in Fenland as the emphasis was on Wisbech and March and there were difficulties in reporting crimes. He said the only way to resolve the problem of nuisance youths was permanent policing.

The resident also spoke about the dangers of using the junction of New Road with the A142 as vision to the right was obscured by vegetation. He suggested speed cameras should be used to reduce the speed on the A142 to 40mph and the shrubbery should be removed. He also spoke of a similar problem at the junction of Clare Street and Huntingdon Road and said the Council should be forcing action to be taken.

Cllr Gowler said the problems with the junctions had been continually reported to the County Council while the Mayor said she had regular meetings with the police sergeant who was well aware of the issues with the youths and action was being taken. She assured the resident that two police officers were assigned to Chatteris and the Council had regular confidential

reports from the police. Cllr Hay urged people to continue to report any problems to the police even though the Council would always take issues to the constabulary. She also said the Town Council's hands were tied on highways matters but they would continue to report any issues.

On the suggestion that the Council was secretive, Cllr Smith said all the council minutes were available on line and if anyone wished to receive a printed copy the library would be happy to help.

The next resident reported problems with noise and nuisance late at night at Furrowfields car park. He was assured that the CCTV cameras picked up certain problems although they could not detect noise. The Clerk asked if the Safety Partnership at Fenland District Council was aware of the problems as they had monitored the area and come up with solutions in the past. Cllr Smith suggested keeping a record of what was happening.

The landlord of the Sportsman reported a problem with nitrous canisters in the car park and requested a visit from the police.

His main reason for attending the meeting was to discuss problems with the changing rooms at the Sportsman. Costs had increased, particularly the insurance, and although he did not want to upset the football team the costs were a hard pill to swallow. He asked for advice on the best way forward.

Cllr Hay explained that the Sportsman had to provide the changing rooms, which belonged to them, hence the need for insurance.

The Mayor suggested the landlord should speak to the Chairman of the football club about their plans for the future.

The last speaker spoke about the Parish Poll on the question "Would you like Wenny Meadow to be designated as a local green space and protected from development". He pointed out 996 people voted in favour and only 83 against and the only criteria for designation was that the site was "demonstrably special".

He said the fact that one third of Wenny Meadow had been allocated as Local Green Space in the draft version of the Local Plan went to show it was not too late to change the outcome and save Wenny Meadow by designating the entire site as Local Green space. He said Whittlesey Town Council had recommended 34 sites within Whittlesey should become designated Local Green Spaces while Chatteris had two in the new local plan.

He asked the Town Council to:

- 1) Respond to the upcoming Local Plan consultation to ask that the entire site at Wenny Meadow is designated as a Local Green Space, as requested by residents in the Parish Poll.

- 2) Consider changing its stance on the planning application to either a neutral stance or a stance of objection.
- 3) Consider evaluating other green spaces for Local Green Space designation in the emerging Local Plan, like recreation grounds and sports pitches.

Councillors explained that having made a decision they could not change their minds on a planning application it was now up to Fenland District Council. They pointed out only 12% of the population voted in the parish poll which was non-binding but would be noted.

They did agree to take the results of the poll into consideration during the upcoming consultation on the draft Local Plan and to consider other sites in Chatteris which could have green space designation.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

Min 27) Poll: The official result of the poll on the question “Would you like Wenny Meadow to be designated as a local green space and protected from development” was:  
No 83, Yes 996. Of an electorate of 8393, 1085 ballot papers were issued representing a turnout of 12.9%. The results had been publicised as agreed.  
Cllr Smith said the results should be sent to FDC’s planning department and this was agreed.

Balcony: The Clerk said she had once again reported the balcony at 30a High Street, which was in a very poor state of repair and looked unsafe, to CNC building control and they had agreed to look into the matter again.

Min 39) Road Safety Initiative: The Clerk had been informed that Vision Zero would be delivering their Surround a Town road safety initiative in the meeting room at the library on the 4<sup>th</sup> August from 12 noon to 4pm. The event would be open for the general public to drop in and browse the stalls of various partners who would be promoting community and road safety.

#### **50) Police Matters**

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

##### **“Local Police**

Members have received a copy of the confidential reports of the meeting between Neighbourhood Sergeant Joe Punton and council leaders held on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and the police update issued on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. The 8<sup>th</sup> June meeting was attended by the Mayor.

### **Neighbourhood Alert**

8/6/22: Notification of launch of Neighbourhood Watch lottery.

13/6 & 4/7/22: June and July editions of Our News, Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.

14 & 20/6 & 4/7/22: Latest news from the courts.

28/6/22: Information about a missing vulnerable adult (he was found safe and well).

29/6/22: Notification that a strategy to end violence against women and girls is taking shape and includes four distinct improvement projects.

1/7/22: Notification that officers visited 15 hand car washes across the county as part of efforts to combat modern slavery and requested the public report any concerns.

4/7/22: Notification that the re-investigation of the murder of 6-year-old Rikki Neave is the subject of a TV special on Channel 4.”

Following on from the issues raised in the Open Forum, Cllr Charrier said she was not aware of any recent problems at Furrowfields car park despite living near to the area.

Cllr Murphy said he had been informed that a number of birds, which had been shot and killed, had been found at the rear of the church along with canisters and other drug paraphernalia. Youths had been observed sitting on the wall between the churchyard and Boadicea Court. There had also been problems with smashed glass covering the play areas at Wenny Recreation Ground. For all the difficulties, Cllr Murphy admitted matters were far worse in Wisbech and Whittlesey.

Cllr Ashley said she had reported the problems at the rear of the church to the police having been contacted by a resident of Boadicea Court and the police had confirmed they would be patrolling in the area. She had also passed on information to help identify the person who had been selling bb guns at the Festival.

### **51) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates**

Members had a copy of the latest FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates (**copy attached**). It was reported that the Anglia in Bloom judging would take place in Chatteris on the 25<sup>th</sup> July and Britain in Bloom judging the following day. Cllr Murphy confirmed he would join the judges on both days, the Mayor said she would make part of the tours on both days and Cllr Smith had given her apologies.

Cllr Murphy said roads and gutters would be swept prior to the visits and he would also be helping to tidy. Fortunately the County Council had sprayed the weeds by the side of roads. With reference to the question of designated green space raised in the Open Forum, Cllr Murphy confirmed that there were more play areas and designated recreation grounds in Chatteris than any other town in Fenland.

## 52) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022 showing expenditure of £417,029.99 and income of £85,659.15 (including a half 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.

## 53) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October and January meetings each year. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability. The approved budget for grants in **2022/23 was £4,000.**

Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, with Recommendations as listed below:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommended Grant £</b>
<b>Chatteris Detachment Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force</b> Grant towards a new Ceremonial Banner plus accessories	<b>475</b>
<b>Magpas Air Ambulance</b> Grant towards running costs and medical equipment	<b>500</b>
<b>Ukrainian Hub</b> Resources for English Lessons	<b>442</b>
<b>Chatteris Car Scheme</b> Grant towards running costs; they have additional costs due to petrol prices rising and increase in hospital car service.	<b>500</b>

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

## 54) Payment of Accounts

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

		<b>2327</b>
Barclays	Bank Charges June 22	<b>6 of 9</b> 8.50
R J Warren	Gardening Services	1,025.24
British Gas	Quarterly Gas bill	280.07
British Gas	Quarterly Elec Bill	182.10
Chatteris In Bloom	Watering Services May 22	216.00
MJ Ashley	Covid Caterpillar Frame	40.00
Onecom	June phone bill	74.89
Clerk	Payroll July	2,770.89
F/O	Payroll July	1,600.61
Cambs Pension	Payroll July	1,652.37
HMRC	Payroll July	1,875.06
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Sundries re Summer Fest	213.43
Financial Officer	Petty cash Reim (added £30 cash to make float up to £100)	94.16
RM Bartlett	Scouted & Booted Band Summer Fest	700.00
Laura Dennis	LD Ents DJ Provision Summer Fest	200.00
HE Spall	Summer Fest Aitch Photography	200.00
The Animal Experience	Animal Display Summer Fest	360.00
Lucky's Rosettes	Rosettes Summer Fest	48.50
YK Suswain-Lee	Dog Show Expenses Summer Fest	78.34
Stuart Green	Isle 'Ave A Shanty	100.00
Richard Leney	Provision of Sound System & Commentary Summer Festival	445.00
Zen Internet	July- August website	11.99
Ward Gethin & Archer	Purchase of Freehold & Lease for 2 Park Street Chatteris to include all professional fees	355,921.21
<b>Total</b>		<b>368,098.36</b>

## 55) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that after much chasing it was hoped that the completion date for the purchase of the former Barclays Bank would be Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July. The leaseholder had finally that day been in contact with the Council's solicitor and it was hoped all the paperwork was now in place.

After approaching several building companies for quotes to carry out the necessary works to 2 Park Street, the architect had confirmed that he had received two quotations which were for similar amounts. The Clerk was now trying to organise a meeting with the architect, the Financial Officer and Cllrs Ashley and Benney to discuss the schedule of works and if savings could be made on the proposals.

## **56) Planning**

Cllr Gowler (Vice-Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to i) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered three further applications. It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Continue to Support
- b) Recommend Refusal, the tree was there before the house, is healthy and just needs managing. It is the subject of a TPO and is why the road was called Sycamore Crescent. A recent application to fell the tree was refused. The Town Council has no objections to works to the tree to maintain it but is firmly against felling it.
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Query whether this should be the subject of a full planning application? It is believed work has already commenced.
- h) Support and request replacement of felled trees.
- i) Support
- j) Recommend Refusal, over development of site and access issues.
- k) Support
- l) Support but request that as part of planning gain one of the conditions of permission should be that the roadway as far as the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park is made up to an agreed standard.

## **57) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Cllr Charrier (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022 (**copy attached**). (Cllr Benney joined the meeting).

L13) Speaker: Cllr Hay said she had looked into an issue raised by Mrs Hagger with regards to an overgrown front garden. However it was not sufficiently overgrown or encroaching on to the footpath for FDC to take action. A hedge outside a property in Wenny Road was, however, all over the pavement so Cllr Hay had contacted Fenland Empty Homes and asked them to take action.

L14) FDC Updates: Cllr Murphy said the bench at Larham Way was missing but it was due to be re-instated and fencing would be repaired. In addition the bench would be replaced at Wenny Recreation Ground as requested.

L19) Peacocks Paddock: The owner of Peacocks Paddock had stated on line that he was not selling the field for development but he did wish to raise the rent. It was agreed the Football Club and the owner needed to have a conversation.

### **58) To Agree New Arrangements for Bus Services**

Cllr Charrier began by informing members that all but one seat on the FACT bus service to Cambridge on the 9<sup>th</sup> July had been filled and a booking had already been taken for the bus on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, which was great news. The service had been advertised by Cllr Charrier on Facebook and in general the response had been very good.

The other proposal was to run a door to door service to Tesco's in Chatteris on Fridays. Passengers would be collected from their home address and dropped back again. The proposal was for one service in the morning beginning at 10am and another in the afternoon at 1pm. Again the service would have to be booked in advance.

The Clerk explained that the Council had previously agreed to the idea of running a service to Cambridge but agreement was needed for the Tesco service. Cllr Haggata explained that the money had originally been given by Tesco's to run a bus to the store but when it failed to open the money had been kept in FACT's coffers. Now the store was open it seemed right to put on the bus service originally proposed.

Members **agreed** to the idea and also **agreed** that The Gables and Swan House nursing homes should be offered a free bus for one day trip in the summer and another in the winter. An idea championed by the Mayor.

### **59) Midsummer Festival Report**

The Mayor said the Midsummer Festival had been very successful with large numbers of people attending on the Saturday and a good number on the Sunday. The small group of volunteers and officers from the Town Council and FDC had worked very hard and had worked well together to deliver one of the best Festivals to date. The Clerk said it had been good to see the FDC officers joining in and obviously enjoying working at the event.

The Clerk said it was unfortunate that news that a stall had been selling bb guns (which had been subsequently on show in public parks) had been given priority on social media and in the Cambs Times as the incident had been quickly dealt with by those working at the Festival once it had been brought to their attention.

Cllr Smith urged those involved with the Festival not to be disheartened as it was one incident which had been magnified and no-one wanted to report anything that went well.

The Clerk said it had been reported that those leaving the Festival had, without exception, said they had enjoyed themselves and one stall holder said it was the best organised event she had ever attended. Cllr Murphy said he had seen an email which stated it was one of the best shows the author had attended and was the best set out.

#### **60) Traffic Issues**

A141: The Mayor said the Council should be raising concerns over the number of accidents which had occurred on the A141 in the past six days, including two which resulted in fatalities. She suggested the Council should be contacting Highways and the police about their concerns. Cllr Benney said most of the accidents appeared to be driver error.

On the junction at New Road he said there had not been enough accidents to warrant expenditure but agreed the Council could request again that the vegetation be cut back to improve visibility. It was also agreed to ask how many times the speed camera near the junction picked up speeding motorists. Cllr Hay was asked to follow up the problems at the Clare Street junction.

Traffic Order: Notification had been received of a temporary prohibition of traffic order affecting 1 to 29 London Road between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July to facilitate new water connection works.

Reports: Reports: The IHMC incident report for May and the latest works and highway events information for Fenland had been received.

#### **61) Correspondence**

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

With regards to the email from a Derbyshire resident asking the Council to oppose development at Wenny Road, Councillors agreed the email should be noted and the author advised that the Town Council had made its recommendation and it was now up to Fenland District Council to make the decision.

#### **62) Reports**

Cllr Haggata had forwarded the minutes of the Transport and Access Group meeting he had attended on the 9<sup>th</sup> June representing Chatteris Town Council.

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

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

