



Chatteris Town Council

Annual Report

Year Ending 30th April 2017

Chatteris Town Council has continued its quest to improve facilities and services for the residents of the town this year.

With the District and County Council's continually being forced to make budget cuts, it has fallen on the Town Council to keep some services going and to look at ways of increasing facilities.

The Town Council is now the sole funder of Chatteris Youth Club and it continues to provide significant financial support for the Christmas Lights, In Bloom, the Museum, the Midsummer Festival and the King Edward Centre whilst also helping to fund activities at the library and giving grants to enable smaller clubs and organisations to continue. Up until December the Council was paying the bill to keep the street lights on all night.

In a bid to improve facilities for residents the Council is planning to create a Pocket Park on land it owns at Little Acre Fen. This should be a welcome addition to the leisure opportunities created by the popular Old Railway Line Footpath and Bridleway. The Council is determined the full cost of the park will not fall on council taxpayers and has applied for grant aid for the project. The next project in the pipeline looks likely to be the creation of a mooring post on the Forty Foot river near Chatteris to encourage the boating fraternity to visit the town.

Staying with tourism a town councillor has single-handedly produced a promotional leaflet for the town after councillors agreed existing leaflets were not fit for purpose.

During the year the Council:

- a) Successfully fought the replacement of the street lights in the centre of the town which would have ruined the Christmas Lights and In Bloom hanging baskets displays.

- b) Helped to organise another very successful Midsummer Festival on the theme the Rio Olympics Come to Chatteris.
- c) Successfully submitted a bid for Local Highways Improvements funding for speed reduction measures in Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces.
- d) Progressed the Gas Lamps Project; the lamps are being restored and will be installed this month.
- e) Agreed to support plans for a mural artwork project for the underpass.
- f) Made arrangements for the VC commemorative paving slab for George Clare to come to Chatteris and supported plans to improve the war memorial.
- g) Agreed to purchase a blue plaque for George Clare's former home in Clare Street.
- h) Funded the refurbishment of the public noticeboard on Jubilee Gardens.
- i) Responded to requests for more seating at Furrowfields by purchasing a new picnic bench (yet to be installed).
- j) Opposed the sale of FDC-owned land at Westbourne Close.
- k) Joined the fight to save the Minor Injuries Unit at Doddington Hospital.
- l) Closely followed the plans for a new free school in Chatteris and asked a number of pertinent questions.
- m) Made suggestions on how the money paid to FACT by the developers of the Tesco site could best be spent.
- n) Agreed to fund an update of the Town Guide following a kind offer by Chatteris Rotary Club to compile the guide.
- o) Argued, unsuccessfully, that a new secondary school for Fenland should be built in March not Wisbech.
- p) Liaised with Anglian Water who inspected smelly drains in the town and carried out cleansing operations.
- q) Had regular monthly updates from the police and Fenland District Council.
- r) Followed up complaints from local residents about anti-social behaviour, highways and parking issues.
- s) Asked Fenland District Council about their future plans for Chatteris.
- t) Flew a flag to mark Commonwealth Day and took part in the Remembrance Day parade and service.
- u) Met with representatives of Tesco's to discuss the future of their site.
- v) Paid for the installation of a new bin in London Road.
- w) Organised and funded the Summer Fun shows in August which were as popular as ever.
- x) Organised the Annual Town Meeting which included presentations by several local organisations and a Powerpoint presentation on "Putting Chatteris on the Map".
- y) Helped local residents concerned by the lack of progress on the New Road development.

The Council

Cllr Bill Haggata was elected Mayor in May 2016 and made a flying start representing the council and the town at a variety of functions. Unfortunately ill health forced him to take a step back later in his term of office and Deputy Mayor Cllr James Carney then deputised at meetings and at functions whenever work and family commitments allowed. Cllr Carney, the

former Mayor, held a function when he gave out the proceeds of his charity fund to six charities.

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	J Burrow	3
A Carney	10	J Carney	10
W Haggata	8	A Hay	9
P Murphy	8	F Newell	11
K Patterson	7	J Smith	12
I Taylor	8	L Templeman	3

Open Forum: The Town Council continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the 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:

The application for a Stopping Up Order at The Hawthorns and opposition from local residents.

Concerns about trees on the Wenny Road development site.

An attempted break-in at the Museum and Council Chambers.

Information about a biography of George Clare VC and commemorations for Private Clare.

Overgrown highways verges in London Road.

Notification of a meeting about devolution.

Improvements to the war memorial.

Information about the Must Farm Roadshow.

An appeal from In Bloom for more volunteers.

Parking problems in Ronaldsway.

Speakers: Speakers at full Council meetings included:

Mr Daniel Bayles, Fenland District Council's Environmental Officer, on environmental issues.

Mrs Pam Joyce, Highways officer for Chatteris (July to March).

PCSO Dawn Rae with crime updates and PC Kurt Allen on plans for the underpass.

Inspector Will Davis on policing issues.

Speakers from Citizens Advice Rural Cambs on a request for funding.

Mr Ian Trafford and Ms Alison Orrell, of Cambridgeshire County Council's education department, on plans for the new free school and a temporary primary school on the Cromwell Community College site.

County Councillor Dick Mandley on County issues affecting the town.

Planning: The Council's planning working group and the Council made recommendations to Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council on 126 new and revised planning applications.

Leisure: The leisure and general purposes working group pursued the Gas Lamps Project, made applications for funding for the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Project, pursued calls for a CCTV camera covering the new skatepark, considered the idea of an outdoor gym, rejected

the idea of a DJ booth at the skatepark and planned the annual town meeting. Cllr Smith researched and designed a new promotional leaflet for Chatteris. Speakers at leisure meetings were:

Mr Bob Ollier, FDC's parks and open spaces manager, on leisure projects in Chatteris.

Mr Chris Borg, of NALC, and Mr Ian Dewar, of CAPALC, on the benefits of membership of CAPALC (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils).

Mr Richard Cassidy (FDC Leisure Director) and Cllr Michelle Tanfield (FDC Portfolio Holder) on a leisure survey document which failed to recognise the need for a new pool in Chatteris.

Officers: The Council continues to employ three part-time members of staff.

During the year the Financial Officer prepared the final accounts and annual return (which were passed without issue by the Internal and External auditors), advised on the precept, prepared the budget, advised on the gradual withdrawal of the council tax support scheme, undertook a financial review, organised the insurance renewal, re-invested the Council's assets and reduced the Council's phone bills.

The Financial Officer and the Clerk also met with the Principal of Cromwell Community College and the Director of Finance to discuss ways of increasing the lettings of the All Weather Pitch in a bid to improve financial returns.

The Clerk continued to administer the allotments, organised the Summer Fun events and helped to organise the Midsummer Festival, recorded meetings and actioned councillors' requests and suggestions, submitted grant applications, acted as an intermediary between councils, passed on residents' concerns to the relevant councils and successfully argued that the George Clare VC commemorative paving stone should come to Chatteris.

The Council's gardener continued to maintain the allotments and other open spaces owned by the Council to a high standard and assisted FDC in the maintenance of play areas.

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

Joanna Melton

May 2017