

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 6th December 2022

2374

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 6th December 2022 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

148) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Gowler and I Taylor. Cllr Benney apologised that he would be late and arrived during item 161).

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

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

150) Open Forum

Two members of the public were welcomed to the meeting and invited to speak. One resident spoke about Furrowfields car park stating the rubber strips which he had reported were broken at the previous meeting had now been removed and motorists were able to skid and swerve around the car park. Cllr Smith said she had followed up the matter with FDC who had informed her that replacement rubber strips were on order but there were supply problems and they would not be installed until January, at the earliest. She suggested the damaged strips had probably been removed for safety reasons. The Mayor said she would mention the on-going problems at the car park at her next meeting with the police. The other member of the public chose not to speak

151) Cyril Haigh Trust Draw

Mrs Ann Grainger, a trustee of the Cyril Haigh Trust fund, was welcomed to the meeting. She said this would be the final draw for the fund as the capital had now been exhausted. The Trust had paid out funds annually since 1973 from an original investment of £2,000. Councillors were asked to draw 16 names out of the bag; 15 would receive £20 each and one £15. Councillors made the draw and agreed to distribute the money.

152) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1st November 2022 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

153) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 107) Small Claims Court: The Clerk reported that UK Tribute Shows Ltd had rejected the Council's claim that they owed the Council money falsely claiming that the Council had cancelled the jubilee concert. The Clerk had been asked if she wished to pursue the claim and Councillors agreed she should do so pointing out the Council had evidence that the other party had cancelled the contract and that a show went ahead.

Min 113) Over 70s Christmas Party: The Mayor reported the Christmas Party for Over 70s held the previous Friday had been very successful and very well received. She read out letters and cards of thanks from those who attended saying how much they had enjoyed the occasion. A news report, written by the Clerk, had appeared in the Fenland Citizen. Nearly 100 people had enjoyed a full Christmas dinner, a bingo session organised by the Mayor, a tombola, musical entertainment from singer Nicole and had taken home two goody bags. The Mayor thanked Cllr Hay for helping at the event and Cllr Haggata for taking the photographs. She also thanked the Financial Officer for organising the event, the Clerk for helping and Housdens Caterers for providing the meal. Members of FDC's Golden Age team were also very helpful and provided goody bags and bingo prizes while Tesco's, Cllr Petrou and the Green Welly provided items for the event. The Financial Officer said one of the FDC officers who helped at the event commented on how good it was and said he wished other town councils would follow Chatteris' lead.

Min 139) FACT Bus Services: The Clerk reported that the Chatteris Runner bus service on Fridays was not going well. There had been barely any take-up. It had been hoped that numbers would improve when Centrepont came out with an article about the service but the publication of Centrepont had been delayed. The Clerk had also looked into the idea of advertising in another publication which went out to Chatteris residents but that would not be published again until February. It was agreed to suspend the service until March to allow for more advertising of the scheme. In the meantime the Cambridge bus appeared to be going really well and would run on all Saturdays and Tuesdays until Christmas.

Min 130) Poppies: Cllr Carney reported the Poppies on a Lamppost had been very successful and had raised over £900 for the Royal British Legion despite the hard economic times. Cllr Carney was thanked for organising the scheme and Cllr Gowler for helping him.

Min 130) EV Charging Points: FDC officer Mr Garry Edwards had responded to the enquiry about EV charge points in FDC car parks by stating that he would enquire if it was still the policy that FDC should lead on EV installations. However Cllrs Boden and French had failed to respond to his enquiry and on his suggestion the Clerk had now approached them for an answer.

154) Police Matters

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

“Local Police

The Mayor has confirmed the next meeting between Neighbourhood Sergeant Joe Puntton and council leaders is scheduled for 7th December 2022.

Neighbourhood Alert

1/11/22: Notification of a survey into rural crime.

1/11/22: Notification of a Neighbourhood Watch Cybercrime survey.

2, 7 & 14/11 & 5/12/22: Latest from the Courts.

7/11/22: Our News, Neighbourhood Watch national newsletter.

8/11/22: Information about a free “Stand up against street harassment” bystander webinar.

11/11/22: Press release about Fenland officers who were praised at the Cambridgeshire Constabulary annual awards ceremony.

13/11/22: Notification about the priorities for the March team: 1) Drug use and dealing across March, Whittlesey and Chatteris; 2) Anti-social driving across March, Whittlesey and Chatteris; 3) Youth-related anti-social behaviour across March, Whittlesey and Chatteris.

14/11/22: Information about the Christmas gift appeal for local children in need.

15/11/22: Email encouraging people to report any non-emergency incidents using live web chat.

21/11/22: December edition of Our News.

22/11/22: Appeal for help in reuniting people with their stolen jewellery after more than 200 items were uncovered by police.

24/11/22: Top tips on how to shop online securely after new figures revealed victims of online shopping scams lost on average £1,000 a person and the amount stolen was £15.3m between November 2021 and January 2022.

24/11/22: Story about a 17-year-old boy who was helped by police after being found on the M11 at night.

4/12/22: Encouragement to join the Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page.”

155) FDC, Street Scene & CCTV Updates

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

Members were pleased to note that there were plans to install metal hoops on the green space at Hunters Close to stop cars parking on the play area. The Clerk confirmed she had contacted Glebelands school about the problem.

156) Financial Officer’s Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 30th November 2022 showing expenditure of £545,399.88 and income of £213,945.08 (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.

157) Payment of Accounts

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

Barclays	Bank Charges	16.00
Clerk	Reim Zoom, Mileage & small claims court	64.69
J T Chambers	Valuation 2 works to 2 Park Street	38,760.00
M Petrou	Reim Food Xmas party for over 70s residents	200.00
F/O	Reim xmas party food & cake re: over 70's party	48.68
F/O	Reim party sundries food & mileage re pension forum	383.14
Zen Internet	Nov-Dec website	13.79
Zen Internet	Dec-Jan Website	13.79
British Gas	Elec Bill	72.98
Nicole Lawrence	Entertainer re xmas party	300.00
Ward Gethin Archer	Legal advice re lease for 2 Park Street	312.00
Warren Access	Cherry Picker Xmas Lights	360.00
Milestone Infrastructure	Additional street refurb, Growing Fenland project	4,634.30
Warren Access	Cherry Picker Xmas Lights 05/11/22-06-11-22	360.00
Viking	Stationary Order	119.60
Ethos	Additional printing on copier over the contract	5.64
Ringway Infrastructure	Road Traffic Management Remembrance parade	1,368.00
Viking	Stationary Order	341.90
Christmas Lights	Part payment re annual grant vol organisation	4,000.00
The Wildlife Trust BCN	Guided Walk at Woodwalton for Allotment Ass	50.00
RJ Warren	Gardening Services	742.04
RBL	Poppy Appeal Mayors Wreath	20.00
Chatteris Comm Car Scheme	Taxis xmas party for over 70s	30.00
Onecom	November phone bill	75.02
Cllr Carney	Reim Mayors Poppy on a lamp post	25.00
F/O	Reim Petty Cash	70.29
Payroll	December Payroll	8,112.86
KEC	FDC Golden Age Fair, hall hire	50.00
Museum Trust	Reim Packing Materials	137.69
Warren Access	Cherry Picker Xmas Lights 19/11/22-20/11/22	600.00
Total		61,287.41

158) To Consider & Approve Draft Precept & Budget 23/24

(1) Draft Precept Budget 2023/24

The Financial Officer presented Members with a proposed draft precept budgetary control sheet for their consideration, comments, and approval.

Members were advised that the draft budget proposed an increase of £8,000 to the precept. The impact this would have on a band D household was an increase of £2.17 per year (4.52%) based on the estimated tax base of 3,398.

The annual precept for a Band D household would be estimated at £47.97.

The main reasons for the proposed increase to the precept were the unexpected cost of £5,100 for the Parish Poll that was called earlier in the year and also anticipated maintenance costs for 2 Park Street.

The Parish Poll cost was paid for out of the Elections holding account budget and therefore needed to be repaid before the elections in May 23.

The budget also reflected many benefits to the residents of Chatteris at the cost of a small increase to the precept.

(2) Financial Statement

Members were reminded that as per SLCC advice they needed to consider projects which might require funding in the next financial year to ensure sufficient provision was included in the Precept budget.

Under the Local Government financial regulations any new project to be included in the Precept budget normally required a written report.

(3) New Budgets

The new budgets proposed for the new financial year were: -

The King's Coronation £1,500

Parish Poll £5,100 (to Reimburse the Elections budget for the 2023 Elections in May).

Over 70's Chatteris Residents Annual Christmas Party £2,000

The Old Railway Line & Little Acre Pocket Park maintenance merged budget £4,500

2 Park Street Repairs & Maintenance £3,000

The Financial Officer reminded Members that the Internal Auditor advised that some of the smaller holding/reserve accounts should be closed and the funds from each of them be transferred into the general fund. It was proposed that these transfers would be done at the end of year accounts.

The budget for 23/24 reflected these transfers by keeping the Precept down and using some of these funds in the budget. The accounts to be transferred were:

General Capital Reserve, Town Plan, Town Guide Reprint, Night Time Street Lighting, Remembrance Parade.

The CCTV Reserve had £27,479 in its fund and had an annual transfer from general funds of £2,000. It was proposed that this transfer should now stop as there were sufficient funds in the Reserve to meet its purpose.

The Financial Officer asked Members if there were any other projects, she should take into consideration for the final budget to be approved at January's meeting.

Members advised that everything was covered in the proposed draft budget they had before them.

Cllr Carney asked why the budget for the King Edward Community Centre had been increased.

The Clerk advised that when the building was refurbished about 12 years ago everything was new, now things needed replacing and the running costs had increased drastically.

Members were advised that a new hire fee structure was being looked at to bring more income into the building without making the cost of hire unaffordable to the voluntary groups and non-profit making groups.

It was hoped that this new fee structure would eventually cover the running costs of the building which in turn would help the Centre become more self-sufficient without having to rely as much on the Town Council.

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

159) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded that the approved budget for grants in **2022/23** was **£4,000**

The Financial Officer advised that two grant applications had been received for consideration.

Chatteris District Guiding Association. - Grant applied for towards Leaders Census Subscriptions, full cost per annum is £742. *Grant approved of £342.*

Help the Aged. - Grant applied for towards a Community Warden in Fenland South to be shared between 6 Parish/Town Councils. Full cost per annum £14,000-18,000. *No grant approved* as the time allocated would be spread too thinly between the designated parishes and towns compared to the cost involved.

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

160) Growing Fenland Project Update

It was agreed to move this item up the agenda to allow the Financial Officer to leave after discussion on the item.

The Clerk said in general works to 2 Park Street were progressing well with men on site every day. In addition to the works being carried out by the main contractors, work had also begun on installing the fire and security systems.

The architect had asked if the Council wished to see the ceiling in the main room/entrance hall remain exposed or go for the cheaper option of re-installing the suspended ceiling.

Members agreed to go with the cheapest option and if the museum wished to retain the exposed ceiling they would be asked to contribute towards the cost. Cllr Haggata asked about the museum's funds and the Mayor explained these would be needed to fund such items as specialist cabinets after the move.

The Clerk also reported that the architect had applied for listed building consent to insulate the roof. He feared that sheep's wool would be specified rather than the cheaper option of

fibre glass. The sheep's wool would be over double the cost. Although some members felt it would be a false economy not to put insulation in, it was agreed to wait and see what form of insulation would be required and if sufficient funds were available to carry out the work.

161) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 (**copy attached**).

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

- a) Chatteris Town Council does not support the revised proposals. It is totally unacceptable to off-set the biodiversity loss by transferring the compensation and enhancement 10 miles out of Chatteris when there is plenty of land which could be used to compensate for the loss of biodiversity within Chatteris.
- b) Recommend Refusal. The land is outside the boundary/building line for Chatteris. There are also concerns about six access points being created on a busy road, near a bend in the road. The Town Council has successfully fought for a reduction in the speed limit in the built up area of Doddington Road and these houses will be outside the area covered by the 30mph.
- c) Support
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support on the condition that the roadway in Ellingham Gardens is made up to an adoptable standard because at present it is not suitable for more vehicular movements.
- g) Support
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support
- k) Recommend refusal, out of keeping with the area.
- l) Support

The Clerk said she had received two replies regarding the Council's call for a footpath along the A141. Mr Martin Lawrence at Stainless Metalcraft had assured the Clerk that "we hear you" and had said he would make all relevant stakeholders aware of the point, although he did admit one issue might be the cost.

FDC's planning officer said the requirement from County Highways for a footway along the A141 fell away when the same department accepted a link to a footpath along Huntingdon Road. As a result the condition requiring the footpath link had been removed from the planning permission.

The Clerk also informed members that the application for 3 dwellings west of 1 King Edwards Road would be considered by FDC's planning committee on the 14th December with a recommendation to refuse. The Town Council had supported the application. Two planning applications, one for the temporary siting of 2 portacabins at Cromwell Community College and the other for change of use of agricultural land to residential land and relocation of vehicular access at Barn north of Cawthorn Farm, Stocking Drove, had been withdrawn.

162) To Agree Reservoir Consultation Response

Members agreed they were in favour of the proposed new reservoir and its location north of Chatteris. They also agreed to the Clerk's suggestion that she would draw up a suggested response document to the new reservoir proposal, based on ideas and comments which were raised at the planning and leisure and general purposes working groups meetings. She would then circulate the suggested response for members' comments before submitting it to the Fens Reservoir team at Anglian Water and Cambridge Water.

163) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Meeting held on the 15th November 2022 (**copy attached**).

164) Youth Clubs Update

The Clerk had received a report from Ms Debbie King, of Youths of Fenland, regarding the youth clubs after the Clerk requested costings to run the services in 2023/24.

Ms King said the younger youth club was well attended each week by between 15-20 youngsters and they appeared to enjoy the venue and activities provided.

However the club for older children had not been running since July as only two young people were attending. Ms King had suggested to Clarion about using the funding for another area of work such as outreach work. It was felt the children's centre was not the right space for the older children.

The Clerk had replied to Ms King pointing out the Council had a budget for work with older children and suggesting they re-launch the outreach work serving hot chocolate to youngsters outside the Emmanuel Church as this had worked well in the past. Members agreed with the suggestion.

165) LHI Application

Members had received the following report:

“Members may recall that applications for an LHI scheme for 23/24 have to be submitted by 6th January 2023. In order to work on the application a decision is required at this meeting on which scheme, if any, to pursue.

The New Scheme

The new LHI scheme splits schemes into two categories – Complex and Non-Complex. Complex schemes include crossings, build outs, central islands, footpaths and cycle ways while non-complex include parking restrictions, street lighting, speed limits, gateways/signs and MVAS units. Applicants can apply for up to £25,000 towards a complex scheme and £10,000 towards a non-complex scheme. Any scheme applied for must have local support.

Requests

Looking back over correspondence and comments made about possible LHI schemes for the past couple of years the following have been mentioned:

- 1) The missing footpath link along the A141 between the new training centre and the existing footpath.
- 2) Some form of crossing in Bridge Street (a request has been submitted via email by a member of the public for a crossing near the Bridge House cafe).
- 3) Street lighting in Dock Road.
- 4) Junction of Station Street and Station Road.
- 5) Extensions to double yellow lines in various parts of the town.
- 6) Speed reduction measures in Southampton Place.
- 7) A safe place for mobility scooters to cross the High Street at the King Edwards Road end.

With regards to the first two schemes according to the County Council’s website the cost of 200m of footpath is £120,000 and the cost of a refuge island is £25,000 or a mobility crossing point is £5,000.

Decision

Do members wish to make an LHI application and if so which scheme do they wish to pursue?”

Cllr Hay said she had attended a County Council transport meeting when it was reported that £260,000 of a £5.3m grant for the Combined Authority had been allocated to create two crossings in Chatteris, one in Park Street and the other round the corner in East Park Street. The money had to be spent by the end of March 2023 or it would be returned to the Government. No other schemes in Fenland had been suggested.

Cllr Hay felt there was no need for the two crossings as there was a pedestrian refuge in Park Street and a crossing nearby in Market Hill. She was concerned the two crossings would interfere with the flow of traffic.

It was agreed the money could be better spent elsewhere in the town, in particular on a crossing for Bridge Street and the footpath link along the A141 (Fenland Way) between the new training centre and the existing footpath. It was agreed to make this suggestion to the Highways team at the County Council. Cllr Hay read out the criteria for spending the funds and the two schemes met many of the criteria.

It was **agreed** to go back to County Highways and request the two alternative schemes, if possible, but to emphasise that the Council did not wish to see the funds lost to the town. The email would also point out the need for, and benefits of, a crossing in Bridge Street and the A141 footpath link.

It was also **agreed** to submit an LHI bid for a crossing in Bridge Street.

166) Traffic Issues

Line Markings: The Clerk had requested the faded lines and signs near the junction of Station Street and Burnsfield Street be re-painted and had been informed that this work would be carried out as part of the County Council's planned maintenance programme in the current financial year.

Temporary Traffic Orders: Notification had been received that the following orders had been made by the County Council: to close Huntingdon Road to traffic between Barber Gardens and Linden Drive from the 9th to 13th January to facilitate sewer repair works; to close Stocking Drove on the 17th January to allow stop tap replacement works; to close Station Street between Station Road and Lime Tree Gardens from the 16th to 19th January to facilitate carriageway patching works. An order had been brought in to close Dock Road on the 14th November to allow emergency works.

Reports: The latest roadworks and events information for Fenland had been received along with the TMC incident reports for October and November. Information had also been received on the documentation needed to apply to close a street for a Street Party to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

Outstanding Issues: There had been no response to the request for the footpath along London Road (towards Seasons Garden Centre) to be re-instated and the installation of replacement drain covers was still outstanding. It was also reported there had been further complaints about the vehicle parked near the Woodside junction with Wood Street which was causing congestion and vehicles parking too close to the St Peter's Drive junction with New Road which were causing visibility problems.

167) Correspondence

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

Cllr Smith said the Fenland Poet Laureate awards ceremony was well supported and a poet from Chatteris had won an award and another was a runner up.

168) Reports

The Mayor reported that she had been invited to the launch of a new breakfast club for Armed Forces veterans to be held at the Conservative Club on the 11th December and she had read a lesson at the FDC Chairman's carol service held in Chatteris Parish Church on the 2nd December.

169) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.