

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 9th January 2024

2507

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Minutes of the Meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs A Hay (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), L Ashley, J Carney, A Charrier, V Joyce, P Murphy, S Selman and S Unwin.

The meeting began with one minute's silence in memory of former councillor Mrs Florence Newell (the longest serving Chairman of the Council) who sadly died in December.

172) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Gowler and M Siggee

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

Cllr Murphy declared an interest in all planning applications. Cllr Unwin declared an interest as a member of In Bloom and the Midsummer Festival committee and Cllr Selman as a driver for the Community Car scheme and Chairman of the Festival committee.

174) Open Forum

There were three members of the public present (including Cllr Charlie Marks) but all declined the invitation to speak in the Open Forum, it was, therefore, agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

175) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2023 were agreed and signed by the Mayor after a minor amendment requested by Cllr Selman. She pointed out that under Min 157) she had asked about the AWP sinking fund, not Cllr Unwin.

176) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 156) CCTV: As requested the Clerk had written to the CCTV Monitoring Station manager thanking him for organising the visits to the station and he had responded by saying they enjoyed hosting and if any other councillors wished to visit this could be arranged.

Min 159) Budget: The Clerk had been copied in to a quote from Balfour Beatty to assist with taking down the Christmas Lights decorations. The quotes were £161.44 for two hours on a Saturday and £195.71 for two hours on a Sunday. The Clerk pointed out the volunteers actually spent about eight hours each day taking down lights. Fortunately, one of their

volunteers had given up two days of their own time to gain the necessary qualification to supervise work on lampposts.

Min 160) Purchase of Allotment Land: The Clerk had finally received a confirmed price for the purchase of the allotment land at Queensway - £3,000 – plus more paperwork. She had informed Clarion's solicitors that the Town Council was no longer interested in purchasing the land but was happy to continue to administer the land under licence.

Min 164) Manea Fire Station: The Clerk had written in opposition to the proposed closure of Manea fire station. An email had been received from Mr Steve Barclay MP's office stating he was completely opposed to the proposed closure of the station and would do everything he could to keep it open.

Min 165) FACT Bus: The Clerk had written to the manager of Barbers Gardens about the problems on the bus but had yet to receive a reply.

177) Police Matters

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

'Local Police

No information has been received from the local police.

Neighbourhood Alert

5/12/23: Notification that more than 40 pubs and venues across Cambridgeshire had signed up to support the constabulary's campaign to crackdown on drink drivers in December.

Venues were encouraged to give free soft drinks to designated drivers.

6/12/23: Advice on how to protect yourself from the 12 frauds of Christmas.

14/12/23: Update from the Fenland Neighbourhood team, including information that patrols and speed checks were carried out in Chatteris and the team would continue to do more patrols and speed checks to make the roads safer, particularly around schools.

18/12/23: Notification that the sixth annual Fenland Christmas gift appeal, organised by the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing team and children's social care, had been deemed a resounding success.

4/1/24: Information about the large scale fire in Hundred Road, March.

8/1/24: The January edition of Our News, the newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch.'

Cllr Joyce was surprised there was no report about an incident at B &M in Chatteris when a member of staff was allegedly beaten up and items stolen.

Cllr Murphy said there were major problems in the High Street when delivery vehicles were attempting to do a 3-point turn in the road. Cllr Unwin said the vans and lorries also parked in the middle of the road.

The Mayor said she would mention all concerns to the police and suggested it would be helpful if someone asked the shop owners to have a word with the delivery drivers.

(Cllr Benney joined the meeting at this point).

178) FDC and Street Scene Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC and Street Scene updates (**copy attached**).

179) To Agree Mural for Jordan Gill

Cllr Unwin said she had approached Mr Gill and asked if he would be happy for a mural depicting his boxing successes to be installed in the bus shelter at East Park Street and he was thrilled with the idea. Cllr Unwin had then approached the street artist responsible for producing the mural depicting a train in St Martin's Road and he had agreed to create and install a mural at a cost of £1,000. The installation would take two days and a £250 deposit would be needed for designs.

Cllr Murphy warned it would be necessary to get Fenland District Council's permission to install the mural.

The Mayor said it was important to celebrate people from Chatteris who brought honour to the town. She said she would be inviting Mr Gill and snooker player, Mr Joe Perry, to her Mayor's reception.

180) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 2nd January 2024 showing expenditure of £450,115.79 and income of £394,974.72 (including a full year's precept income) compared with budgets, along with a bank reconciliation statement and a summary statement of reserves and funds balances.

The Mayor was pleased to note that income from allotment rents was about 25% above the expected figure. The Clerk reported that all allotments were let and all but one rent had been collected.

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

181) To Approve Final Budget & Precept 2024/25

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

Members were advised that the Chief Accountant at FDC had sent an email to the Financial Officer confirming a slight amendment to the Band D tax base. The new amount was 3451, this was an increase of 5 from the estimated amount stated in the draft budget report in December 23.

Members were reminded that it was agreed at the previous meeting that a quotation would be sought to commission a mural at the bus stop in honour of Jordan Gill. The quotation for these works has now been received and was £1,000.

The Financial Officer proposed that the £1,000 be added to the precept making the precept £173,500. The impact would be an additional £0.25p per annum on a Band D property.

The increase in the Band D tax base had contributed in keeping the increase cost to a Band D household down to 0.49%.

The overall Band D effect compared to last year's Precept was an additional £0.25p making the total annual cost of £50.27 for a Band D property.

On this basis the recommended funding of the 2024/25 budget was as follows: -

	£
Proposed Budget	209,429
From Balances (includes rounding)	-35,929
Net Precept 2024/25	173,500

The Financial Officer advised Members that the new proposed recommended Precept of £173,500 would be an increase of £3,500 from the 2023/24 Precept. The increase had been kept to a minimum by transferring funds from the general fund, an increase in the tax base and an increase of income to the budget, this was due to the new rental income for the first floor of 2 Park Street and a forecast rent for 14 Church Lane.

An increase of £3,500 to the Precept meant that the uncommitted general fund balances on a full budget spend would still be considered adequate to carry forward into the next financial year.

The effect of the Net Precept (i.e., the figure recovered through Council Tax) was as follows:

	Net Precept	Tax Base	Band D Effect
2024/25	£173,500	3451	£50.27

The comparison of Net precept (i.e., the figure recovered through council tax) was as follows: -

	Net Precept	%	Tax Base	Band D Effect %
2024/25	173,500		3451	50.27
2023/24	170,000		3,398	50.02
	2.05% inc.		5	0.49%

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

182) Payment of Accounts

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

J Melton Clerk	Reimbursement: Zoom, Norton security, Microsoft storage, phone top up.	2511 5 of 11 113.57
Cllr Hay	Reimbursement: mileage civic duties	18.00
Capalc	Councillor Training	115.00
Warren Access	Excess re: damage	500.00
Warren Access	Cherry picker Jan hire	456.00
Hanson Buildings	Museum deposit re: metal store	10,100.00
Morton Hall	Prof. Fees, 14 Church Lane	3,219.00
Infotone Imaging	Ink cartridges	90.96
Youth of Fenland	Well-being café, senior youth club	1,914.18
Youth of Fenland	Junior youth club	2,239.63
Cambs Acre	Membership renewal	60.00
RJ Warren	Gardening Services	742.04
FDC	CCTV renewal service level agreement	21,220.00
Chatteris Allotment Assoc	Repaid Assoc fee.	6.00
CPRE	Membership renewal	60.00
Payroll	Payroll January 24	5,946.71
St Ives TC	Mayors Charity Event	50.00
Illumin8	Training xmas lights electricals	300.00
Bgas	Gas bill Nov-Dec Est	277.53
Onecom	Phone bill	111.18

Bgas	Electricity bill	2512 6 of 11 23.71
Bgas	Gas bill Oct-Nov Est	323.42
Bgas	Gas bill Sept-Oct Est	118.19
Zen Internet	Jan-Feb website	13.79
Cllr Selman	Reim Mulled Wine	104.80
SLCC	Membership Renewal	288.00
Katie Moore	Shredding confidential docs	167.75
Iris Business	Payroll software license renewal	488.40
Housden's Catering	Xmas Party catering	1,385.06
Cllr Selman	Reim Xmas bags & cards for Xmas party	68.00
Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
Nicole Fossett	Xmas party entertainer	300.00
Cadent Gas	2nd supply to Church Lane	690.48
Cadent Gas	Supply to 14 Church Lane	690.48
Total		52,210.38

183) To Appoint Contractors for Fire & Security Systems at 14 Church Lane

Members were advised that two quotations had been received for the Fire & Security systems at Church Lane.

Company A quoted 11,929.00

Company B quoted 11,545.00

Both Companies had installed and maintained systems for The Town Council previously and currently, with both delivering a good supportive, consistent service.

Company A had serviced and maintained the Fire Alarm and Emergency lighting system at Church Lane for many years. They had dealt with all the pre-construction site works, disabling, and taking down emergency lighting and sensors for safe keeping to be reused when building works were completed.

They had advised and attended callouts and been reliable and supportive, providing the Council with an impeccable customer service.

Company B won the contract for installing and maintaining the Security, Fire and CCTV systems at 2 Park Street.

They also had the contract for managing those systems at the King Edward Centre.

They too delivered a reliable, supportive, and good customer service.

It was agreed that both the Fire and Security works should go to the same contractor which would make it easier to manage on site.

It was proposed that the new installation and maintenance of both the Fire and Intruder alarms be offered to Company A as they represented Best Value.

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

184) Youth Clubs Reports & Quotations for 2024

Members were advised that the youth provision service was going extremely well for both the junior and senior clubs.

The attendance for both had increased, therefore, a third youth worker had been appointed to each session, as they needed to comply with the health & safety ratio requirements.

The youth leader had advised that they had been delivering weekly sessions, instead of every other week.

This was previously agreed after a period when the service was stopped due to a lack of staff. The weekly sessions were a way of using the underspent budget and a chance to get the clubs back up and running. There was not an agreement in place for weekly sessions and the budget had not been set for weekly sessions for 24/25.

The quotations for 2024/25 were based on a weekly provision for both senior and junior clubs; the Youth Leader advised it equated to a 40 weeks service provision.

The Financial Officer advised that 40 weeks would take the junior youth club over the proposed budget for 24/25.

She asked Members if they would agree to leave it to her to manage and make some changes to keep the service within budget.

Councillors did not like the idea of the service going back to every other week as they agreed that the youth of Chatteris need the service. They asked the Financial Officer

to have a meeting with the Youth Leader to see if the length of the sessions could be reduced to enable weekly sessions to continue.

The Financial Officer agreed to arrange a meeting with the Youth Leader to discuss options.

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

185) To Consider Memorial for former Councillor Florence Newell

Councillors agreed there should be a memorial for Mrs Florence Newell, a town/parish councillor for over 40 years, former Fenland District Councillor and Chairman of Chatteris Parish Council for 16 years.

It was agreed to plant an Oak tree next to former Councillor Rosemary Stimson's Oak tree in the Little Acre Pocket Park and to erect new plaques near both trees. Members agreed this was fitting as the councillors worked together for many years and both tried to save any trees threatened with felling.

186) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 (copy **attached**).

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

- a) Recommend Refusal. Over development. Erection of a dwelling would lead to poor levels of residential amenity for new dwelling and 54 Queensway and would set a precedent of building in gardens. (Cllrs Carney and Gowler declared an interest).
- b) Support
- c) Recommend Refusal. The application is premature as the width of the byway has still to be determined. As it stands the application fails to overcome access problems as there is no guarantee the road shown can be delivered. There are also concerns about the impact of more cars on West Street which has existing traffic problems.
- d) Support
- e) Support

187) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk reported that the project had been delayed as it taken over three weeks to remove the flat roof at the rear of 14 Church Lane. This had resulted in large parts of the building being open to the elements during a period of very high rainfall. It had been a race against time to make the building as water tight as possible in time for the Christmas and New Year break and had meant emptying the store cupboard and storing all the items in different parts

of the building which were not open to the elements. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to stop all the leaks but at least the building was now drying out as it had finally stopped continuously raining.

Carpenters were now busy working on the building again and permission had finally been granted for the bricks and tiles which were now on order.

On another positive note planning permission had been granted for the new outside store at the museum.

188) To Agree Dates for Meetings and Annual Town Meeting

Members agreed to the following dates:

Full Council Meetings 2024

Tuesdays - 9th January, 6th February, 5th March, 2nd April, 7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 6th August, 3rd September, 1st October, 5th November, 3rd December.

Date for Annual Town Meeting: Friday 26th April.

Dates of Planning Meetings 2024

Tuesdays- 30th January, 27th February, 26th March, 30th April, 28th May, 25th June, 30th July, 27th August (TBC), 24th September, 29th October, 26th November.

Dates for Leisure Meetings 2024 (could be subject to change)

Tuesdays - 16th January, 13th February, 19th March, 16th April, 14th May, 11th June, 16th July, 17th September, 15th October, 12th November.

189) Pride In Fenland Awards Nominations

An FDC press release had been received seeking nominations for the Pride in Fenland awards. The categories were Top Community Group, Individual Volunteer, Young Individual, Recreation/Environment Volunteer and Lifetime Contribution.

Cllr Unwin suggested putting forward a volunteer with Christmas Lights and the Festival for over two decades for the individual award and Cllr Hay suggested putting forward the Museum volunteers for the group award. Cllr Carney suggested the teenager who created the murals in the bus shelter for the young individual category and the final suggestion was the organiser of the Poppy Appeal in Chatteris for many years for the Lifetime award.

These were all agreed.

190) To Discuss Results of Shuttle Bus Survey

Members had a copy of the results of the survey into a Chatteris to Manea Shuttle Bus service organised by Cllr Carney.

A large majority of people said they would use the bus, particularly on Saturdays and weekdays at morning off-peak times. The favoured destinations from Manea railway station were Ely, Cambridge and beyond.

A survey had also been carried out in Manea with most people opting for a weekday only service to Chatteris with mid to late morning being the favoured time.

Cllr Carney said as both communities were interested in a shuttle bus service, he would be meeting with the Chairman of FACT to discuss the idea. The Chairman would need to seek funding for a trial service. Cllr Carney was hopeful that if the trial was successful the service would continue. Cllr Murphy was sceptical as he rarely saw people using existing bus services.

191) LHI Update

The Clerk said she had submitted the LHI application for warning signs on the A141 (Fenland Way) ahead of the closing date of the 12th January. She had offered £3,000 towards the cost of the scheme (after receiving advice from a highways officer) and a fatal and a minor injury accident in the area would help to give points in the scoring system. But the Clerk had received an email from another highways officer warning her that the response she had marked as 'no' would need to be marked 'yes' ahead of the submission deadline as failure to do so would raise concerns about the deliverability of the scheme.

The Clerk had ticked the 'no' box because an informal consultation to seek the support of residents had not been carried out. Cllr Carney very kindly offered to put out a survey on Facebook the following day, seeking residents' support for the scheme. The Clerk said this would allow her to tick the yes box.

192) Traffic Issues

Potholes: Cllr Unwin reported that Wenny Road was full of potholes again, many of which were dangerous for cyclists and motorcyclists. The Mayor asked Cllr Unwin to forward photos of the problems so she could pass them on to the local highways officer.

The Clerk had reported two highways' problems in Station Street. The County Council had agreed to re-paint lines at the Market Hill end of Station Street but were unable to find anything wrong with markings at the junction with Burnsfield Street. The Clerk had reported this problem on behalf of Cllr Gowler and admitted she had obviously misunderstood his concerns and would check with him.

Prohibition of Traffic: Two temporary prohibition of through traffic orders had been granted from 3rd January 2024 to 2nd July 2025 to allow the installation of zebra crossings in Bridge Street and East Park Street. It was anticipated the works would be carried out by the 29th March 2024 although they had yet to begin.

Civil Parking Enforcement: The Clerk had noted a report to Fenland District Councillors which stated there was a shortfall in the budget for Civil Parking Enforcement of about

£500,000 as there was so many signs and lines which needed to be corrected. Cllr Murphy admitted the scheme appeared to be in trouble and he had asked for the return of the £100,000 taken from Chatteris Growing Fenland project if the scheme did not go ahead. Members agreed with the course of action.

Events: Notification had been received of road works and events which would affect roads in Chatteris in the coming weeks (there were a large number), the TMC incident report for December and the highways events diary for January.

193) Correspondence

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

Letter: As requested, the Mayor read out a letter of congratulations and thanks from Mr Ian Salter. Mr Salter congratulated the Town Council on two areas of Council activity.

Following his attendance at a council meeting, when he expressed his (and other park users) concerns about the way the park was being maintained, he thanked the Council for having the pond re-lined so it was retaining water and would soon be a "hive of animal activity". He also thanked the Council for having the tall weeds removed so the park was ready for "an excellent year for park users".

Mr Salter also said that now the works to the Old Railway Line footpath had been completed it was a great asset for walkers all year round.

194) Reports

Cllr Unwin said the In Bloom AGM would be held on the 18th January at the Cross Keys. The group was looking for more volunteers.

195) Items for the Next Agenda

Cllr Selman asked if Centrepoint could go on the next agenda. Cllr Ashley said the newsletter was no longer being published as there was no editor. There were no problems with distribution or printing but someone needed to collate it. Cllr Selman suggested approaching the publishers of the Chatteris Scene magazine which went out monthly asking if they would consider putting in a list of forthcoming events. This would satisfy those who missed Centrepoint as a way to find out what was going on and might help to encourage more people to read Chatteris Scene.