

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 5th September 2023

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Minutes of the Meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5th September 2023 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs A Hay (Mayor), L Ashley, A Gowler, A Keating, V Joyce, P Murphy, M Siggee and S Unwin.

86) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs I Benney, J Carney, A Charrier and S Selman.

87) Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

Cllrs Murphy declared an interest in all planning applications.

88) Open Forum

Two members of the public were present but only one wished to speak.

The resident said it was hardly possible to sleep at nights due to motorists "street cruising". Cars were speeding up and down the road until 2am. The resident said she had been out protesting, she had spent money on signs and she described the police action as "appalling". She had written complaining to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

The resident claimed elderly people were suffering from dementia as a result of the exhaust fumes and said the whole place was a nightmare. The resident asked why no-one wanted to do anything about the situation.

Cllr Ashley said she had been in touch with the police who had told her a plan was being drawn up to deal with vehicle nuisance. The police were aware of the problems and two vehicles had already been seized. Officers were patrolling in Chatteris. The Mayor confirmed the police had been active in Chatteris and Cllr Gowler said he had been walking around the town and was aware of the problems, the police were taking action but the Council could not tell them what to do.

The resident also claimed that drugs were being sold in the bus shelter.

The Mayor said the police would be outside Tesco's on the 26th September to listen to residents' concerns and she assured the resident that the Council was continually communicating with the police.

89) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 1st August 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

90) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 82) Fenland Way: The Clerk had contacted the planning department at FDC about the provision of a footpath link along Fenland Way, which was a condition of the planning permission for the Womb Farm development. The development manager at FDC had responded to say a scheme for various works had to be submitted, agreed and implemented before occupation. No such details had been received. However, he understood that the developers were working with the County Council to gain technical approval for a number of requirements and that details would be submitted. The Mayor said she would be contacting County Highways to enquire if this was the case. The Clerk had stressed the footpath should not be forgotten.

Min 79) Shuttle Bus Questionnaire: Members had received, via email, a copy of the bus questionnaire which had been posted on line and Cllr Carney had confirmed he would give the survey another week or so and then look at the results. Cllr Ashley said she would be handing out paper copies of the survey.

Min 69) Pocket Park: Cllr Carney had also reported that FLAPP had been awarded a £1,000 grant by Tesco's for a new interpretation board and plants for the pond. The Mayor had provided water lilies for the pond and reported the police were regularly visiting the park. The Clerk reported two more benches would be provided along the Old Railway Line Footpath following a request from the public who were enjoying the new footpath surface but found it a trek from the existing benches to the Pocket Park.

Min 78) Weeds: Councillors had received a copy of a letter sent by Cllr Charlie Marks to a Highways Officer at the County Council asking: i) why the County Council was not carrying out a programme of weed killing; ii) when the decision was taken; iii) what was the budget for the works (if there was a budget) and iv) how had that budget been redirected. In the meantime, the public were being urged to sign an on-line petition calling for the County Council to reconsider the decision as the weeds were damaging footpaths and highways edges and were blocking gulleys which would lead to flooding. The Mayor said the petition needed 3,000 signatures and a motion was being prepared. The hope was the ruling administration would change their minds. Cllr Joyce said the weeds were already coming through on footpaths which had been slurry sealed earlier in the summer and Cllr Unwin said the weeds in the centre of town had to be tackled by probation and In Bloom.

Min 80) Allotments Water: The Clerk reported it appeared she would not be able to stop the use of hosepipes on the allotments - and only allow watering cans - as SLCC considered this would be indirect discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 as some allotment holders may be unable to use watering cans. Discussions on how to cut down on water use were continuing at Allotment Association meetings.

91) Police Matters

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

‘Local Police

There is an opportunity for residents to speak with police officers in Chatteris on Tuesday 26th September. Some of the local neighbourhood team will be joined by FDC's Community Safety Support Officer at Tesco in Fenland Way between 10am and 12noon.

Members have been sent, via email, a copy of the confidential minutes of the meeting between Neighbourhood Sergeant Chris Arnold and Council Leaders held on the 1st September 2023.

An invitation has been issued to join a lunchtime online webinar with the Police and Crime Commissioner on the 29th September so local businesses can raise concerns about cybercrime and fraud. It is necessary to register an interest in the meeting.

Cllr Ashley has reported a problem with a car driving around the Sportsman field early in the morning.

Neighbourhood Alert

2/8/23: Notification that an illegal motorcycle was seized in Chatteris.

2/8/23: Tips on how to keep mopeds safe after an increase in moped thefts.

4/8/23: Warning about scammers targeting large community and religious WhatsApp groups.

7/8 & 4/9/23: August and September editions of Our News, the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.

8/8/23: Warning about quishing, a scam which uses fake QR codes on parking machines, charging points and even restaurant menus.

8, 14 & 21/8/23: Latest from the courts.

10/8/23: Request for help identifying men concerned with a theft in Wisbech.

11/8/23: Neighbourhood policing team update. The priorities for Chatteris are drug use and dealing and work has included patrols in known hotspot areas, the execution of 5 drugs warrants in Fenland with drugs, cash and weapons found, stop-searching of people and vehicles with more than 50% of the searches resulting in items being seized and the person reported or arrested.

16/8/23: Advice on how to keep your tools safe after thefts of tools in Cambridgeshire doubled in a year.

16/8/23: Notification that speed checks were carried out in three areas including Wenny Road in Chatteris.

19/8/23: A reminder of how to contact Cambridgeshire police and when it is most appropriate to use each method of contact.

23/8/23: Request for Neighbourhood Watch members to complete a survey as research for two new security products.

23/8/23: Fenland Community Safety Partnership request to hear from anyone who has concerns about crime and disorder.

1/9/23: Open letter to parents and carers asking them to refrain from parking illegally, particularly near schools.'

The Mayor said the police had been very active in Chatteris but they could not be everywhere at the same time. She said she would be attending the meeting for businesses. Cllr Unwin said she was aware of a problem with rural crime, machinery was being stolen.

Cllr Murphy asked the Mayor if she could request the police keep a lookout for the person who parked a bus in the bus stop outside Spectacular for days at a time as they needed reminding it was a bus stop not a bus park. It was also suggested the bus company should be informed.

92) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

Members had before them the latest FDC, Street Scene and CCTV reports (**copy attached**).

Cllr Gowler reported the CCTV control room had been re-located in Peterborough and there would be an invitation to visit the new headquarters.

FDC Officer Ms Layna Warren had asked for clarification of a statement made by the Town Council in response to the Dog Control Public Space Protection Order questionnaire.

Members confirmed their response had been based on public comments but there had not been a survey of residents. Councillors had responded that dogs should not have to be on a lead in a closed cemetery and should be allowed in open cemeteries, if they were on a lead, because many bereaved people liked to visit the graves of loved ones with their dogs

93) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 29th August 2023 showing expenditure of £245,304.10 and income of £239,602.03 (includes 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.

94) Payment of Accounts

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

Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
Clerk	Reim Zoom Google added storage	47.74
Zen Internet	Sep-Oct 23 Website	13.79
British Gas	Gas Bill Park Street	34.38
Rural Cambs CAB	1st Quarter Face to Face service	1,587.25
Mayor of Godmanchester Charities	Mayor purchase of charity tickets	50.00
Creative Arts East	CTC contribution to Summer Fest Jazz band	175.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services July	742.04
R J Warren	Gardening Services August & Allot Clearance	886.04

		2471
R J Warren	Little Acre Gardening Services August	5 of 10 216.19
Trident Contract Services	Re-inspection asbestos survey report Church Lane	660.00
J T Chambers	Release of 50% retention 2 Park Street contract	7,200.00
Chatteris Community Car Share scheme	CTC Grant to vol organisations	500.00
I Mason	Reim Pocket Park sundries FLAPP	22.91
Viking	Stationary	176.27
British Gas	Elec Bill	74.31
Morton & Hall Consulting	Professional fees 2 Park Street	816.00
Freya Moore	Shredding /clearing office documents	145.75
Just Copiers	Move & set up photocopier Museum	180.00
Portal Plan Quest	Planning permission application Museum out-building	181.00
British Gas	Gas Bill Park Street	62.14
Onecom	August phone bill	93.94
S Gibb	Cleaning 2 Park Street	43.75
Payroll	Sept 23 Payroll	7,101.90
Red Skips	Skip hire Church Lane	250.00
KECCA	Summer Fun Hall hire	86.00
Ethos Communications	Photocopier additional copies	1.03
Camguard Fire & Security	Call out to faulty intruder alarm	86.40
Tufferman Ltd	Racking Museum	2,384.67
Total		23,827.00

95) External Auditor's Report

Members were advised that the External Auditor's report had not yet been received.

The Financial Officer advised that she had chased that day asking when the report would be completed and was advised that the file was currently being reviewed by an engagement lead and if they did not have any further queries the external audit should be completed by the end of the week.

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

96) To Accept Quotations for Works to 14 Church Lane & To Appoint Contractor

The Clerk advised members of the following:

Background

Four local building companies were approached and asked to provide quotations to convert 14 Church Lane into the new council offices and three community rooms with a flat above and the building of another flat at first floor level.

The schedule of works was drawn up by the architect and all those who were asked to tender for the work confirmed they would be able to start within two to three weeks of being formally appointed and the estimated length of the contract would be 20 weeks.

Quotations

All four companies came back with quotes and each quotation included a 10% contingency but no VAT, as the Council is able to claim back VAT.

The quotes were as follows:

Company A	£267,663
Company B	£277,631
Company C	£281,237
Company D	£292,363

Other Expenses

The quotations did not include flooring, alterations to the alarm systems, asbestos removal, service connections and professional fees. The Financial Officer and the Clerk attempted to put a sum against each of these costs (based on sums spent at 2 Park Street) and they estimated an additional expense totalling £49,500.

CPCA Funding

The Financial Officer had estimated that there should be £355,884 of the original budget of £1,050,000 remaining when all the costs for 2 Park Street were met.

Taking the cheapest quote for the works to 14 Church Lane and adding on the additional expenses would leave approximately £38,000 in the budget,

Recommendation

It was recommended that the Council accept the quotation from Company A and award the contract to that company as they represented Best Value.

Members **resolved** to accept the quotation from Company A and award the contract to that company. They were then informed that the company was J T Chambers (Dev) Ltd.

97) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that the museum was busy unpacking and arranging the new museum and a planning application had been submitted for the outside store.

The accountants had signed a new lease and had moved in to the first floor offices.

The gates were ready to be installed.

It was hoped work would soon begin on 14 Church Lane. In the meantime, the Financial Officer's granddaughter had been busy helping to prepare for the works by shredding old paperwork and filling a skip with unwanted items. When the builders were ready to begin the Clerk and the Financial Officer would move to the community room at 2 Park Street but it was hoped evening meetings of the Council would still be possible at 14 Church Lane while most of the works were carried out.

98) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 29th August 2023 (copy **attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to o) as shown on the **appended** list. It was agreed to make the following recommendations to Fenland District Council:

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Recommend Refusal, over development and detrimental impact on street scene.
- e) Support – the Plan had since been withdrawn.
- f) Support
- g) Recommend Refusal no justification for felling trees.
- h) Request tree officer inspects and councillors will support the tree officer's recommendation.
- i) Support
- j) No objections to the development in principle but very concerned about access on to A142. There are already major safety issues at the existing two accesses on to the road from New Road and Wenny Road due to the speed of traffic and this access is on a bend. The A142 is acknowledged as a high casualty route. If the application is agreed request pedestrian/cycle link to the new open space being created by the approved development at Wenny Meadow and expect Section 106 payments of £2,000 per

dwelling to be paid. Chatteris Town Council has a shopping list for Sec 106 payments (copy attached)

- k) Support
- l) Support
- m) Support
- n) Recommend Refusal, over development, totally different to approved plans, not acceptable in open countryside.
- o) Support

Street Naming: Members were asked to vote on the three options for naming the new development at land east of 133 High Street (off Black Horse Lane).

Members supported the decision of the Planning Working Group and **unanimously agreed** to option 3 – numbering the properties into Black Horse Lane (from 1 to 5 including 1A, 2A etc.) as currently the first number on that side of the road was 6.

99) To Agree Update to Councillors' Code of Conduct

The Clerk reported that the current Code of Conduct adopted by the Council was out of date and she had researched the latest model from the Local Government Association which was dated 2020 (with updates in January and May 2021).

Members had received a copy of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 and **unanimously agreed** that the Council should adopt the model.

100) To Agree Design of New Town Map

Members had before them a draft of a new town map for Chatteris. The Clerk explained that the map would go in noticeboards outside the library and the former police station. It had been drawn up by David Richards printers working with former councillor Julie Smith, who had supplied the photographs of the town which illustrated the map (most of which came from the Chatteris Community Archive website).

The Clerk asked for any comments on the design and members requested the word club should go after bowls and tennis. The Town Clerk was concerned about a dotted line which appeared to have no purpose. Members agreed with the design and the Clerk said she would pass on the comments before the final version was printed.

101) Alzheimer's Society Email

The Council had been approached by a dementia advisor for the Cambridgeshire Alzheimer's Society who had carried out a survey on the views of people with dementia and carers. More people in Chatteris responded than elsewhere in Fenland and of those 67% said they did not

know where to turn for support and help and felt there was nothing for them in Chatteris. The advisor asked for help to address the problem by setting up a local group.

Members pointed out that prior to Covid a group had met at Salem Court and it was believed the group would soon be returning to Chatteris. It was also suggested that a group might be able to use one of the new community rooms due to be created at the Council Chambers and they would be able to apply for a grant from the Council.

102) To Agree Quotation for Road Closures for Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk had obtained a quotation from Ringway Infrastructure Services to close the roads for the Remembrance Sunday parade and wreath laying ceremony on the 12th November. The cost would be £1,250, this compared to £1,140 in 2022.

Members **agreed** to accept the quotation.

103) Traffic Issues

Doddington Road: As requested the Clerk had asked for more 30mph signs in Doddington Road to remind people that the former 40mph speed limit was now 30mph. The Highways Officer had explained this was not possible because street lighting was seen as a reminder of the 30mph limit and as motorists were technically already in a 30mph zone as they left the town centre they should assume it was a 30mph limit. It would not be possible to install further signage without getting a departure from standard sign off from the Department of Transport which they wouldn't allow. The Officer did agree it would be a good idea to use the MVAS to remind motorists of the speed limit. Members pointed out for local people it had always been a 40mph speed limit so they needed to be informed and reminded it was now a 30mph limit. As a result motorists doing 30mph were being overtaken. Members agreed to ask the Highways officer to consider a 30mph warning painted on the road or a temporary sign warning people that the speed limit had changed.

Highways Officer: The Clerk informed members of the good news that Mr Nick Munns was back as the local highways officer for Chatteris.

Works: Notification had been received of footway reconstruction works at Wenny Estate due to start on the 11th September and likely to last about 4 weeks. The works would allow potential future carriageway resurfacing works proposed for 2024. Work was already underway to reconstruct the footway on London Road from the entrance to Tithebarn to the junction with Stocking Drove. Works began on 29th August and were anticipated to take 3 weeks. The temporary prohibition of use order to close footpath 14 (which runs from Wenny Road to the A142) had been granted and it was anticipated the works (to remove vegetation for ditch surveying and associated works) would be carried out between the 16th and 20th October.

Railings: Cllr Murphy reported that a car had gone into the railings near Buster's café in the High Street and as a result the railing were now bent and broken and needed to be replaced. The Clerk said she would inform the County Council.

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

104) Correspondence

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

Yellow Lines: The Council had been asked to support the removal of double yellow lines from the street outside 67 High Street and the moving of a bus stop so a parking bay for residents could be created. Councillors pointed out the County Council would not support residents parking bays in Chatteris, the double yellow lines had clearly been installed on highways safety grounds and there was no reason to remove them or to move the bus stop. The resident would be able to park around the corner in Furrowfields car park.

105) Reports

Choir: Cllr Unwin said as a member of Chatteris Community Choir she was able to report that the choir had now moved from the Parish Church to the Salvation Army Fortress. The group was continuing to meet and was trying to recruit a new musical director. She asked if the group would be eligible for a grant and was informed they could apply.

Fenvision: Cllr Murphy said he had attended a meeting of Fenvision. The group was working on a new website and attracting people back from Camsight, who had now moved to March.

Chatteris In Bloom: Cllr Unwin reported the baskets would be up until the beginning of October. The results of this year's In Bloom competitions would be announced on the 20th September and the group would be giving out prizes for the garden competition shortly. Fortunately, the committee had been able to attract more members and should be able to continue with all the beds/planting areas the group had taken on.

Festival: Cllr Ashley reported that there would be an open meeting to discuss the 2024 Midsummer Festival at the King Edward Centre on the 13th September. Everyone was welcome to attend.

Bowls: The Mayor said the Bowls Club would be holding their finals day on the coming Saturday and Sunday.

106) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward.

