

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 7th February 2023

2396

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 7th February 2023 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

189) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs I Benney and A Charrier.

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

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

191) Open Forum

Three residents were welcomed to the meeting and two chose to speak.

One of the residents had already sent an email to the Council stating his concerns about speeding in Bridge Street, in particular the speed of traffic leaving the Slade End roundabout, and the dangerous parking in the area.

The resident explained that the parking was on both sides of the road on a slight bend and many cars were now parking on the pavement. The traffic coming in to town was still travelling at more than 30mph due to its speed on leaving the bypass. In addition the resident had spotted people on their phones driving into town at speed. He was also concerned about vehicles parking on double yellow lines at the Blackhorse Lane junction. The resident said local villages appeared to have better traffic calming measures.

Councillors acknowledged that the parking problems had been exacerbated by a local company no longer allowing their employees to park on site so they now parked on Bridge Street.

Cllr Gowler said the Council was applying for funds to put in a crossing in Bridge Street, which if successful would hopefully slow traffic going out of Chatteris. The police were still responsible for enforcing parking but no longer did so and although FDC were going through the process of bringing in civic parking enforcement it was a very slow process, Cllr Hay warned action could only be taken if parking was on double yellow lines.

Cllr Gowler said the movable speed sign which was currently sited in Huntingdon Road could be moved to Bridge Street. He said this form of warning only worked for the first few days but it was possible to get data from the cameras which could potentially be used to persuade the police to use a speed gun. Members said it would be good to have speed traps and a visible presence in the area.

Cllr Smith warned that removing parking from the area would encourage motorists to go even faster and the Mayor said Aldi had now introduced a time limit on parking which had resulted in even more parking on Bridge Street.

The other resident was also concerned about illegal parking. He said a van parked on the white line hatching at the junction of Furrowfields Road and High Street blocked visibility for motorists leaving Furrowfields. The Mayor advised taking a photograph of the van which could then be shown to the police.

The resident also thanked the Council for the new speed inhibiting blocks in Furrowfields car park but warned they would soon be damaged again if the refuse lorry and gritting lorries continued to drive over them.

192) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd January 2023 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

193) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 180) Youth Work: The Clerk reported that the drop-in café (outreach) sessions for young people had been due to start on 11th January and Youths of Fenland had promised regular updates and monitoring of both youth ventures. An invitation had also been received to the Youths of Fenland C.I.C AGM on February 15th in Wisbech.

Min 153) FACT Bus Services: FACT had agreed that the Chatteris Runner bus could be re-launched on the 3rd March after the Friday service was advertised in Centrepoint and the new directory Chatteris Scene. They also agreed that those using the Cambridge bus service would be asked what time they wished to return by the bus driver. Cllr Hay said Seasons coffee shop was not aware of the Chatteris Runner bus but had asked about the former footpath along London Road which led to the garden centre site. The County Council had failed to respond to a request for the footpath to be re-instated.

Other Matters: The Mayor reported that the speed humps in New Road had now been replaced by rubber humps and Cllr Hay said she was still waiting to receive photos of the potholes mentioned by a member of the public at the last meeting. The member of the public said the largest pothole had been filled in but the Forty Foot Road was still in a terrible condition.

194) Police Matters

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

“Local Police

A date has yet to be set for the next meeting between the police and council leaders.

Neighbourhood Alert

4/1/23: Notification of new Neighbourhood Watch logo.

4 & 16/1 & 6/2/23: Latest news from the courts.

6/1/23: Notification that more than 80 people were arrested in Cambridgeshire in December in a drink and drug drivers crackdown.

9/1/23: Contact Us guide on how best to get in touch with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

9/1 & 6/2/23: January and February editions of Our News the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.

10/1/23: Example of how a call to the police alerted them to a drink driver with a child in the car.

11/2/23: Request for help in tackling child sexual exploitation in Cambridgeshire and what to look out for.

11/1/23: Notification that a murder investigation had been launched in Wisbech.

12/1/23: Information about a confidential hotline to report suspected drink or drug drivers.

13/1/23: New appeal for information 10 years on from murder of Wisbech pensioner.

16/1/23: Think WIDEN to prevent burglary. Advice on how to prevent burglaries.

17/1/23: Notification that a video doorbell helped to catch a would-be burglar.

23/1/23: At the start of Neighbourhood Policing Week, notification that work by the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing teams would be shared on the Policing Fenland Facebook page.

25/1/23: Notification (and a poster which was displayed) about free online workshops on county lines drug dealing to be held on 1st and 8th February.

28/1/23: Information about Dog Watch in Cambridgeshire.

29/1/23: Fenland burglary update and advice.

30/1/23: Notification that eCops is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

1/2/23: Invitation to join Neighbourhood Watch free crime prevention webinars.

2/2/23: Request for help in tackling catalytic converter thefts.”

The Mayor confirmed no date had been set for a meeting as Sgt Punton was waiting to move south and was to be replaced.

195) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

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

The Financial Officer said she had queried the bill for CCTV maintenance since the cameras were not operational for part of November and December. FDC had replied that the fault was not down to FDC and the cameras were usually well maintained. FDC had met the costs of the repair and was not seeking re-imburement from partners. The email also argued that the

cameras had still prevented crime even though they were not operational. As a result the full maintenance costs were due.

Members queried why there was no back-up system in the event of a failure.

196) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 17th January 2023 showing expenditure of £672,936.87 and income of £277,854.44 (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.

197) Payment of Accounts

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

Iris Business Software	Payroll software license renewal	440.40
Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
British Gas	Elec Bill	110.97
Clerk	Reim: Zoom, Mileage, allotments, lock raffle & bingo tickets festival & X mas party	90.16
J T Chambers	Valuation for works to 2 Park Street	32,773.80
Impie	Advertising Fact Bus	150.00
RBL	Balance of growing Fenland grant for street refurb re: War memorial refurb	130.00
Morton & Hall	Professional Fees, 2 Park Street	5,334.00
Zen Internet	Feb-Mar Website & Domain name renewal	32.98
British Gas	Gas Bill	343.63
Viking	Stationary Bill	220.72
Viking	Stationary Bill	221.68
UK Safety Management	Pat Testing	276.22
Cambs CC	Chatteris Library hire of room for Cab face to face	216.00
Rural Cambs Citizens Advice	Q3 face to face service	1,537.00
David J Richards	Summer Fun Leaflets printing	137.55
CF Corporate	Q lease photocopier	255.53
CCTV	Contribution Costs	21,220.00
Warren Access	Cherry picker hire Xmas lights	456.00
CTS Security	50% installation cost for CCTV, Fire & Intruder alarms, 2 Park Street	12,870.00
Cambs Acre	Renewal	57.00

		2400
		5 of 11
Wave	RHS Allotments water bill	24.26
Onecom	January phone bill	75.13
Camguard	Battery replacement	13.86
Camguard	Monitoring & servicing Intruder alarm	367.20
Payroll	February Payroll	5,665.28
CPRE	Annual Membership	60.00
Creative Arts	Annual Membership	50.00
Wave	LHS Allotments water bill	550.93
Cash	Petty cash	67.66
Wave	Water bill Council Offices	46.05
Total		83,802.51

The Mayor reported that she had seen a Facebook post from the Community Defibrillators for Chatteris organiser, Mrs Rosemarie Croucher, asking for donations to pay for new batteries and pads for the existing defibrillators in the town. The Mayor considered this to be very worthwhile for the community and had donated money from the Mayor's fund to purchase two batteries and one set of new pads worth £600. The Council would purchase the items so the cost to the Council would be £500 as the Council would be able to claim back the VAT.

198) Insurance Renewal Approval

Members were advised that the Council's Insurance policy was due for renewal on the 31st March 2023. The current insurance policy was with Gallagher, AJG Community Schemes (Previously Came & Company, Ecclesiastical), under a three-year contract which would reach full term on the renewal date.

Gallaghers advised the Financial Officer that Ecclesiastical were no longer offering renewal terms as they had withdrawn from the market,

Members were reminded that Came and Company along with Ecclesiastical won the current three-year contract as they offered additional services to include asset registers, various templates, and an annual visit to the council's offices to ensure everything was going well with the insurance side of things. During the 3-year insurance period contract they only visited the Council once, and that was in the first month.

Members were advised that the Financial Officer had gone out to three different insurance companies who specialised in Town & Parish Council insurance, to obtain a best value quotation as listed below.

	Annual	3 Year contract
1) Gallagher formerly Came & Co	£3,021.42	
2) Norris & Fisher	Failed to respond	
3) Zurich Municipal	£2,193.52	£1,988.60

The two quotations covered both Council owned buildings, insurance cover for 2 Park Street was for £600,000 which included the purchase price and refurbishment costs.

The Financial Officer advised Members that Gallagher's quotation was from Hiscox insurance company. They had refused to insure the Summer Festival event and walking parade as it was a joint event with FDC. Gallagher's had received the Sag document for the event but despite that they advised the event and parade could only be insured as a stand-alone insurance under Hiscox. Gallaghers had sent the Financial Officer an 11-page questionnaire to complete so they could send a separate standalone quotation for the festival parade. The Financial Officer declined to complete the form.

Zurich advised that the event and the walking parade would be insured under the Town Council's Public Liability cover within the insurance policy if the council was found to be negligent. Zurich Municipal's quotation came in over £1,000 cheaper a year for a three-year contract and just under £1,000 for the annual premium compared to Gallaghers.

Gallaghers had only provided an annual premium and Norris & Fisher failed to respond,

Members were advised that Zurich Municipal were always very proactive and helpful when they insured the Town Council previously, and were used by several local Parish & Town Councils.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and Council **Approve** a 3-year contract with Zurich, as their quotation offered a best value quotation to the Council.

199) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

- [1] Members were advised that a grant application had been received for consideration.
- [2] The approved budget for grants in **2022/23** was **£4,000**
- [3] The application for consideration by Members at the meeting was received from Chatteris Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Association. The sum requested, £250, was to go towards the purchase of a noticeboard for community notices to encourage better communication throughout the entire site, especially for those who did not participate in online social media and email.

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

200) Planning

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on the 31st January 2023 (**copy attached**).

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

- a) Support
- b) Support
- c) Recommend Refusal. Over development, loss of amenity, not in keeping with surrounding area. (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- d) Support
- e) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- f) Support
- g) Noted
- h) Recommend Refusal. Contrary to Broad Concept Plan, concerns about access.
- i) Support
- j) Noted
- k) Recommend Refusal. Contrary to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, would result in urban sprawl in a rural location, unsuitable access road, no pedestrian access (footpath).
- l) Support

Councillors also voted in favour of sending the following to Fenland District Council:

Chatteris Town Council is concerned that land at The Elms has been sold to Fenland Futures Investment Board for £200,000 which is well below the market value. The Town Council would therefore like answers to the following questions under the Freedom of Information Act:

- 1) What is the set-up of the Fenland Futures Investment Board?
- 2) Who are the directors and councillors on the Board?
- 3) If the land at The Elms is sold on or developed who will gain?
- 4) With the absence of Section 106 payments how will Chatteris benefit from this?
- 5) What percentage of any profits that are gained from the sale of land within Chatteris will go to Chatteris?
- 6) Does the Investment Board have a protocol on how profits will be distributed?
- 7) What other assets within Fenland does FDC plan to sell to Fenland Futures?
- 8) How will FDC distribute the money it has received from Cambridgeshire Horizons and how will Chatteris benefit from it?

The Town Council firmly believes that profits from the sales of land in Chatteris should be invested in the town and should not be spent in other parts of the district.

201) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that the project was progressing well and the building was finally starting to take shape. The new heating system had been installed in the first floor offices and at ground floor level the plasterers and electricians were hard at work along with the decorator who was restoring the windows. The main entrance now looked very impressive with its original ceiling and full height windows exposed. The Clerk was now busy getting quotes for new flooring throughout the building.

After blaming conservation for hold ups, the Clerk had discovered that the delay on the new door was the fault of planning not the conservation officer who had agreed to the door's design back in December.

The Clerk and the Financial Officer were delighted that the Combined Authority had agreed to find extra funds for the project and were now seeking a price for completing the museum project and for the conversion of 14 Church Lane. The Clerk had asked the builder to submit two up to date estimates for the works at 14 Church Lane, one for the conversion of the existing building (including one residential flat) and the other for the conversion plus new build to create two residential flats at the first floor level.

202) Leisure and General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Members had received a copy of the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 (**copy attached**).

L48) Annual Town Meeting: Cllr Carney was advised not to present his Powerpoint presentation. The Clerk said she would present if Cllr Carney would be kind enough to put it together.

L49) Walking Map: Cllrs Ashley, Haggata, Hay and Smith together with the Clerk and two representatives of the U3a walking group had met with Ms Joanne Rose and Ms Wendy Otter, from FDC, to discuss the plans for a walking and cycling map for Chatteris. It had been a very positive and productive meeting with everyone giving ideas on what should be included on the map and altering one or two discrepancies on the draft map. Members had a copy of the second draft of the map and made a few comments, mainly concerning the guide which was a little confusing, particularly when it came to supposedly busy roads. Cllr Gowler requested a copy of the electronic version of the map so he could make comments. Those present at the meeting agreed with Cllr Smith who said Ms Rose was making a first class job of the map which had been needed for a long time.

L49) Town Map: Cllr Smith said she had sent the printer some photos for the new town map.

L46) Pocket Park: Cllr Carney reported that he had re-installed a life-ring near the pond having found one on Facebook for just £20. However the life-ring casing post needed to be well secured to a more substantial post supplied by the contractors and Cllr Gowler offered to source the necessary bolts.

203) King's Coronation Event

The Clerk had been informed that the Parish Church was not available for a concert on the Coronation Day as it was already booked for a concert by the Chatteris and Manea Silver Band and a choir.

The Mayor had therefore put forward an alternative suggestion – allowing visitors to view the works at 2 Park Street at an Open Day on the Sunday (May 7th). The date meant purdah would be over as the elections would have taken place on the 4th May. The Mayor would still be in office as the new Council would not take over until the 9th May and a new Mayor would be elected on the 16th.

The Mayor said she would ask the museum if they would be willing to put on a display and explain their plans for the building and Cllr Haggata's photographs of the building before work began and whilst work was underway could be printed out and displayed on boards.

Members were in favour of the idea and suggested serving drinks and snacks to visitors in commemorative cups and plates. The idea of a colouring competition for children was also put forward.

204) To Organise Signing Ceremony for Armed Forces Covenant

The Royal British Legion Chatteris branch had agreed to sign a joint Armed Forces Covenant and the Clerk suggested a signing ceremony should take place so photographs could be taken. It was agreed she should find a mutually agreeable date on either a Monday or Tuesday evening.

205) Stem in the Fens Science Project

Members had received information about STEM in the Fens, a programme of touring educational Community PopUpScience Centres which were due to visit four key towns, including Chatteris, in the summer of 2023. The centres explored science through hands-on exhibits, engaging workshops and interactive shows.

The information came from Mr Martin Lawrence at Stainless Metalcraft, as the group was considering using the new training centre. Mr Lawrence asked if the Town Council could get involved in the project to help inspire people in Chatteris and the surrounding villages.

Cllr Carney said the fire service was also involved with a STEM challenge for secondary school pupils. He was a mentor for the Thomas Clarkson Academy and Cromwell Community Collage was also involved.

Members agreed it appeared to be a very worthwhile project and agreed the Clerk should gather more details.

206) Bridge Street Traffic Issues

This had been discussed in Open Forum. However, Cllr Taylor was concerned that all the parked cars from the company who had stopped employees parking on their site, had made life very difficult for those using the nursery. It was agreed children playing signs should be erected in Bridge Street to warn motorists of the nursery.

207) Traffic Issues

Traffic Order: Notification had been received of an emergency traffic order temporarily closing Blackmill Road.

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

208) Draft Bus Strategy

An email complaining about bus services had been sent to the Council as had the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's draft Bus Strategy consultation. The survey asked people how the authority could deliver the best possible bus network for the region. Cllr Smith was concerned there were no paper versions of the survey which could be handed out to people.

Cllr Murphy warned people would have to use the buses or they would lose them and Cllr Hay claimed the average cost to the local authority for bus services was £85 per person per journey.

Cllr Haggata said there was a campaign for better bus services and another against buses. He claimed there were not enough buses going to places people wanted to go, at a time they wanted to go and return, as a result people could not rely on them. Cllr Haggata said he believed buses were an essential public service like water and electricity. Removing buses

meant removing some people's ability to work and isolating them. Cllr Haggata was concerned that the plum routes had been retained by Stagecoach leaving those that did not make a profit. Cllr Hay said 30 new electric buses were only being used in Cambridge and the bus review, which had been due to conclude in January 2019, was still ongoing.

209) Correspondence

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

Meals on Wheels: Members had received a copy of an email from the charity manager of CAMMS Meals on Wheels Ltd which had won a grant from the County Council to set up a kitchen to prepare meals and was looking for premises in Chatteris (as it was a central location). Members put forward the following suggestions: The Working Men's Club, the Conservative Club, the Sportsman, the Salvation Army Fortress, the Emmanuel Church, the Bricstan Room or Housdens' Caterers premises.

Bike Share: Members considered an email about the possibility of a bike share scheme for market towns in Cambridgeshire but pointed out Chatteris didn't have any cycleway links.

Election ID: It was agreed the message about the need to show photo ID at polling stations needed plenty of publicity, in particular the message needed to go out to young people and the elderly. It was agreed the poster should go on the Council's website. The Clerk had already displayed the poster on the public noticeboard.

Waste Education Centre: Cllr Murphy urged everyone to visit the centre as it was a very interesting place.

210) Reports & Items for the Next Agenda

There were no reports or items for the next agenda.