

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 3rd August 2021

2213

1 of 9

Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd August 2021 at the King Edward Centre, Chatteris.

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

70) To Accept Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr J Carney. Cllr M Petrou was also absent.

71) 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 members of FDC's planning committee.

72) Open Forum

There were no members of the public present and it was, therefore, agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

73) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th July 2021 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

74) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 59) Connections Bus: Members had received a copy of the Connections Bus Project report for the summer term on detached and outdoor youth club sessions in Chatteris. Mr Webb said the plan was to get one of the youth buses up and running in the hope it would be able to start again in September but this would depend on National Youth Agency guidelines.

Min 65) Doddington Road: Cllr Gowler said his brother had offered to help him and Cllr Benney try and sort out the MVAS speed unit currently sited in Curf Terrace. The Financial Officer had also contacted the manufacturers who were willing to discuss the issues and would know if the unit was faulty.

Min 62) Growing Fenland: Cllr Hay asked if FDC had been contacted regarding issuing improvement notices to properties in need of repair which were not applying for Renaissance Funding grants. The Clerk confirmed she had written but had yet to receive a reply and Cllr Hay offered to chase up the enquiry.

75) Police Matters

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

“Local Police

A confidential report from Sgt Richard Lugg has been forwarded by email as have the crime figures for April to July 2021. The report follows a meeting between Sgt Lugg and Council leaders from the Fenland area held on the 27th July 2021. Unfortunately the Mayor was unable to attend the meeting as she was in attendance at the planning working group meeting that evening. She has, however, had a subsequent meeting with Sgt Lugg and will update members at the Council meeting.

Neighbourhood Alerts

12/7/21: Details of a Sling your Hook campaign launched by Neighbourhood Watch to tackle scams.

15/7/21: Warning that warmer weather brings opportunities for burglars and advice on how to make your home more secure.

27/7/21: Information on a day of action in Cambridgeshire to tackle modern slavery. Dozens of nail bars and hand car washes were visited.

2/8/21: Notification that the force has launched its first podcast series. Cambs Cops follows narratives of survival, dealing with the trauma of an avoidable death and highlights some of the more complex and serious issues tackled by the police.

3/8/21: August edition of Our News the e-newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters.”

The Mayor said at her meeting with Sgt Lugg and Pc Allen it had been stated there were fewer incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour being reported. However the Mayor had stated there were still problems and women felt intimidated by youths calling out to them. Pc Allen had stated he was trying to secure permanent premises for the new youth club, which had been successful during its temporary run, with some of those previously hanging about the streets in attendance. Pc Allen was seeking backing from the Town Council but the Mayor explained the Council already financed two youth clubs.

The need to report crimes was discussed with Cllr Murphy suggesting at least 10 people needed to report a crime to ensure investigation. In the case of speeding the police would loan out the equipment and train local people to use it. Cllr Murphy also spoke about all the rubbish he had cleared from Jubilee Gardens, including half a can of petrol. The bushes meant offenders often could not be seen. Members queried if CCTV cameras offered value for money in the battle against crime.

The Mayor said the next police’ meeting would be on the 7th September, which was the date of the next Council meeting. Cllr Benney offered to attend the police meeting.

76) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

Members had received a copy of the reports (**copy attached**) which were noted.

77) Financial Officer's ReportBudget

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 26th July 2021 showing expenditure of £73,638.26 and income of £81,999.10 (includes a half year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

Cllr Murphy asked about the budget provision for the Remembrance Parade and the Clerk explained it was now the responsibility of Town or Parish Council's to arrange road closures for the Remembrance Sunday parade. Using information supplied by Major Norman Larke, she had successfully applied for roads to be closed whilst the parade was underway and had commissioned Ringway to organise the road closures.

Cllr Murphy also questioned the £10,000 set aside for electric vehicle charging points. The Financial Officer said the Clerk had looked into the idea but FDC were not willing to give permission for charging points in Furrowfields car park as they were also considering installing points in their car parks to help pay towards the costs of civil parking enforcement. Cllr Smith explained this was why the leisure group had decided not to pursue the idea further or put it to the full council. Cllr Haggata commented it was unfortunate that Fenland was one of the few areas without charging points. Cllr Murphy suggested parking spaces with charging points were often occupied by cars which did not require electric charging.

ICO Freedom of Information Act 2000(FOIA) Alleged Breach Notification

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had finally received a report back from the ICO officer who had been assigned to review the above alleged offence under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The report confirmed that upon review and assessment of the case the ICO had determined that there was insufficient evidence to substantiate that Chatteris Town Council destroyed or deleted material requested with the requisite criminal intent to prevent disclosure in response to a request received from the complainant.

The ICO had advised that they would not be taking any further action.

Cllr Hay said she believed it was a vexatious complaint which had resulted in considerable cost for the Council, in terms of officer hours spent providing information to the ICO, and stress for the individual reported, who had been carrying out the instructions of the Council.

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

78) Payment of Accounts

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

Financial Officer	Payroll August 2021	1,325.68
Clerk	Payroll August 2021	1,845.14
Pension Fund	Payroll August 2021	1,126.21
HMRC	Payroll August 2021	996.01
British gas	Elec bill	57.68
Barclays Bank	Bank Charges	6.50
Zen Internet	Website August-Sept	10.79
Ward Gethin Archer	Search Fees re Bank House Purchases	500.00
JezO's	Summer Fun	210.00
Mad Etiquette	Summer Fun	400.00
Squirty Wirty	Summer Fun	195.00
Clerk	Reim Zoom& Cable ties	28.93
Portalplan Quest	Planning permission fee Bank House	259.00
Onecom	July Telephone bill	80.27
Laura Dennis	Summer Festival Music Services	100.00
Middle Level Board	Land Drainage fee Allotments	151.74
Warboys Somersham & Pidley Board	Land Drainage fee Allotments	118.02
Wave	Council Offices water rates	34.75
Wave	RHSOF Allotments water rates	54.36
Wave	LHSOF Allotments water rates	76.79
R J Warren	Gardening Services, Allotment clearances, Little Acre	1,082.70

Browne Jacobson	Professional services re: Growing Fenland project; to check legalities of contract	2217 5 of 9 720.00
Town & Country Signage	Little Acre Pocket Park Sign	660.00
Cllr W Haggata	Reim: Mileage Planning Meeting Fenland Hall	9.00
Mayor Linda Ashley	Reim: DBS re Summer Fun & Summer Festival	13.00
Total		10,061.57

79) To Consider Grant Application for Chatteris Community Car Scheme

Members were advised that the Chatteris Community Car Scheme had applied for a grant towards the running costs of the various services the organisation provided.

These services included collection of prescriptions, transportation of local residents to and from medical appointments, shopping and other appointments the residents may have.

This organisation was run by volunteers and depended on voluntary donations/grants to keep it going.

The Financial Officer reminded Members that there were no grant applications received in July and as this was such a worthy voluntary organisation, providing an essential service to the residents of Chatteris, Members were asked to consider approving a grant of £500.

Members agreed that the Car Scheme provided an essential service to Chatteris residents and also to residents of Doddington, Manea & Benwick.

Members approved a £500 grant on the condition that the grant money was used for Chatteris residents only and that the car scheme organiser should approach the Parish Councils for neighbouring villages seeking a grant to the car scheme to help towards the running costs for their residents.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and a £500 grant approved.

80) To Consider Report by FDC's Parish Remuneration Panel on Parish Allowances

Members had received a copy of a report, by an independent panel, on remuneration for town and parish councillors. The recommendations were that if a Town or Parish Council felt a basic allowance would be appropriate they could pay an amount up to 1% of the basic allowance for Fenland District Council - £50. The Chair's allowance could be up to 2% - £100 – which could be paid in addition to the basic allowance. Travel and subsistence should be paid at the same rate as FDC members – 45p a mile.

Town and parish councillors could choose not to receive all or part of any allowance and should do so by giving written notice to the proper officer.

Members agreed that if they took any money the role would become non voluntary and the public would be able to argue that councillors were paid.

It was **unanimously agreed** that the Town Council would not pay a basic allowance to members but would pay out of pocket expenses such as travel.

81) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 27th July 2021 (**copy attached**). Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to e) (as shown on the **appended list**) and considered two further applications. The Clerk said with regards to c) planners had failed to respond to her request for clarification about the access to the site.

It was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Rec Refusal, overdevelopment of the site and members are convinced that the absence of any parking provision will lead to major difficulties in the area. Parking is already a problem in that area and potential residents will not use the towns' car parks - which only allow parking for a maximum of 24 hours – and walk to the site. They will park on the streets nearby which are already crowded with cars. Members also remain concerned about the access for emergency vehicles bearing in mind the Fire Service's comments.
- b) Support
- c) Need clarification about access to the site, in particular how width of existing drove is to be extended to 5m wide as proposed in the plans.
- d) Support the application if Highways are satisfied with access on to Doddington Road. Request the replacement of as many trees as possible and the inclusion of nesting boxes in houses to counter removal of trees.
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support

P17) Pavement Licence: The licence had been granted following a visit from a licensing officer who had insisted the planters be removed so three tables could be positioned flush with the front façade of the premises. The remaining width of the pavement then just met the minimum 1500mm for passing pedestrians.

82) Growing Fenland Update

Members had received a copy of the minutes of a meeting between the architect, the Chatteris members of the Growing Fenland town team, the Mayor and Town Council officers held on Friday 9th July. Those present discussed the plans to convert Barclays Bank to a museum. Another meeting was held on the 8th July between Cllrs Ashley, Benney and the Clerk with the Museum Curator to discuss the conversion. Members had also received a copy of the minutes of the Growing Fenland town team meeting held on the 27th July.

The Clerk confirmed Museum member Mrs Sue Spooner was busy planning the museum move.

The Financial Officer and the Clerk had dealt with the paperwork from the solicitors working on behalf of the Council to purchase the former bank freehold and leasehold. They were now awaiting a survey report on the state of the building before instructing the solicitors to go ahead and arrange the purchase of 2 Park Street. The solicitor had warned there would be stamp duty to pay on the purchase.

The Financial Officer also reported that she had submitted her first claim to the CPCA for grant funds for the Renaissance Project and after initial teething problems the claim for £5,500 had been paid.

83) Meeting with George Clare Surgery Representatives

A meeting with the George Clare Surgery representatives had been arranged for Thursday 19th August at 5pm at the King Edward Centre. All councillors were welcome to attend. The Mayor invited any councillors unable to attend to submit questions for the representatives.

84) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Smith (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on 21st July 2021 (**copy attached**).

L21) Cycle Rack: The Clerk had arranged that the Cricket Club would make use of the cycle rack from the Market Hill gardens and Mr Phil Hughes had offered to organise its removal and delivery to the Cricket Club.

L22) Day Centre: The Clerk had spoken to a representative from Age UK who had explained the group was keen for the day centre to return to Chatteris but the owners of Lyons Court were putting obstacles in the way. The Clerk had suggested using the King Edward Centre and the Financial Officer would be discussing the possibility with Age UK but there were concerns the cost of attending the day centre would go up to cover the cost of hiring a room at the KEC.

L23) Pocket Park: Cllr Smith said the information board was now installed at the Pocket Park.

L27) Metalcraft: Cllr Hay said when she and Cllr Benney attended the ground breaking ceremony for the new training centre she had mentioned the problems with the Slade End roundabout to the Mayor of the Combined Authority.

85) Traffic Issues

LHI: The Clerk had received an email inviting the Council to apply for a Local Highways Improvement grant for the 2022/23 financial year. As agreed at the July meeting of the

Council she would submit an application to reduce the speed limit in Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces to 30mph and to introduce speed reduction measures.

Members agreed it was very unfortunate that Highways had requested Persimmon Homes put in a new bus shelter, as part of the conditions for the new housing development, rather than contribute towards speed reduction measures.

New Road Speed Cushions: The resident of New Road in dispute with Highways about the speed cushions outside his home had copied the Council in to further correspondence. It appeared the County Council was considering replacing the speed cushions with lower cushions but the resident argued they would still be too close to his home and should be moved to a different location.

Remembrance Events: The Clerk had received a Powerpoint presentation giving an overview guide to traffic management requirements at Remembrance events. The email explained that insuring parades was no longer down to the Royal British Legion and traffic management duties were no longer the responsibility of the police. The duties were now the responsibility of parish or town councils. Aware of this the Clerk had already made the necessary arrangements.

Documents: The latest edition of the Road Safety Education Newsletter “Way to Go” had been received as had the latest Ouse Washes Section 10 Works update, information about road closures related to the A47 Guyhirn junction works and the highways events diary for August.

86) Correspondence

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

87) Reports

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the Chatteris Focus on Youth Group meeting held on the 14th July which was attended by the Clerk.

The meeting had included discussions about the work of the Connections Bus, anti-social behaviour by youths in the town and the launch of a new youth club which would open three evenings a week for a limited period.

The Mayor offered to attend the next meeting of the group.

88) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

The following item was held **In Committee** due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

89) To Consider Purchase of Allotment Land