



Chatteris Town Council

Annual Report

Year To April 2023

The past 12 months have been a busy time for the Council and its officers as they have strived to deliver the Growing Fenland project.

Topmost task has been pushing forward the conversion of Barclays Bank to a museum and community room.

After a long and sometimes arduous journey the Council finally managed to purchase both the freehold and first floor leasehold of 2 Park Street in July 2022. This was thanks to grant funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Work began immediately on obtaining tenders for the works. Although several companies were approached only two submitted quotations and the contract was awarded to local builders J T Chambers Ltd.

Works began on 26th September and, despite hold-ups due to planning and conservation queries, they are progressing and the museum should be able to move into its new home within the next couple of months. Please come along to an open day on the 7th May to see how the building has changed.

The Growing Fenland Project has also offered grants to businesses to improve the look of their premises in the town centre. The improvements to the Empress building in Park Street, where the Christmas Lights Committee store their equipment, is particularly striking. This project was also partially funded by the Town Council as it has helped to improve security for the lights collection.

In February The Mayor met the Deputy Mayor of the Combined Authority, Cllr Anna Smith, to show her works to the Empress and the museum and suffice to say Cllr Smith was very impressed and confirmed the works exactly met the brief for the Growing Fenland project.

During the year the Council has also:

- a) Fought for the retention of bus services for the town, pointing out to the Combined Authority that Chatteris is in a unique position as it has no other form of public transport.
- b) Paid for an extension to the built up surface of the Old Railway Line footpath to improve the link to the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park.
- c) With the help of FACT, run a subsidised bus to Cambridge on Saturdays and a bus around Chatteris on Fridays – the Chatteris Runner.
- d) Successfully bid for LHI funding for a scheme to reduce the speed limit in Doddington Road.
- e) With the help of volunteers and Fenland District Council officers, organised another very successful Midsummer Festival.
- f) Welcomed plans for a new reservoir, with associated leisure facilities, to be built north of Chatteris.
- g) Paid for the Parish Poll demanded at the Annual Town meeting on the subject ‘Would you like Wenny Meadow to be designated an green space and protected from development?’
- h) Unveiled a new town sign created by Mr Rick Savage.
- i) Organised a successful concert in the Parish Church to mark Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.
- j) Organised Books of Remembrance on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and a ceremony when the Mayor read out the Proclamation for King Charles III.
- k) Organised another very successful, free-to-all, party for the Over 70s in Chatteris just before Christmas.
- l) Continued to organise the very popular Summer Fun shows for children.
- m) Responded to the Draft Local Plan consultation, putting forward many sites to be considered as local green spaces and suggesting where development should take place in Chatteris.
- n) Fought for the extension of the footpath along the A141 to the new training centre.
- o) Passed on other footpath and highways concerns to County Highways.
- p) Continued to successfully maintain the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park with the help of FLAPP volunteers.
- q) The Clerk ensured most of the allotments were continually let and looked at ways to reduce water bills.
- r) Made a small claims court application when a promoter failed to return a deposit.
- s) Continued to financially support youth services in Chatteris – outreach work and a drop-in café for older children and a youth club for younger.

- t) Successfully requested a crossing in Bridge Street.
- u) Made a Freedom of Information request about Fenland Futures Investments and lack of investment in Chatteris following the sale of land in the town.
- v) Assisted FDC with the production of a new walking and cycling map for the town.
- w) Agreed to give grants to a science project planned in Chatteris, STEM in the Fens, and two reading schemes.
- x) In total gave out £4,000 in grants to smaller voluntary organisations in the town as well as giving substantial funding to the Christmas Lights, In Bloom, the Museum and the King Edward Centre.
- y) With the RBL signed an Armed Forces Covenant.
- z) Rejected the idea of a 20mph zone throughout the town.

The Council

Cllr Linda Ashley was re-elected Mayor for a fourth term in May 2022. During her time in office Cllr Ashley was very busy helping to run the council, attending all events she was invited to in her home town and also representing the Council at events in other towns. She read the Proclamation for the new King following the sad demise of Queen Elizabeth II.

Cllr Anne Hay was elected as Deputy Mayor for the first time.

There have been 12 meetings of the full council and shown below is the number of meetings Councillors have attended. 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	10	A Charrier	5
A Gowler	10	W Haggata	12
A Hay	10	P Murphy	12
F Newell	9	M Petrou	2
J Smith	10	I Taylor	4

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 124 new and revised planning applications to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. Speakers at planning meetings included a representative of Floorspan Contracts Ltd and speakers from Anglian Water and Cambridge Water.

Leisure: The Leisure Working Group, chaired by Cllr Charrier, was busy organising events, overseeing the Pocket Park and Old Railway Line footpath, monitoring the FACT bus services and completing questionnaires. Speakers at leisure meetings included officers from FDC on CCTV monitoring and its benefits, a representative of Cambridgeshire Constabulary

on crime prevention and ATMs, the Fenland community navigator and a representative of Rush Fitness on community fitness.

Open Forum: The 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. Last year these included: Stagecoach plans to cut all bus services to the town.

Questions on the parish poll and a call for the council to follow the mandate of the poll.

A call for the council to make reference to the poll when completing the Local Plan Review.

Concern about tractor drivers using mobile phones whilst driving.

Broken speed restrictor strips in Furrowfields car park and the state of roads in the town.

Concerns about speeding in Bridge Street.

Concerns about illegal parking.

Concerns about the lack of Section 106 payments and investment in the town despite the sale of FDC owned land in the town.

Police: Along with other Council Chairmen and Mayors from the Fens, The Mayor attended monthly meetings with the local police sergeant which resulted in councillors receiving confidential reports on crime figures and the work of the police and being able to pass on any concerns with policing in the town. Pc Harry Howe, of the neighbourhood policing team, attended a Council meeting.

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

The officers have worked closely with the architect and the building contractor to deliver the new museum project in the former Barclays Bank.

The Clerk has also carried out the wishes of the Council, organised the books of Condolence and events surrounding the death of Her Majesty, helped to organise another Midsummer Festival, the Summer Fun shows and a concert; administered the allotments, overseen works at the Pocket Park and the Old Railway Line footpath, produced the minutes of meetings, organised Zoom meetings, organised the road closures for the Remembrance Parade, passed on residents' concerns to the relevant authorities and made sure comments were submitted on all planning applications.

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

Joanna Melton
Town Clerk
April 2023

