

# **Chatteris Town Council**

## **Annual Report**

### **Year To April 2025**

This year we completed the Growing Fenland Project and we are proud to say that Chatteris Town Council now owns and administers two prominent buildings in the town.

Jointly the buildings have been valued at £2.4m (for insurance purposes); wonderful assets for the town. Most importantly they are both bringing in rental incomes, from letting the first floor of both buildings. This income is helping to keep down the council tax paid by Chatteris residents, supporting local groups and organisations (such as the Christmas Lights and In Bloom) through grants and paying the running costs of the museum in its new home at 2 Park Street. The museum is going from strength to strength and is attracting record numbers of visitors with its continually changing displays and activities for children.

Four small community rooms have been created at 14 Church Lane and these are being used by Citizens Advice and the local NHS vaccination and immunisation team during the day and by local groups at night. They have also been used for hearing services during the year and it is hoped these may return, if the company who ran them can find NHS funding.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> February representatives of the Combined Authority (who funded the Growing Fenland Project), contractors who had worked on the project and local dignitaries were among those invited by the Mayor to a cheese and wine event at 14 Church Lane to celebrate the completion of the project.

During the year the Council has also:

- a) Successfully applied for LHI funding for warning signs of pedestrians crossing the A141 Fenland Way.
- b) Applied for LHI funding for warning signs of the New Road junctions on to the A142.
- c) Completed and distributed a new town guide, with thanks to Cllrs Selman and Unwin for their work on the guide.
- d) Funded youth services in the town, including the very successful Well Being Café, which distributes hot chocolate and advice to teenagers after school.
- e) Purchased and installed a new defibrillator in the old telephone kiosk in Wood Street, with special thanks to Cllr Joyce for the installation and redecorating the kiosk.
- f) Welcomed two new zebra crossings, having campaigned for the crossing in Bridge Street.
- g) Worked with Fenland District Council to deliver one of the most successful Midsummer Festivals to date with record crowds on the Sunday.
- h) Unveiled memorial plaques for former councillors Florence Newell and Rosemary Stimson.
- i) Worked closely with the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park to deliver improvements at the park and a successful Easter activity morning.
- j) Helped In Bloom get permission to put up their hanging baskets.
- k) Funded the testing of the Christmas Lights fittings
- l) Commented on plans for the new reservoir.

- m) Funded community bus services, including the free service around Chatteris on Fridays run by FACT.
- n) Funded a survey of all the trees owned by the Town Council.
- o) Commented on FDC's Infrastructure Plan.
- p) Given out grants to multiple local organisations.
- q) Commemorated D-Day 80 by lighting the beacon.
- r) Met with PCs Pell and Hall to discuss policing issues.
- s) Considered and commented on road projects, including the installation of disabled parking bays.
- t) Welcomed the return of the County Council's weed treatment programme.
- u) Considered and put forward ideas for Capitally Funded Highways Maintenance Projects in Chatteris.
- v) Welcomed news FDC was looking into the possibility of providing a new swimming pool in Chatteris.
- w) Requested Section 106 funds be used for new play equipment at Furrowfields Recreation Ground.
- x) Approved the design of a mural commemorating the town's boxing champions.

### **The Council**

Cllr Anne Hay was re-elected as Mayor in May 2024. Cllr Hay has been very busy helping to run the council, attending events in Chatteris and representing the Council at numerous events in other towns around the County. She has also represented the town on Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Cllr Ian Benney was re-elected as Deputy Mayor.

During the year Cllr Ken Perrin resigned and a by-election was held in February to fill the vacancy on the Slade Lode South ward. Cllr Jo Fuller-Gray was duly elected. There have been 12 meetings of the full council and shown below is the number of meetings Councillors have attended (followed by the number they were eligible to attend). It must be noted that Cllr Siggee was on long term sick leave from the Council for part of the year. Many members have also attended monthly meetings of the planning and the leisure working groups and councillors have represented the Council on outside bodies.

Linda Ashley	11/12	Ian Benney	10/12
James Carney	6/12	Alan Gowler	9/12
Anne Hay	10/12	Astrid Jones	5/12
Vic Joyce	10/12	Peter Murphy	10/12
Ken Perrin	5/8	Sharon Selman	12/12
Matthew Siggee	7/12	Sue Unwin	11/12
Jo Fuller-Gray	2/2		

Cllr Charlie Marks, one of the district councillors for the Chatteris north and Manea ward, also attended most meetings and raised concerns about illegal encampments off New Road and the lack of light being emitted from new street light bulbs installed by the County Council.

Planning: The Council's planning working group, chaired by Cllr Ashley, made recommendations on planning applications and these were ratified by the full council. In total the Council made recommendations on 99 new and revised planning applications to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The planning group also considered possible LHI schemes and made a recommendation to full council.

Leisure: The Leisure and General Purposes Working Group, chaired by Cllr Joyce, met with representatives of the George Clare Surgery and the CAMMs Meals on Wheels service; oversaw the development of the Pocket Park and Old Railway Line footpath; planned the D-Day commemorations; completed a questionnaire about the new reservoir; completed consultations on 'Remote Attendance at Meetings and Proxy Voting' and 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities'; reviewed the bus services provided by FACT in Chatteris (with helpful input from Cllr Ashley); revised a Section 106 shopping list; planned the purchase of and installation of the defibrillator; made decisions on the new Town Guide; looked into the idea of a splash pad and the ownership of land at the Old Auction Yard.

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:

A resident seeking a grant for a project on local myths and legends.

Concerns expressed about comments made at the Annual Town meeting.

A resident seeking support for the Empress Pool to continue as an Asset of Community Value.

Developers of a site in Doddington Road concerned about comments made about them and the architect.

A resident seeking an update on the Tithe Farm development.

A resident reporting problems with a tenant.

Cllr Dave Connor, Chair of FDC's planning committee, on planning rules and consultations.

Concerns about one councillor's views on immigration.

Traffic problems in Victoria Street.

Concerns about CCTV cameras pointing on to a public drove and concern that planning conditions had not been adhered to on a new build.

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; their contract was reviewed, new quotations sought and the contractors were then re-appointed.

The officers have worked closely with the architect and the building contractor to deliver the Growing Fenland project and have then dealt with any queries raised by the tenants of 14 Church Lane and 2 Park Street. They are now working with FDC officers, contractors and staff at the King Edward Centre to deliver an extension to the centre, funded by a grant sourced by FDC.

The Clerk has also carried out the wishes of the Council, helped to organise another successful Midsummer Festival and series of Summer Fun shows, administered the allotments, oversaw works at the Pocket Park and the Old Railway Line footpath, produced

the minutes of meetings, organised meetings, organised the road closures for the Remembrance Parade, submitted grant applications, worked with FACT on the free bus service, 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 very successful Christmas meal and entertainment for the Over 75s.

**Joanna Melton**  
**Town Clerk**  
**April 2025**