

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 4th April 2023

2421

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 4th April 2023 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

Present: Councillors L Ashley (Mayor), A Hay (Deputy Mayor), I Benney, A Charrier, A Gowler, W Haggata, P Murphy, F Newell and J Smith.

234) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and I Taylor.

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

Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in all planning matters as a members of FDC's planning committee.

236) Open Forum

Two members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and one expressed a wish to address the council.

Ms Lucy Acred explained she was a community fund raiser for the RBL in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire and part of her role was to help poppy appeal organisers. She said many people donated to the appeal but did not realise what they were donating to. The money went towards helping the armed forces community in a number of ways from help with mental health issues and the cost of living crisis to help in obtaining employment.

Ms Acred said Chatteris had a really big Remembrance Sunday commemoration but currently did not have a poppy appeal organiser. There were lots of volunteers willing to help with the appeal but no-one to take on the organiser role which involved liaising with supermarkets about collections, the distribution and collection of collecting boxes and co-ordinating volunteers. Ms Acred said the role could be taken by one person or a small committee of up to 4 people. Cllr Gowler expressed a possible interest in the role and councillors promised to spread the word about the need for an organiser. Ms Acred was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

237) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

238) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 217) CCTV Update: In response to the query about a considerable reduction in the amount of patrols in February, the FDC officer responsible had stated this was down to there being less days in February.

Min 221) STEM: The grant had been paid to the Cambridge Science Centre to fund the STEM project in Chatteris and the head of development at the Centre had confirmed that the pop-up science centre had a home at the North Cambs Training Centre from mid-June and would also be attending the Midsummer Festival.

239) Police Matters

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

‘Local Police

Earlier in the month members received the crime statistics for December and January and yesterday they received the confidential minutes of a meeting between Neighbourhood Sergeant Chris Arnold and Council leaders held on 21st March 2023. The Mayor attended the meeting representing Chatteris Town Council. Members also received a copy of the Powerpoint presentation given at that meeting.

Neighbourhood Alert

11/3/23: Notification of campaign to raise awareness of 999 misuse.

13/3 & 3/4/23: March and April editions of Neighbourhood Watch’s Our News newsletter.

16/3/23: Notification that an appeal for help to catch Wisbech pensioner Una Crown’s killer was broadcast on national television, 10 years after her murder.

16/3/23: Call for the public to have their say on local policing priorities. At that time the priorities for the March team were drug use and dealing across March, Whittlesey and Chatteris, illegal parking in Whittlesey and speeding in rural parishes.

18/3/23: Information about child exploitation and how the public can help to tackle it; this includes criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation.

19/3/23: Notification that two people had been arrested in connection with a violent disorder incident in the Hornbeam Close area of March.

22 & 28/3 & 4/4/23: Latest court news.

27/3/23: Warning about a WhatsApp scam with criminals posing as a friend and asking for a security code. Once they have the code they can access someone’s WhatsApp account and lock them out.

29/3/23: Invitation to take part in Neighbourhood Watch’s annual Insights Survey and be in with a chance to win a £25 Amazon voucher.

30/3/23: Advice on when to use 999 and when to use 101.

3/4/23: Notification of vacancy to be a Communications Assistant with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

3/4/23: Footage of a brazen thief stealing from a car.’

The Mayor said the meeting with Sgt Arnold had been very constructive and she had noted that the crime situation in Chatteris was not as bad as March. Cllr Hay said she had found the reports very interesting,

Cllr Gowler said he had been contacted about vandalism at the Little Acre Pocket Park. The Clerk confirmed she had rescued the lifebuoy and its casing from the pond after it had been torn down from its post. The items were now safely stored at the Council Chambers.

240) FDC and Street Scene Updates

Members had a copy of the latest reports which were noted (**copy attached**). There was no CCTV update.

241) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 31st March 2023 showing expenditure of £784,937.54 and income of £371,210.56 (includes a 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.

242) Payment of Accounts

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

Payments Up to the End of March 23

FDC	CTC Summer Festival Contribution	10000.00
Cambridge Science Centre	Grant for Stem re: Chatteris Pop up Centre	1,000.00
Onecom	March Phone Bill	74.82
B Gas	Elec Bill	107.27
KEC	Centrepoint Grant	900.00
Xmas Lights Committee	Remaining Grant money	2,043.00
R J Warren	Feb Gardening Services	742.04
Zen Internet	Website domain renewal Summer Festival	14.39
Total		14,881.52

2022/23 Creditors

Rose Fire & Security	Fire alarm service	409.60
Rural CAB	Q for Face to Face service	1,537.00
Cambs CC	Hire of the Library re: CAB	253.50

Viking	Stationary	2424 4 of 10 132.23
Read to Succeed	Grant towards books for Chatteris year 4 pupils	500.00
Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
British Gas	Gas Bill	216.66
Total		3,057.49

April 2023

C A Chubbock	Annual Allotment Rent	275.00
Chatteris Women's RBL	Grant for Kings Coronation afternoon Tea party	50.00
Zurich Town & Parish Insurance	Town Council Insurance renewal	1,988.60
J T Chambers	Valuation 6 works to 2 Park Street	36,480.00
Clerk	Reim. Zoom & Sundries	197.83
R J Warren	Little Acre gardening services	132.19
R J Warren	Gardening Services outdoor spaces Chatteris	742.04
Zen Internet	Apr-May 23 website	13.79
Payroll	Payroll April 23	5,665.28
Total		45,544.73

243) To Agree Renewal of CAPALC Membership

Members had received a copy of the letter from CAPALC inviting the Council to renew its membership for 2023/24 and explaining the reason for the 5% increase and the benefits of membership. The Clerk had also received a leaflet explaining the range of services provided by CAPALC and the National Association of Local Councils.

Members **resolved** to renew the Council's membership of CAPALC for 2023/24 at a cost of £1,383.09 (including membership of the Data Protection Officer scheme) but agreed to review the benefits of membership in 2024.

244) To Consider Grants for Voluntary Organisations

[1] The Financial Officer reminded members the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications quarterly. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability.

[2] The approved budget for grants in **2023/24** was **£4,500**

There were separate approved budgets set in 2023/24 for the following: -

Chatteris King Edward Centre – Staffing contribution	10,000
Chatteris Museum Trust	6,500
Chatteris Christmas Lights Committee	10,500
Chatteris Town in Bloom	5,500
Chatteris Junior Youth Service Provision	4,500
Chatteris Town in Bloom Paid Watering service	1,000
Summer Children’s Fun	1,500
Summer Festival Contribution	5,000
Senior Youth Service Provision	5,400
Rural Citizen’s Advice Bureau Face to Face Service	6,280

[3] Applications for consideration by Members at the meeting were scheduled, with recommendations.

Chatteris Library Re Summer Reading Challenge

Grant to help support the Summer Reading challenge by adding additional family activities and staffing the events to include visiting the schools.
Up to £600 requested- Recommended £350, Members approved £400. (Cllr Smith declared an interest)

Chatteris Mid-Summer Festival

Grant request towards Kings Coronation Medals for the competitors in the colour fun run.
Grant to be taken from the Kings Coronation Budget.
£50 requested- Recommended £50.

Chatteris Town Bowls

Grant towards a bowling party to celebrate the Kings Coronation. All Members and the local community welcome to join in for a free try out with refreshments being served. Grant to be taken from the Kings Coronation budget.
Amount unspecified- Recommended £100. (Cllr Hay declared an interest).

It was **RESOLVED** that: - Members approved grants of £400 to the Chatteris Library, £50 to the Midsummer Festival and £100 to the Chatteris Town Bowls Club.

Cllr Gowler suggested the Council gave out too much money in grants and asked members to consider its grant scheme the following year He said one local parish council did not give out any grants. Cllrs Smith and the Mayor spoke in favour of the grant system. Cllr Smith said it was important for the council to support organisations run by volunteers for the benefit of the

community. Cllr Ashley agreed pointing out not only did the volunteers not get paid, they also had to fund raise for their organisations. She believed that being a councillor meant working for and supporting your community.

245) To Agree Repairs to Allotment Taps Estimate

The Clerk reported she had asked a plumber about boxing in the taps at the allotments and insulating them. The taps had been protected in this way in previous years but the boxing had disintegrated over the years.

There had been frequent problems with leaks and damaged taps as the current arrangement was a pipe out of the ground with a tap attached which was easily damaged. Leaks added to water bills which were already excessive.

The proposal was to attach the pipes to concrete posts and then box in the taps and add insulation within the box. The work would involve digging out the holes, concreting in posts, replacing any damaged pipes and taps and then creating purpose built boxes which would be filled with insulation. The plumbing work would be carried out by the gentleman, who was responsible for all the plumbing repairs at the allotments, and his carpenter friend would make the boxes.

Total estimated cost for the works to taps on both north and south sides was £760. The Financial Officer confirmed funds were available within the allotments budget as income had exceeded expenditure in 2022/23.

It was the Clerk's recommendation that the work be carried out over the summer in readiness for next winter and members **resolved** to agree to that recommendation and the works outlined.

246) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 28th March 2023 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to g) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered three further applications. It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Cannot support height of racking but would support the compromise of a reduction in height of the racking to reduce the impact on neighbouring properties' gardens.
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support

- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Cannot make a decision until planning application F/YR22/1379/TRCA (Felling of trees on the site) has been determined. Chatteris Town Council requested the FDC Tree Officer visit the site and said it would support all necessary works but these needed to be clarified by the tree officer. (Cllr Gowler declared an interest).

247) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that 2 Park Street was a hive of activity with the plumber, electrician, plasterer, decorator and security installers all working on the building. The good news was that all planning permissions and listed building consents were now in place. This meant the outbuilding could now be insulated, lined and skimmed and the CCTV cameras installed. The flooring contractor had been appointed and the new rear doors were due to arrive and be installed and the last cracked panes of glass would be replaced. The contractor had estimated the completion date at mid-May.

Members had a copy of a plan for 14 Church Lane which showed a few amendments to the ground floor layout compared to the original plan which had been submitted for planning permission. The new layout meant it would be possible to provide 3 community rooms, instead of the one originally proposed, with two flats at first floor (funding permitting).

In order to save money it was now proposed that no retaining walls should be removed. This meant the Council Chamber would not be extended lengthways but there was the possibility of extending part of the width. The Clerk explained she and the Financial Officer were busy seeking extra funding from the Combined Authority to allow works to 14 Church Lane to go ahead. The Financial Officer had submitted projected costs for the project.

The Financial Officer pointed out that if her desk, filing cabinet and other items stored in the council chambers were removed there would be significantly more space. She also said that working with the building would lead to significant savings. The Combined Authority were very enthusiastic about the project and wanted to see it completed.

Cllr Smith was disappointed a larger Council Chamber was not on the cards and pointed out a bigger room had been talked about initially for the council to sit in and for the visiting public.

Members agreed the architect should draw up a schedule of works and seek quotes based on the plan copied to councillors.

248) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Charrier (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 21st March 2023 (**copy attached**).

L62) FACT bus services: FACT had confirmed that on average 6-8 people used the Cambridge bus and 4-5 used the Chatteris Runner. It was agreed to advertise the services at the annual town meeting.

L62) Walking and Cycling Map: The Clerk said copies of the map would be delivered to the Council Chambers and other distribution points around the town the following day.,

L65) Annual Town Meeting: The Clerk confirmed the meeting would be held on the 21st April at 7pm at the King Edward Centre. Cllr Murphy warned councillors must be careful not to make any comments or answer any questions, particularly if it was being filmed. It was agreed the Mayor should make a statement explaining the reasons for councillors silence at the beginning of the meeting. Cllr Smith asked if those not standing could answer questions. The Clerk agreed to look into it and said she would be able to answer questions or take them away to answer at a later date.

249) Midsummer Festival Update

The Clerk reported plans were going well for the Midsummer Festival on the 24th and 25th June when the theme would be The Roaring 20s.

The small but dedicated band of volunteers was working well with the Clerk and Ms Isabel Edgington from FDC to organise an exciting programme of activities over the weekend and would appreciate any help from councillors.

Chatteris20s, the lottery-funded museum project, would be staging activities at the Festival.

250) Wenny Road Traffic Issues

Members had been copied in to email correspondence between the clerk and a police officer who lived off Wenny Road. The police officer had asked if there were plans to sort out road safety for children along Wenny Road. The officer said another zebra crossing was needed along with more traffic calming measures as there had been a significant rise in anti-social driving along the road.

The Clerk had promised to bring her concerns to the attention of councillors but stated there were no plans for further road safety measures in Wenny Road as crossing points, a 20mph school times speed limit and humps had already been installed through LHI schemes. The Clerk said the Council did not have the resources for more measures and suggested it was up to the police to take action.

The officer had not liked the reply and had insisted more measures were needed as it was incredibly dangerous.

Cllr Hay had also advised the Clerk that a local resident was complaining about the speed of traffic along the road and had complained to the Chief Constable.

The Mayor said she had explained to Sgt Arnold all the measures which had already been introduced in Wenny Road and he had said speed checks had been carried out in the area and illegally parked cars had been ticketed.

The Mayor suggested it might be an opportune time to put up the MVAS in Wenny Road. The Council's contractors had agreed to move the sign.

The Clerk reminded members that the Town Council had spent considerable time and money fighting for road safety measures in Wenny Road. The Council had paid contributions towards two LHI schemes (the school time 20mph speed signs and speed humps and the crossing). Following many site visits the LHI schemes had been drawn up taking into consideration where the children crossed and the need for buses to be able to turn into the area where they picked up and dropped off, etc.

Members agreed that the MVAS should be moved to Wenny Road and Cllrs Gowler and Benney were asked to monitor the speeds recorded and inform the police of those speeds.

(Cllr Benney gave his apologies and left the meeting).

251) Pedestrian Crossings Update

The Clerk was pleased to report that Highways project manager Mr Simon Manville had confirmed that the Combined Authority had no problems with changing the location of the two crossings planned in Chatteris. As a result Highways would be pressing ahead with the plans for the East Park Street and Bridge Street crossings.

These would be paid for using TCF funding. This meant the Town Council did not need to pursue LHI funding for the Bridge Street crossing.

Mr Manville promised to be back in touch with details of what would be delivered and when.

252) Traffic Issues

Pothole: It was reported that there was a significant pothole in Wenny Road next to the speed hump. Cllr Hay said she would report it. A number of potholes in West Street had been marked.

Parking: Cllr Gowler said a highways van parking on the corner of Clare Street and Huntingdon Road was causing significant visibility problems. The Mayor agreed to mention the problem to the police.

Old Auction Yard: A resident of the Old Auction Yard had rung to complain about motorists using the cul-de-sac as a turning area. He claimed the motorists actions were putting lives at risk and had called Highways who had informed him they needed instructions from a local council to look into the problem. The resident was keen to see No Turning painted on the

road. Members pointed out the local residents had the opportunity to pay for the works but it would be a significant amount as a traffic order would be required.

Temporary Traffic Order: Notification had been received of a temporary traffic order to reduce the speed on Fenland Way (near the garden centre) to 40mph and 30mph from 9pm to 6am on the 2nd and 3rd May to enable works on behalf of Outreach.

Reports: The latest roadworks and events information for Fenland had been received along with the TMC incident reports for March.

253) Correspondence

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

Royal Card: Cllr Smith took a photograph of the card from HRH King Charles and said she would put it on the Chatteris Community Archive website.

254) Reports

Cllr Haggata said as it was his last full council meeting he wished to say how much he had enjoyed the company of fellow councillors over the past 8 plus years. He had enjoyed the discussions and although he had not always agreed with all the views of others he had liked the lively debates.

He thanked councillors for giving him the privilege of serving as Mayor for three years and wished them well for the future.

Cllr Smith gave thanks for the opportunity to serve the community of Chatteris. She said she hoped she had done her best as she had tried to help wherever she could. It had been a privilege to work alongside fellow councillors and she had learnt a lot, particularly from Cllr Newell. Cllr Smith said she had enjoyed seeing how Chatteris had evolved. She encouraged everyone to consider standing for Council and said she would return as she still cared about the town.

The Mayor said it had been a pleasure working alongside Cllrs Haggata and Smith and thanked them for all their hard work for the town

255) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

