

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 16th May 2023

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley, I Benney, J Carney, A Charrier, A Gowler, A Hay, P Murphy, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

1) Election of Mayor

Outgoing Mayor Cllr Linda Ashley welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for nominations for Mayor.

Cllr Murphy proposed Cllr Hay be elected Mayor, seconded by Cllr Ashley There were no further nominations, the proposal was agreed by a majority (there were 2 abstentions) and Cllr Hay was duly elected Mayor for the coming year.

Cllr Murphy thanked Cllr Ashley for all her work over the past four years as Mayor.

The new Mayor asked members to identify themselves for the benefit of new members.

2) Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3) Members' Declarations of Acceptance of Office

All members present signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

4) Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Murphy proposed Cllr Benney as Deputy Mayor, seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by a majority (there were 2 abstentions). Cllr Benney was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.

5) Registering of Members' Interests and Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

Councillors were asked to complete the Register of Member Interests and return their forms to the Clerk. Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in planning matters.

6) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr A Keating.

7) Open Forum

Cllr Charlie Marks, councillor for the Chatteris North and Manea ward of Fenland District Council, introduced himself and said he would be working with fellow district councillors for the Chatteris North and Manea ward Cllrs Carney and Gowler. He promised to help in any way he could.

8) Appointments to Outside Bodies & Election of Working Groups

The Clerk explained the Council elected members to represent the Council on a number of outside bodies. Members attended meetings of the groups and reported back to the Council. Members had a list of the outside bodies and the number of representatives required.

The following representations were agreed:

King Edward Centre Trustees – Cllrs Charrier & Gowler
Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Carney & Gowler
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay
Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllr Unwin
Fenvision – Cllr Murphy
Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley, Hay & Murphy
Midsummer Festival – Cllrs Ashley, Charrier, Selman & Unwin
Fenland Transport Advisory Group – Cllrs Benney & Siggee
Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Ashley & Selman
Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay & substitute Cllr Benney
Chatteris Bowls Club Trustee – Cllr Benney
FACT liaison group – Cllrs Ashley, Charrier & Selman
George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group – Cllr Benney

Members were then asked if they would also agree to sit on the Leisure and General Purposes and Planning Working Groups. Leisure meetings were usually held on the second or third Tuesday of the month and planning was always the last Tuesday of the month.

Members agreed to serve on the working groups as follows:

Planning – Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Charrier, Gowler, Hay, Siggee and Unwin (Cllr Murphy also expressed a possible interest).

Leisure – Cllrs Ashley, Charrier, Gowler, Hay, Selman and Siggee.

9) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members were reminded that at the January 2023 Council meeting Members had agreed the Mayors Allowance budget of £1,500 as part of the final 23/24 budget. At the May meeting it was required to confirm the previously agreed Mayor's budget for the newly elected Mayor. The budget was agreed.

10) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2023 and the Annual Town meeting held on Friday 21st April 2023 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record. Cllrs Carney and Gowler pointed out they had attended the Annual Town meeting and had sat in the audience. Cllr Hay said she and Cllr Murphy had sent apologies for the meeting due to purdah.

11) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 215) FOI: As instructed by Councillors the Clerk had asked further questions about income from the sale of land by FDC and how Horizons money was to be spent and had received the following replies:

- 1) *How was £200,000 deemed an open market value for an area of land suitable for 80 houses when a single plot in Chatteris was up for sale for £150,000?* The land at Elms is being sold to Fenland Future Ltd at open market value as determined by a firm of independent surveyors/valuers adhering to the RICS red book valuation standards. This was fully detailed in the report presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2022.
- 2) *If the Horizons money came with strict requirements how was East Cambs District Council able to pledge a substantial sum from their Horizons fund to a village hall project in Stretham?* We cannot comment on how East Cambs utilise their allocation. As previously stated below the Horizons money came with strict criteria on how it should be spent and is not specific to areas. Again, as previously stated it is primarily about economic growth and sustainable development.
- 3) *Is Chatteris due any of the funding set aside by FDC for economic development and sustainable growth?* There is no funding set aside for any specific areas.
- 4) *How much has been set aside?* None.
- 5) *Have funds already been distributed elsewhere in the Fenland area?* £150k of Horizons money has been utilised to fund a levelling up bid for the District.

Min 250) Wenny Road Traffic Issues: Following the meeting the Clerk had been approached by MP Mr Steve Barclay's office, as he had also been contacted about the speeding in Wenny Road and had asked for the Council's assessment of the situation. The Clerk had sent the following reply:

"This was discussed by the Town Council on Tuesday evening. The Town Council has spent considerable time and money fighting for road safety measures in Wenny Road over the past 10 years. As the Highways director rightly says an LHI scheme (school time 20mph signs and speed humps) was installed in 20-21 following a long campaign by the Town Council which was eventually backed by the school. The raised table/crossing had earlier been installed under another LHI scheme as a result of a bid by the Town Council. The Council paid contributions towards both schemes.

I and councillors have held many site meetings with highways officers in Wenny Road to look at safety measures and the LHI schemes mentioned were carefully drawn up taking into consideration where the children cross, the need for buses to be able to turn into the area where they pick up and drop off, the need to allow some limited parking on Wenny Road, etc.

On all occasions we were guided by highways, the needs of the school and the needs of local residents.

It is true the Town Council did not apply for yet another LHI scheme for Wenny Road this year as councillors believed the safety of people trying to cross Bridge Street was paramount so the Council applied for a crossing there.

The Town Council did agree on Tuesday to move its MVAS speed monitor (purchased via yet another LHI application) to Wenny Road so it can monitor the speed of cars in the area.” Mr Barclay’s caseworker had replied to say she could see the council was doing everything it could to keep the residents of Chatteris safe.

12) Police Matters

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

Local Police

Members have received the confidential crime statistics for April. The Clerk reported vandalism at the Pocket Park and motorbikes on the Old Railway Line Footpath and received a crime number. Unfortunately there were no viable lines of enquiry although attempts were made to identify the youth who was photographed riding his motorbike on the footpath. Sgt Arnold also agreed to include the pocket park in police patrols.

Neighbourhood Alert

5/3/23: Tips on how to protect your home and valuables.

10/4/23: Notification that the UK Government’s Emergency Alerts system was now live.

11/4, 2/5 & 15/5/23: Latest court news.

21/4/23: Tips on how to protect your garden from burglars.

3/5/23: May edition of Neighbourhood Watch’s Our News newsletter.

3/5/23: Notification that, up to that date, 184 people in Cambridgeshire had been arrested for being in possession of a knife or other weapon.

4/5/23: Advice on how to protect keyless cars.

11/5/23: Notification that the constabulary’s Demand Hub is recruiting emergency call handlers.

11/5/23: Advice on how not to become a victim of tool theft.

12/5/23: Information about the accelerated detective pathway.

14/5/23: Video showing how busy the Demand Hub is as a warning to people to think before they call.

14/5/23: Notification that speeding in Fenland has been set as a priority for the local neighbourhood policing teams and a request for people to consider volunteering as part of Community Speedwatch.

The Mayor reminded members that police reports from the neighbourhood team contained sensitive information and should not be shared with anyone outside the Council Chambers. She confirmed she would be attending the meetings for chairmen and mayors with Sgt Arnold and asked members to inform her of any issues they wished her to raise at the meetings.

Cllr Gowler was very concerned by the van which was continually parked on double yellow lines in Huntingdon Road as it was obstructing the view of motorists trying to turn out of Clare Street. The Mayor said she would ask the police to take a look and Cllr Murphy suggested mentioning it to the Street Scene officer for Chatteris.

Cllr Carney was concerned about the scrambler motorbikes which were using the Old Railway Line and the Pocket Park as he feared a child would be injured if the riders lost control of the bikes.

13) FDC, Street Scene, CCTV & Section 106 Updates

No updates had been received due to the election.

14) Consideration and Approval of Annual Governance Statement Part 1 (AGAR 2022/23)

Members had before them Section 1 of the Agar 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement both (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 2022/23, 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 2022/23 AGAR.

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.

15) Approval of the Accounting Statements (Section 2 Agar 2022/23) and the Annual Return

[1] Introduction

Members had before them the Annual Return report and Accounting Statements (Section 2 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23) 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 reminded that the Council's accounts for 2022/23 attracted an Intermediate Level 4 Review audit as the total income & the total expenditure for 2022/23 exceeded £200,000.

[3] Annual Governance (See Separately under Agenda Item No 14)

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

[4] The Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2022/23)

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 had 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 2022/23) 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 2022/23, as submitted be noted and approved.

15) Payment of Accounts

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

Onecom	April Phone Bill	95.28
Cpalc	Renewal Membership	1383.90
Chatteris Town Bowls	Grant Kings Coronation open day	100.00
SLCC	2 x training courses (Officers)	72.00
Cambs CC	Summer Reading Grant	400.00
J T Chambers	Valuation 7 works to 2 Park Street	25,080.00
Clerk	Reim: Zoom & Sundries re Coronation Day & S/Fest	366.84
R J Warren	Gardening services	742.04
F/O	Reim: Sundries Coronation open day	34.56

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Zen Internet	May-Jun 23 website	
British Gas	Elec Bill	103.86
British Gas	Gas Bill	128.92
I Mason	Reim: Sundries Flapp	14.99
A Simpson	Allotment tap repairs	40.00
D Stimson	Council Office windows cleaned (annual invoice)	180.00
M Edgley	Boiler repair	372.57
Wave	Water bill Council Offices	48.99
Wave	RHS Allotments water bill	16.01
Wave	LHS Allotments water bill	215.33
Barclays	Bank Charges	10.00
British gas	Gas Bill	205.51
British gas	Elec Bill	146.84
CF Corporate	Photocopier lease	255.53
David J Richards	Printing photos Coronation Open day	44.68
F/O	Reim: petty cash	91.69
Payroll	Payroll May 23	5,665.28
Total		35,828.61

17) Planning

Members had been consulted via email on applications a) to c) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered two further applications. It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Noted
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Recommend Refusal, not in keeping with the street scene and councillors queried if there was a covenant which would prohibit the development? (Cllr Selman declared an interest).

18) Growing Fenland Update

The Clerk reported that the works to 2 Park Street were progressing well with the flooring about to go down in the museum.

The Combined Authority had agreed a further allocation of £245,873 for the Museum and Community Space project (to cover the conversion works to 2 Park Street and 14 Church Lane) subject to confirmation once the final quotation for the remaining works had been

received. They had also agreed that the underspend from the Chatteris Renaissance Fund project could be spent on the Museum and Community Space project bringing the total allocated for the project to just over £1million. The Clerk said the Combined Authority was still enthusiastic about the project which fully met their criteria.

The Clerk also said a meeting had been held with museum trustees to discuss the lease and service charge responsibilities for 2 Park Street.

The Financial Officer said the electricity supply would remain in the name of the Council and would be recharged to the museum. She was currently sorting out the transfer of the electricity and water supplies to the Council from the previous owner and had discovered there was an outstanding bill of nearly £2,000 which covered the period from the end of July when the Council took ownership of the building. Part of the cost was the industrial blowers which had been needed to dry out the building. The Clerk said part of the cost would also be for the electricity supply for the Christmas lights on the building.

Cllr Murphy said he had only received good reports about the open days on the 7th and 8th May. The museum estimated over 300 people had visited to see the works to 2 Park Street and enjoy the refreshments laid on by the Council on the 7th. It was agreed the new museum was a good legacy for the town.

Cllr Ashley said she had met the Mayor of the Combined Authority at the Skills Escalator Day at the new Training Centre and she had told him about the success of the two open days. He had been very enthusiastic pointing out he was keen on the Combined Authority funding projects for the community.

Cllr Benney pointed out other towns were having to return funds to the Combined Authority as projects had failed and the fact Chatteris was being offered more funding proved the project was succeeding. The FO said the project was only costing more because the original estimates for the work were pre-covid and building costs had substantially increased since then.

The FO pointed out a total of four community rooms would be provided once the works to 14 Church Lane were complete, rather than the one originally promised. Rental income from the offices at 2 Park Street and the flat or flats to be created at 14 Church Lane would mean the projects would be self-funding in future.

19) Festival Update

The Clerk gave members a copy of the programme for the Midsummer Festival on the 24th and 25th June 2023. Highlights included the walking parade, performances by Gorilla Circus, mini trampolines from JDK Fitness, the fun dog show, the colour fun run, the tug of war competition, cream teas and the Party in the Park which included a Robbie Williams tribute act and a return performance by Scooted and Booted who were very popular in 2022. Cllr Unwin said the Community Choir would also be performing. The Clerk said any help from councillors would be appreciated and she thanked new Councillors Selman and Unwin who had helped to organise the Festival for many, many years (Cllr Selman was the Chairman of the Festival committee).

20) Traffic Issues

LHI: The Clerk had been notified that there had been no objections to the LHI plan for Doddington Road and the contractor had, therefore, been asked to programme the works as soon as possible.

Traffic Orders: Notification had been received in advance of works to Fenland Way (which took place at the beginning of May) and further carriageway maintenance works to be carried out on the 8th and 9th September overnight. There had also been notification that: Huntingdon Road would be closed from Linden Drive for 50m from the 5th to 9th June for manhole repairs.

Wood Street would be closed between Eastwood and London Road from the 5th to 9th June for electrical works.

Re-surfacing works had already been carried out in Burnsfield Street, Green Park and Windsor Close.

Events: Notification had been received of road works and events which would affect roads in Chatteris, the TMC incident report for April and the highways events diary for May.

Potholes: The Mayor asked for a photograph of the speed hump in Wenny Road which was still awaiting repair, despite having been reported by numerous people. It was agreed Ash Grove roadway was in a shocking state due to the potholes and Cllr Carney reported a bad pothole in Church Lane which included a broken drain. Cllr Gowler said Wenny Road got the prize for the worst pothole in a competition he had been running.

21) Correspondence

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

Pocket Park: The Clerk said she had met with the contractors and the chairman of FLAPP to agree which parts of the pocket park needed cutting and which should be left uncut to encourage wildlife. Cllr Carney said a FLAPP working party would be undertaking work at the park the following Saturday and he had asked the author of one of the letters of complaint to pop along so the position could be explained to him. He pointed out the Pocket Park had never been envisaged as a “prim and proper municipal park”.

22) Reports

Fenvision: Cllr Murphy had attended a meeting of Fenvision who were struggling because Camsight had taken their members.

Mural: Cllr Unwin said she had been given names of youths who might have been responsible for defacing the new mural in the bus shelter which commemorated the coronation of King Charles III. Cllr Ashley said the police had originally told In Bloom they would not be investigating the incident but Sgt Arnold had agreed to look into it. Cllr Unwin warned the mural might not go back in the same form. Cllr Ashley said her son’s company had offered to donate Perspex sheets to cover the painted boards.

Poppy Appeal: Cllr Gowler said the Poppy Appeal area co-ordinator had contacted him about taking on the co-ordinators job in Chatteris but he was looking for help with the role.

23) Items for the Next Agenda

Cllrs Hay and Selman gave their apologies for the next meeting.

