

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

2528

1 of 10

Minutes of the meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

**Present:** Cllrs I Benney (Deputy Mayor), L Ashley, A Charrier, V Joyce, P Murphy, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

### 217) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Hay (Mayor), J Carney and A Gowler.

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

Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in all planning applications. Cllr Unwin declared an interest as a member of In Bloom and the Midsummer Festival committee, Cllr Selman as a driver for the Community Car scheme and Chairman of the Festival committee, Cllr Ashley as a trustee of the museum and member of the Festival committee and Cllr Murphy as a trustee of the museum.

### 219) Open Forum

Two representatives of the Sparta ABC Boxing Club were present along with Cllr Charlie Marks.

The boxing club representatives explained that Chatteris had a successful club with 9 national champions and three about to turn professional but the Club was struggling to keep up with inflation and some children were struggling to pay the £3 a night fee. The men said during Covid the Council had bailed them out and had ensured they were able to keep going and they would now again appreciate a little help.

The representatives explained that the club had helped to change a lot of lives and was a safe space for some children at it was open every night of the week. Many of the children did not want to be boxers but they did want to be good members of society. The boxing club taught them discipline and the one rule for attendance was that youngsters had to be doing well at school. About 30 children regularly attended the club.

Putting on shows was particularly difficult as the club had to pay for a doctor, a paramedic and anaesthetist, which totalled about £700 for each show and the total cost of staging a show was over £2,000, but the club liked to put on shows in Chatteris for the novice boxers. It also cost a lot, in terms of fuel bills, to travel around the country to take part in other shows.

Councillors gave the representatives information on other possible funding sources and Cllr Selman asked if the club would be involved at the Midsummer Festival to raise their profile. The representatives were invited to apply for a grant from the Council.

## 220) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

## 221) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 200) Shuttle Bus: Cllr Carney had submitted a report on a meeting with FACT when the idea of launching a trial of a Chatteris to Manea bus service on Saturdays was discussed along with the cost of the trial possibly being funded by the Tesco S106 pot or from another source (the Manea Station improvement budget?). It had also been suggested that the twice monthly Chatteris to Cambridge bus should include a stop at Ely railway station. Cllr Ashley pointed out a service to Ely had been tried in the past but there had not been any take up.

Min 207) Works to Allotments: The Clerk had received quotations for clearing the ditch and culvert at the allotments (£600+ VAT) and the repair of the roadways (£700 plus VAT) and she had agreed to both works, although the latter would only take place when the weather improved. She had not agreed to repairs to the south side gate (£320) as this took expenditure above the budget.

L55) Empress Swimming Pool: Following the continued closure of the pool, Cllr Unwin asked for the matter to go on the agenda of the next Leisure meeting. She said she had been approached by many users of the pool who had brought up the fact it was an asset of community value. Cllr Benney explained that the listing merely meant a sale could be stalled as the asset would be offered to the local community who would have 6 months to raise the money. Even if the community raised the money or put in a better offer the owner did not have to sell to them.

The perceived problems with the pool and the costs of running a swimming pool were discussed.

## 222) Police Matters

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

### **Local Police**

The Clerk had contacted Sgt Chris Arnold and reported online the damage and anti-social behaviour at the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park. At least two other people also reported the incidents on-line but the police said there were no viable lines of enquiry. Sgt Arnold said he would try and ensure there were patrols at the pocket park and he had also sent it to the Rural Crime Action Team who had offroad bike capabilities to try and prevent the offending. The Clerk said she had looked into gates to try and prevent admission but was aware those who were using the off road motorbikes would simply gain access another way (over the bund). She suggested the seizure of just one offending bike would send the message home.

Whilst updating the Town Guide, Cllr Selman had contacted the Police Firearms museum only to be told the museum had closed and items were being moved out. (Cllr Benney said he understood the museum had lost its funding).

### **Neighbourhood Alerts**

6, 13, 27/2/24: Latest from the courts.

9 & 12/2/24: Notification of a county-wide dispersal order ahead of a planned car meet and follow up stating about 150 cars were moved on when they gathered in the Serpentine Green car park in Hampton.

12/2/24: Notification that neighbourhood officers had been out and about in Chatteris with exhaust noise monitoring equipment but no one was found to be exceeding the limit.

16/2/24: Notification that tickets were issued to cars parked obstructively outside schools. One of the schools targeted was Glebelands.

16/2/24: Warning issued after vans were targeted by thieves and tools stolen. One of the vans targeted was in Fillenham Way, nothing was stolen.

19/2/24: February newsletter from the March Neighbourhood team including information about vehicle nuisance patrols and enforcement in Chatteris and the team's priorities - illegal parking around primary schools, retail crime across the sector and speeding.

22/2/24: Request from Fenland Community Safety Partnership to fill in a survey to help inform their work.

22/2/24: Notification that the Major Crime Unit had taken over the investigation into the disappearance of a Wisbech man.

24/2/24: Notification that a child was injured in a fail-to-stop collision in Warboys and the police were keen to speak to witnesses.

28/2/24: Information on four ways to frustrate a fraudster.

4/3/24: The March edition of the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter Our News.

4/3/24: Notification that a car not fit for driving was seized in Chatteris after it was found parked on the road in Horsegate Gardens.

### **223) FDC and Street Scene Updates**

No FDC or Street Scene updates had been received despite chasing by the Clerk.

### **224) Financial Officer's Report**

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 showing expenditure of £544,015.72 and income of £496,547.96 (includes full 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.

### **225) Payment of Accounts**

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

Onecom	January Phone Bill	<b>2531</b> <b>4 of 10</b> 93.00
Tamar Nurseries	Cllr Newell's Memorial Tree	474.00
N Meekins	Refund Mayors Charity Event	50.00
J Fuller Gray	Refund Mayors Charity Event	50.00
Huntingdon DC	Refund Mayors Charity Event	50.00
R J Warren	Gardening Services	742.04
R J Warren	Clearing of Ditch & Blocked Culvert at Allotments	720.00
Payroll	March 24 Payroll	6,557.45
British Gas	Electricity Bill, 14 Church Lane	19.00
St Ives TC	Refund Mayors Charity Event	25.00
Town & Country Signage	New Pocket Park Signs & Repairs	1,377.60
Viking	Stationary	314.59
Barclays	Debit Charges	8.50
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Gloves for Catering	25.58
Impie	Advert	792.00
J T Chambers	Valuation for Works to 14 Church Lane	20,520.00
J T Chambers	Concrete Base for Museum Shed	2,352.00
Zen Internet	Website Feb/Mar & Domain Renewal	32.98
Wave	Water Bill, 2 Park Street	48.81
FDC	Elections May 23	5,275.79

Kay Mayor	Refund Mayors Charity Event	<b>2532</b> <b>5 of 10</b> 50.00
Ian Mason	Reim: FLAPP Sundries	29.14
SSE Energy	2 Park Street (Museum) Electricity Bill	649.95
UK Safety Management	Pat Testing	231.60
Onecom	December Phone Bill	93.37
Youths Of Fenland	Junior Youth Club Provision	716.41
Youths Of Fenland	Senior Youth Well Being Café Provision	1,296.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>42,595.31</b>

The Clerk commented it was disappointing that the planned Mayor's Charity evening had had to be cancelled but all monies already paid had been refunded.

## **226) Financial Review**

[ 1] Members were advised that the purpose of the report was to review the Council's financial activities, as required to be undertaken annually under the Financial Regulations Clause 1.5, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement and in preparation for the 2023/24 audit.

### [ 2] Financial Regulations

Members were reminded that the Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved by resolution at the February 2019 meeting and revised regulations were published. (Min 221). The Town Council adopted CAPALC/NALC's Model Financial Regulations – (The England updated version May 2016). Since then, CAPALC/NALC had revised and published a 2019 Model with minor changes and were now in the process of revising that model. This was due to be finalised and released by May 2024.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she would update the Town Council's Financial Regulations as soon as CAPALC/NALC released the updated model for Town and Parish Councils to adopt.

### [ 3] Risk Management

Members were advised that the Council approved a Risk Management Policy in August 2002 and revised wording was approved in February 2014 (**Appendix A**).

[ 4] Insurances

Members were reminded that they approved a new 3-year long term policy with Zurich Municipal at the February 2023 Council meeting. (min. 198).

The new insurance policy commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and cost £1,988.60, this cost was based on the discounted 3-year long-term agreement.

The insurance policy would be automatically renewed on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and 2025 and would remain active until 01<sup>st</sup> April 2026 whereby the long-term agreement would expire.

The annual renewal cost for April 2024 was 2,095.77.

[ 5] Protection of Assets

A copy of the Council's Register of Assets was attached (Appendix B).

Members were reminded, the value of assets were not contained in the balance sheet they were just listed as a memorandum item in the supporting information, it was discussed and previously agreed with the internal auditor that it was not necessary to pay a District Valuer for a re-valuation of any assets unless the Council intended to sell the assets. Since then, the insurance company had advised that they would require a professional valuation on both properties once the refurbishment works had been completed.

The Town Councils assets had increased from the purchase and refurbishment of 2 Park Street and the ongoing refurbishment of the Town Council offices building at 14 Church Lane. At present the insurance valuation figures stand at £598,500.00 for the Council offices in Church Lane and £630,000.00 for 2 Park Street.

The notional value of the two properties, the street furniture, office equipment, fixtures, fittings, and contents were updated annually for insurance purposes and this would suffice until building works were completed and a professional valuation on both buildings was carried out.

[ 6] Internal Controls

Members were advised that the new Financial Regulations 2019 approved under resolution by Members at the February Council meeting (Min 221) included everything that was appended in the Internal Controls (Appendix C). It was therefore no longer necessary for it to be included as a separate appendix in the Financial Regulations. The Internal Controls were reviewed every year under the financial review.

Appendix C had been revised due to the renewed approval of the use of Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits and standing orders for process of payments. Under the Financial Regulations this approval should be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two

years. This renewal was approved on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (Min 251).

The renewed approval would be included in the updated version of the Financial Regulations, once NALC/CAPALC released the new model template. In the meantime, Members were advised that any payments made by Bacs, Chaps, variable direct debits and standing orders were approved by resolution at the full Council meetings on the monthly schedule of payments.

[ 7] Internal Audit

Members were advised that under current regulations, an annual review of effectiveness of internal audit was no longer required. It was, however, still necessary to re-appoint an Internal Auditor annually. The current Auditor, Mark Saunders, had confirmed he was willing to carry out the internal audit for 2023/24.

[ 8] Investments

Members were advised that the Council's Register of Investments, including yields, was attached at Appendix D.

At the full council meeting held on 6th June 2023 (Min 34) Members of the Council considered and **approved** reinvestment of £85,000 with Nationwide Building Society at 2.75% fixed for 1 year.

[ 9] Risk Assessment

Members were advised that Risk assessments were carried out by the Clerk on a needs basis for all events organised by the Town Council.

[ 10] It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved as below: -

- [ i ] the Council's Risk Management Policy (Appendix A) be approved;
- [ ii ] the Register of Assets (Appendix B) be approved;
- [ iii ] the Internal Controls (Appendix C) be noted & approved;
- [ iv ] Mark Saunders be offered re-engagement as Internal Auditor for the 2023/24 audit;
- [ v ] the updated Register of Investments (Appendix D) be approved.

**227) To Agree Grounds Maintenance Contract**

Members were advised that the Financial Officer had received the 2024/25 quotations for the ground's maintenance and Little Acre Pocket Park maintenance services.

The annual garden maintenance contract quotation was £7,568.84, this was an increase of £148.44 per annum.

The Little Acre Pocket Park annual quotation was £898.90, this was an increase of £17.62 per annum.

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

**228) Capital Funding for Chatteris**

A discussion took place on the absence of funding for Chatteris in the FDC budget. It was pointed out there was a need to apply for funding for an extension to the King Edward Centre.

**229) Date of Annual Town Meeting**

The Clerk apologised that she had had to change the date of the Annual Town Meeting which would now be held on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at the King Edward Centre at 7pm

**230) Growing Fenland Update**

The Clerk said the good news was that the Mayor of the Combined Authority along with his wife, the Deputy Mayor of the Combined Authority and her husband and officers Mr Domenico Cirillo and Ms Grace Crawford had all accepted an invitation to attend the official opening of the museum on the 11<sup>th</sup> May, which proved it was a project they held in high esteem.

The Financial Officer reported she made regular claims for re-imburement from the Combined Authority and they were promptly paid.

The museum was doing well and the architect had been shown the issues with damp and a report back was awaited.

**231) Planning**

Cllr Ashley (Chairman of the Planning Working Group) took over chairing the meeting for this item and the Deputy Mayor declared an interest and left the room. Councillors considered planning applications a) to j) (as shown on the **appended** list) and agreed to return the applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Noted
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Will Support Tree Officer's decision
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support and re-iterate the need to provide an extension to the footpath along the A141 (Fenland Way) so it extends from the Slade End Roundabout to the Tesco's site.

The Clerk gave details of the plans which would be determined by FDC's planning committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> March. They included: the erection of 9 dwellings at land east of 13B Bridge Street; the siting of a mobile home for residential use and erection of an ancillary day room at land south west of 92 High Street and the erection of a detached annexe block at the



rear of Bramley House Hotel, High Street. All three were recommended for refusal. The Town Council had also recommended refusal of the first two applications but supported the Bramley House application.

The application to erect 7 dwellings at 71 Huntingdon Road had been withdrawn and the applications for a timber gate and new patio area at The Old Stables, 31B London Road and variation to the erection of a fence at 80 Bridge Street had both been approved by FDC.

### **232) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (**copy attached**).

L47 Fire Station: It was reported Manea fire station had provided a crew recently to deal with a flooding problem.

L50 Defibrillators: FDC's S106 officer said the wording of the S106 agreement, with regards to the £5,000 held in the account for Chatteris, was quite specific and the allocation of funds to purchase the defibrillators would not be in accordance with the agreement. The Clerk advised members there was provision in the budget for one defibrillator, which would go in the old telephone kiosk, but the purchase of a defib for the cemetery would have to wait unless it was possible to get a grant.

### **233) To Decide Whether to Take Up Offer of Official Portrait of HM the King**

All public authorities had been invited to apply for a free, framed portrait of His Majesty King Charles III. Members agreed they would like to take up the offer.

### **234) Youth Report**

The Clerk had been sent a copy of the findings of a Youth Survey conducted by Cambridgeshire County Council's Targeted Support & Communities Service Team. It was agreed the report should be discussed at the next Leisure Working Group meeting and the Clerk would send a copy of the report to all working group members.

### **235) Traffic Issues**

Road upgrade: A resident had enquired if there were plans to upgrade the Chatteris to Ely road to reduce the constant congestion, especially at the Sutton roundabout. It was agreed this request should go to the County Council who could be asked to look at the safety record of the road.

Drainage: Notification had been received of planned drainage maintenance works in Eden Crescent which were due to be carried out in the second week in August.

Sign: The Clerk had reported the damaged weight limit sign at the Huntingdon Road/West Park Street junction and it had already been replaced.

Temporary orders: Notification had been received of a temporary road closure order which would affect Fairview Avenue, Crescent, Drive and Gardens and planned carriageway surface dressing works to be carried out in Langwood Hill Drove in June.

Road works: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received.

### **235) Correspondence**

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

Mobile bank closure: It was pointed out that it was possible to do most forms of banking at the Post Office.

Reservoir: Cllr Selman reported that the next meeting of the Fens Reservoir Liaison group would take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> March.

### **236) Reports**

In Bloom: Cllr Unwin warned the display for 2024 would be scaled down as it was not possible to hang baskets from the lampposts and there were problems with the suggested alternative of attaching baskets to buildings as it was a conservation area and there would be problems with putting the baskets up.

Boxing Club: The Clerk asked members for a steer on the size of grant they would be prepared to give to the boxing club. She pointed out there was money left in the grants budget. Cllr Murphy proposed £1,000 and this was agreed. The Clerk assured members that the Financial Officer would examine the club's accounts when a grant application was received, as she did with every organisation who applied.

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

No items were put forward for the next agenda.