



Chatteris Town Council

Annual Report

Year Ending 30th April 2018

In the year that the new Community/Town Plan for Chatteris was published, the Council has been listening to the residents of the town and responding to calls for improved facilities and support for services.

As a result two open spaces in the town are being greatly improved, a new community bus service is about to launch and financial support for two of the best loved volunteer services has been substantially increased.

The development of the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park is now underway thanks to Section 106 funding. A pathway has gone in and the area is to be re-seeded, new trees planted and other features introduced to encourage wildlife and visitors. Section 106 funding is also being used to improve the meadow area behind the Parish Church to make it a family-friendly area and the Council has purchased a picnic bench which will very shortly be installed.

As part of its planning permission Tesco's had to provide the funding for FACT to run a bus service to the store. That money has never been spent and the Town Council successfully argued the funding should be used to provide a community bus service. After a consultation it was agreed the most popular town to visit would be Ely for the new leisure village and the railway station/Tesco. The new Ely Shuttle bus service will operate on Saturdays and will launch on the 9th June.

The Christmas Lights and In Bloom are not only popular with local residents but help to bring visitors to the town. In recognition the Town Council has substantially increased their grant aid. It has also found new youth workers to run the youth club it funds.

During the year the Council also:

- a) Agreed to set up a new group to discuss the issue of empty shop and business units.
- b) Agreed to pay the running costs of the new CCTV camera at the Wenny Skatepark and entered a new service level agreement with FDC to maintain and monitor other CCTV cameras.
- c) Took charge of a new MVAS unit which will monitor speeding issues on various roads.

- d) Completed and officially opened the gas lamps project.
- e) Erected a blue plaque in memory of George Clare VC and successfully battled to ensure his commemorative paving slab was installed at the war memorial in Chatteris.
- f) Helped to organise and fund another very successful Midsummer Festival which saw camels parading through the streets of Chatteris.
- g) Formally adopted the new Community/Town Plan and began work on the action points.
- h) Voted in favour of Cromwell becoming a 4-18 school.
- i) Fought a stopping up order on public land adjacent 15 The Orchards.
- j) Sadly failed in a bid to gain LHI funding for road safety improvements to Wenny Road.
- k) Looked into and suggested a solution to parking problems in Huntingdon Road.
- l) Assisted the Post Office manager with a planning problem following the ram raid on his shop.
- m) Financially supported the Summer Reading Scheme at the library, the museum, the King Edward Centre and gave out grants to many organisations in Chatteris.
- n) Organised and funded the ever popular Summer Fun shows in August.
- o) Submitted more information in support of an application to register the footpath from Wenny Road to The Elms.
- p) Requested, on numerous occasions, improved bus services for Chatteris.
- q) Carried out a survey of all trees on Chatteris Town Council-owned land and funded works suggested.
- r) Monitored the use of the All Weather Pitch at Cromwell Community College.
- s) Supported the installation of no parking signs and the replacement of goal posts at Tithe green.
- t) Received monthly updates from Fenland District Council (including CCTV and Street Scene reports) and the police.
- u) Welcomed news that Chatteris would receive funding from the Market Towns Masterplans for Growth scheme and was to be included in a Community Literacy Project.
- v) Hosted the Cyril Haigh Trust draw.
- w) Adopted a Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy.
- x) Made recommendations on disabled parking bay applications.
- y) Continued to chase up the smelly drains problem.
- z) Followed up complaints from residents about highways and parking issues.

The Council

Cllr Bill Haggata was re-elected Mayor in May 2017 and represented the Council at all the events in Chatteris he was invited to attend. He also attended events outside Chatteris. Cllr James Carney was re-elected Deputy Mayor.

During the year a by-election took place following the disqualification of Ms Leah Templeman as a councillor due to non-attendance. Mr Ian Benney was elected to fill the vacancy on the Slade Lode ward.

There were 12 meetings of the full council during the year and shown below is the number of meetings Councillors attended. Several members also attended monthly meetings of the

planning and leisure working groups and councillors represented the Council on numerous outside bodies.

| | | | |
|-----------|----|-------------|----------|
| L Ashley | 10 | I Benney | 4 (of 7) |
| J Burrow | 2 | A Carney | 8 |
| J Carney | 6 | A Hay | 12 |
| W Haggata | 12 | P Murphy | 10 |
| F Newell | 12 | K Patterson | 4 |
| J Smith | 11 | I Taylor | 8 |

Planning: The Council's planning working group and the Council made recommendations to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council on 128 new and revised applications. They also raised concerns about the length of time taken to determine major planning applications.

Leisure: The leisure working group was busy with the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park project, planning the annual town meeting, the community bus project, the Church meadow project and met regularly with Mr Bob Ollier (FDC's open spaces manager) to discuss the maintenance of and improvements to recreation grounds and green spaces in the town. The group also worked on a plan to address action points raised in the community/town plan.

Open Forum: The Town 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. Matters raised during the year have included:

Virgin Media's plans to bring fibre optic broadband to Chatteris.

Objections to plans for 350 homes at Wenny.

Concerns about speeding lorries and the possibility of a roundabout in London Road.

Concerns about the closure of shops in the High Street and the installation of PVC windows in a Conservation Area.

The possibility of installing more blue plaques in the town.

Problems with four wheel drive vehicles ruining droves.

Concerns about the quality of re-instatement work by Virgin Media.

Request for support for the Save Wenny Meadow campaign.

Speakers: Speakers at Council, leisure and planning meetings have included:

PCSOs Dawn Rae, Glenn Macloud and James Cox on policing in Chatteris.

PCs Kurt Allen and Janine Hagger on the underpass mural project.

Drs John Szekely and Susan King, of the George Clare Surgery, on GP service provision in Chatteris.

Representatives of HBV Villages Ltd on plans for a development for vulnerable adults in Huntingdon Road.

Local architects Lee Bevens and Ian Gowler on proposed planning applications.

Mr Martin Lawrence, of Stainless Metalcraft, on the company's future plans and plans for an enterprise zone in Chatteris.

Mr Pete Jones, supervisory officer for Chatteris Fire Station, on plans to improve the station.

A representative of Virgin Media to discuss concerns about reinstatement work.

Members of the Community Plan team for the hand-over of the plan and discussions on the way forward.

A County officer to discuss cycle routes around Chatteris. The Leisure group then drew up a cycle routes wish list.

Mr Bob Ollier on recreation ground and open space projects in Chatteris.

Councillors also met with highways officers to discuss re-surfacing and pot-hole concerns and parking problems in Huntingdon Road.

Officers: For most of the year the Council employed three part-time members of staff. However following the retirement of the gardener after five years of excellent work, the Council is now employing contractors to maintain the allotments and open spaces it owns and to help with the maintenance of the FDC-owned play areas.

The Financial Officer prepared the final accounts and annual governance statement for the annual audit which was passed with no issues raised. She also administered the accounts as per the financial regulations, advised on the precept, prepared the budget, undertook a financial review and re-invested the Council's assets. She is now working on ensuring the Council is GDPR compliant.

The Clerk carried out the wishes of councillors, continued to administer the allotments, organised the Summer Fun events and helped to organise the Midsummer Festival, oversaw the work on the pocket park, recorded meetings, acted as an intermediary between councils and passed on residents' concerns to the relevant authorities.

For more information on the Council visit the website www.chatteristowncouncil.info

Joanna Melton

May 2018