

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 7th May 2024

2548

1 of 11

Minutes of the annual meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at the King Edward Centre, King Edwards Road, Chatteris.

Present: Cllrs A Hay (Mayor), I Benney (Deputy Mayor), L Ashley, A Gowler, V Joyce, P Murphy, K Perrin, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

1) Election of Mayor

Before the elections began Cllr Selman requested, under Local Government Act 2002, that if the positions of Mayor or Deputy Mayor were contested councillors should vote via a secret ballot. Her request was supported by 3 councillors as required under the Act.

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Hay be elected Mayor, seconded by Cllr Gowler There were no further nominations, the proposal was agreed by all and Cllr Hay was duly re-elected as Mayor for a second year.

2) Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3) Election of Deputy Mayor

There were two nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor, Cllr Hay proposed Cllr Benney, seconded by Cllr Murphy, and Cllr Unwin proposed Cllr Selman, seconded by Cllr Perrin. A ballot was held and Cllr Benney was elected Deputy Mayor by a majority vote.

4) To Confirm Registers of Members' Interests are correct and Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items

The Clerk reminded members that they should keep their Register of Members' Interests up to date and notify her of any amendments.

Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in all planning applications. Cllr Unwin declared an interest as a member of In Bloom and the Midsummer Festival committee, Cllr Selman as a driver for the Community Car scheme and Chairman of the Festival committee, Cllr Ashley as a trustee of the museum and member of the Festival committee and Cllrs Hay and Murphy as trustees of the museum and the King Edward Centre.

5) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Carney and Charrier had given apologies for absence.

6) Open Forum

The applicant for a grant and Cllr Charlie Marks were welcomed to the meeting.

The applicant explained he was involved with Anglian Players, who were based at the Green Welly in Chatteris and put on two or three shows a year. He had been asked to do a project using the idea of local myths and legends. The applicant admitted there had been a similar project a few years back but said he was starting from scratch and working on a play set in 1650 when the Fens were drained. He felt the subject was relevant today with the impact of climate change.

The applicant said he hoped the play would be performed both indoors and outdoors and he was currently looking for suitable venues (including the pocket park) and trying to involve local artists, including puppeteers. He was also hoping to work with local schools. He was currently trying to work out the likely costs and was hoping Creative People and Places would help with funding. The Anglian Players would also be able to put in some funding thanks to the profits created by their annual pantomime.

The Mayor explained that in order to give a grant the Council would need to be assured that the project would benefit the people of Chatteris. The applicant said he would ensure the venues where the production was performed were in and around Chatteris instead of Anglian Player's usual venue of Doddington Parish Hall.

Cllr Marks said as one of the district councillors for the Chatteris North and Manea ward, he had attended the annual town meeting and had been really impressed by the Town Council's achievements. Unfortunately, he had subsequently been contacted by a distressed lady very upset at comments made after the annual meeting by a councillor. Her husband was not British and she felt their family had been singled out and it had been implied that they should not be entitled to doctors' appointments. Cllr Marks said Chatteris Town Council should not be used as a political minefield.

As vice chairman of FDC's planning committee, Cllr Marks also advised town councillors to seek advice and undertake training on planning matters. He said councillors might not agree with the decisions taken by FDC but often the planning committee's hands were tied and they always had legal advice before any meeting.

The Mayor said she was disappointed to hear about the distressed lady and said the councillor's comments went against the Code of Conduct. She assured Cllr Marks that she would not allow any derogatory language at town council meetings.

7) Appointments to Outside Bodies & Election of Working Groups

The Clerk said the Council elected members to represent the Council on a number of outside bodies. The Mayor said members attended meetings of the groups and reported back to the Council as necessary. Members had a list of the outside bodies and the number of representatives required.

The following representations were agreed:

King Edward Centre Trustees – Cllrs Siggee and Selman

Safer Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison – Cllrs Carney, Gowler and Siggee

Red Tile Wind Farm Trust – Cllr Hay

Chatteris In Bloom and Street Pride – Cllrs Joyce and Unwin

Fenvision – Cllr Murphy

Museum Trust – Cllrs Ashley, Hay & Murphy

Midsummer Festival – Cllrs Ashley, Selman and Unwin

Fenland Transport Advisory Group – Cllrs Benney and Gowler

Feoffee Charity – Cllrs Ashley and Selman

Metalcraft Charity Fund – Cllr Hay and substitute Cllr Benney

Chatteris Bowls Club Trustee – Cllr Benney

FACT liaison group – Cllrs Ashley, Charrier and Selman

Reservoir Liaison Group – Cllrs Gowler and Selman

George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group – Cllr Benney and substitute Cllr Gowler

Members were then asked if they would also agree to sit on the Leisure and General Purposes and Planning Working Groups. Leisure meetings were usually held on the second or third Tuesday of the month and planning was always the last Tuesday of the month.

Members agreed to serve on the working groups as follows:

Planning – Cllrs Ashley, Carney, Gowler, Hay, Joyce, Siggee and Unwin. Cllr Perrin also asked to join the working group but was asked by the Mayor if he would keep an open mind and listen to both sides of the discussion before making a decision. Cllr Gowler pointed out that Cllr Perrin had shown pre-determination in the past by posting on social media that he was against development. Cllr Perrin was not prepared to make that commitment so did not join the planning working group.

Leisure – Cllrs Ashley, Charrier, Hay, Joyce, Selman, Siggee and Unwin.

8) To Approve Mayor's Allowance

Members were reminded that at the January 2024 Council meeting Members had agreed the Mayors Allowance budget of £1,500 as part of the final 24/25 budget. At the May meeting it was required to confirm the previously agreed Mayor's budget for the newly elected Mayor. The budget was agreed.

9) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 2nd April 2024 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

10) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Min 245) Old Station Place: The Mayor said she was still awaiting a photograph of the problem. Cllr Perrin said he had asked if the original complainant wished to take it further and had heard nothing. On closer examination he had noticed there were two fences running parallel and the overgrown trees appeared to be on private land.

Min 259) Next Agenda: Cllr Selman asked why the King Edward Centre was not on the agenda. The Mayor explained that further information was required and there was a need to draw up plans.

11) Police Matters

Members had received a report based on information received from the police in the past month. The Mayor reminded members that the police voluntarily provided the Council with confidential reports, including the minutes of meetings between Sgt Arnold and council leaders, which were not to be shared with members of the public or put on social media because some of the items in the reports could be subject to ongoing investigations.

“Local Police

The minutes of the online meeting between Sgt Chris Arnold and council representatives held on 9th April 2024 had been received. Cllr Selman had represented Chatteris Town Council at the meeting. Members received a copy of the minutes but were reminded they were confidential and not to be shown to members of the public. The minutes contained crime statistics and policing priorities.

Neighbourhood Alerts

2/3/24: April edition of Our News, the Neighbourhood Watch e-newsletter.

2, 16, 23 & 30/4/24: Latest court news.

3/4/24: March newsletter from the March Neighbourhood policing team which included an introduction from the new policing Inspector for Fenland Michael Basford. Insp Basford said new priorities would be set for the coming quarter. At present the priorities were illegal parking around primary schools, retail crime and speeding in rural parishes.

4/4/24: Information about the disclosure scheme known as Sarah’s Law which allows anyone to apply for information to find out if an adult poses a risk to a child.

4/4/24: Notification that during a week of action across Cambridgeshire in March 25 arrests were made for various offences relating to business crime.

6/4/24: Message to Cambridgeshire’s cyclists giving advice on how to prevent bikes being stolen and what to do if they are stolen.

8/4/24: Information about four arrests made by the local neighbourhood team in one week, including a man arrested in Chatteris who was wanted on recall for prison and a woman arrested for assisting him.

15/4/24: Invitation to complete an Insights Survey.

15/4/24: Important notice about a security update and scheme area data for the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

16/4/24: Notification that £6.7 million was lost to ticket fraud in 2023.

26/4/24: Notification that ten tickets were issued to those parked illegally around primary schools including Glebelands and Kingsfield schools in Chatteris.

2/5/24: April newsletter from the March neighbourhood team (members have a copy).”

Commenting on one of the items in the report which gave advice on how to keep homes secure, Cllr Siggee pointed out one way to let people know that no-one was home was to leave bins out after the collection day.

Cllr Joyce asked if there had been any updates on the problems with motorcycles. Cllr Selman said noisy exhausts had been mentioned at the meeting but there was nothing about the motorcycles. Cllr Joyce said the motorcyclists were now riding through town and the Mayor asked for dates and times so she could pass them to the police. There were also calls for more police visits to the town and foot patrols but the Mayor and Cllr Unwin said the police were regularly patrolling.

12) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

Members had received a copy of the latest FDC, Street Scene and CCTV updates (**copy attached**). The Mayor pointed out the CCTV report gave the location of the cameras and she asked members not to pass on this information. Cllr Gowler praised the new format of the CCTV updates.

Cllr Ashley asked Cllr Murphy if the dyke between St Stephen’s Drive and Furrowfields could be cleaned as it was full of rubbish.

Cllr Unwin said Chatteris In Bloom had put out a plea for more gardeners and someone to water the plants.

13) Payment of Accounts

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

Cambs CC Chatteris Library	Summer Reading Challenge Grant	500.00
Gamlingay PC	Xmas Lights purchase of lamppost motifs	720.00
JT Chambers Developments Ltd	Valuation 6 Growing Fenland refurb of Council Offices	41,040.00
RJ Warren	Gardening Services April	756.84

		2553 6 of 11
RJ Warren	Little Acre Gardening Services April	269.66
Mousy Brown	Festival Entertainment Deposit	60.00
RJ Warren	Little Acre Gardening Services March Creditor	134.83
RJ Warren	Gardening Services March Creditor	756.84
Thomas Quinn	Reim Elec used in Office at 2 Park Street	661.94
Payroll	Payroll May	6,795.03
Cllr Unwin	Reim Cocktails ingredients re Mamma Mia Afternoon Tea	40.00
F/O	Reim Petty Cash	67.67
Housdens Catering	Buffet for Mamma Mia Afternoon Tea	300.00
S Reynolds	Allotment Gate Signs	43.04
Glasson Electronics	Xmas Lights equipment	4,164.06
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Mamma Mia Tea	329.40
Capalc	Renewal of Affiliation fee	1,450.93
Chatteris In Bloom	Grants for watering & Vol Organisation grant	8,500.00
Zen Internet	May-June website	13.79
CfCorporate	Q Lease photocopier	265.10
C A Chubbock	Allotment annual rent	275.00
Wave	Creditor Office water bill	61.56
Bgas	Office gas bill creditor	22.91
Wave	LHS Allotment creditor	177.00

		2554 7 of 11
Wave	RHS Allotment creditor	125.26
Onecom	March phone bill creditor	100.37
Barclays Bank	Debit fees	8.50
PC OK	Office Computer monitor & keyboard replacement	143.00
Total		67,782.73

14) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 30th April 2024 showing expenditure of £72,423.79 and income of £158,134.09 (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.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had balanced and completed the 2023/24 end of year accounts. The Internal Auditor had the accounts and was in the process of completing his audit. The accounts would be ready for Members to approve, along with the annual governance statement and the accounting statements (AGAR), at the meeting in June.

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

15) To Consider Grants for the Fenland Sparta ABC Boxing Club & Anglian Players

Fenland Sparta ABC Boxing Club

Members were reminded that at the March full council meeting the boxing club asked for a grant towards the cost of the boxing shows for the youth and junior boxers.

Members asked for more information and agreed to discuss it at the Leisure meeting. It was then deferred until information was gathered.

At the April full council meeting Members agreed to wait until all the information they required was received.

Cllrs Siggee & Perrin met the owners of the Boxing club at their training club to find answers to some of the questions posed by Councillors.

Cllr Perin produced a report for Councillors, updating them on information he had received from the Proprietor of the Boxing club. In the report he asked for clarification on several

pieces of information which he felt needed to be addressed before a grant could be considered.

The Financial Officer advised Members that she had gathered all the information and had documents to prove her findings. She was happy that the information she had received and the relevant documents were sufficient to recommend a grant to the Fenland Sparta ABC Boxing Club to go towards putting on a junior boxing show.

The Financial Officer recommended a minimum grant of £1,000.

After the grant of £1,000 was approved by a majority of councillors, the Financial Officer asked Councillors to return all the documentation they had before them as it had financial information that needed to be destroyed under GDPR. The Financial Officer destroyed the documents, witnessed by Cllrs Benney and Marks.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Fenland Sparta ABC Boxing Club be granted £1,000 towards the cost of a junior boxing show and that the report be noted and approved.

Anglian Players

Members were advised that an initial contact grant request had been received for a Chatteris based art project.

The applicant had spoken about the project in the Open Forum. The Financial Officer said she planned to meet with the applicant to go through costs and obtain further information to have a better understanding of what the project would bring to the residents of Chatteris.

The Financial Officer advised councillors that she would defer the grant decision until she obtained more information.

16) Growing Fenland Update

The Clerk said there had been a blip with works to 14 Church Lane and it had been a case of chasing up the builder and requesting works continue apace, including a tidy up of the site. Fortunately, things did appear now to be back on track but the Clerk said it was likely to be September time before it would be possible to move back into the offices and the flats would be available for let.

17) Planning

Cllr Ashley (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 30th April 2024 (copy **attached**). (Cllrs Benney and Marks left the room while the plans were discussed).

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

- a) Support

- b) Support
- c) Object, home would be close to a commercial property, access not good, accessibility to local amenities very poor, no proper footpath, public transport very limited (the Planning, Design and Access Statement is inaccurate as the site is not well connected to the town or safe for pedestrians (particularly vulnerable elderly people) and is not close to bus stops and bus service is infrequent). Councillors worry that elderly people may wander on to a very fast road (60mph) which is a red, high casualty route.
- d) Support
- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) No objections to the development in principle but very concerned about access on to A142. There are already major safety issues at the existing two accesses on to the road from New Road and Wenny Road due to the speed of traffic and this access is on a bend. The A142 is acknowledged as a high casualty route. If the application is agreed request pedestrian/cycle link to the new open space being created by the approved development at Wenny Meadow and expect Section 106 payments of £2,000 per dwelling to be paid. The Council disputes the recent viability study as a local estate agent has confirmed that house prices in Chatteris have plateaued, not fallen, and the housing market is now improving. There are concerns that arrangements for surface water drainage have yet to be agreed with Anglian Water. Land levels need to be checked before the work begins to ensure existing properties in The Elms do not suffer more flooding issues. There are also concerns about the impact of additional traffic on St Martins Road, Birch Avenue and The Elms.
- h) Support
- i) Support
- j) Support if there are conditions that the static caravan is only used in connection with the horse schooling and is never used as a habitable building.
- k) Support
- l) Noted
- m) Support

18) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Ashley (Vice Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 (**copy attached**).

L73) D Day Commemorations: Unfortunately, Cllr Siggee was no longer able to help with the beacon lighting at the D Day Commemorations as he had a hospital appointment. Cllr Gowler offered to help Cllr Joyce and also offered to read out the citation which should have been read by the Town Crier. Cllr Unwin asked if it would be possible for the Community Choir to sing in the church if it was raining. The Clerk also agreed to ask the vicar to put in the post to stop vehicles parking near the beacon. The RBL had invited the Mayor and

members of the Town Council to join the them at the War Memorial at 11am on the 6th June for a short service and said the standards and branch members would be attending the beacon lighting ceremony. The Clerk suggested the standards should be dipped at 9pm after the community choir had finished singing and before the beacon lighting.

L74) Chatteris Community Helping Hands: Cllr Ashley and the Clerk had attended a meeting of the new group. The group's aims were admirable and starter packs, for those moving into a house who had nothing, were undeniably needed but the main problem was finding storage space and someone to run the scheme. Cllr Ashley said the group was talking to Stainless Metalcraft and Bartletts about storage.

19) Festival Update

Cllr Selman reported that a boozy afternoon tea held to raise funds for the Festival had been very successful. There were now plans for a similar event at Halloween. The programme for Festival weekend was being finalised and the committee was now frantically trying to get people to agree to take part in the Festival, particularly the Festival parade.

20) Traffic Issues

Zebra Crossings: The Mayor had forwarded an update on the new zebra crossings in Bridge Street and East Park Street. Whilst the groundworks were now complete there was a delay in delivering the Belisha Beacons and there would be another delay in connecting them as connection dates could only be scheduled when the beacons arrived. This meant the crossings would be barriered off until the beacons were lit.

A resident had sent an email complaining about tarmac left near the Bridge Street crossing but this appeared to have been cleared. He had also raised the issue of vehicles parking near the Aldi entrance and Tailormade Ltd causing congestion and even parking on the footpath. He suggested the problem had increased since Aldi introduced parking cameras to stop employees of Tailormade parking in their car park all day and he suggested Tailormade should provide sufficient parking for its employees. Cllr Unwin asked how to get double yellow lines near Aldi and Cllr Gowler said it would have to be an LHI scheme or privately funded. Members noted that Aldi lorries were struggling to enter the site and it was agreed to write to Aldi and suggest they pay for double yellow lines opposite their site.

Bus Stops: The Mayor commented that the newly re-painted bus stop signs on the roads looked good.

High Street Parking: The issue of town centre parking had been raised at the annual town meeting. It was suggested there should be more signs directing motorists to park at Furrowfields but councillors argued felt these would be ignored as motorists did not comply with the double yellow lines. Cllr Ashley said one resident used Furrowfields car park to store their cars for sale but Cllr Murphy said nothing could be done if the vehicles were taxed and insured.

Temporary Traffic Orders: Notification had been received that high priority drainage works would be carried out in Eden Crescent between the 10th June and 12th July. On the 3rd June

Stocking Drove would be closed for carriageway repair works and works to London Road should have been carried out on the 2nd May. Anglian Water were due to close Horseway for the installation of a water supply for agriculture. Cllr Marks confirmed this had been done. He also said FDC enforcement had visited the illegal encampment and would take action. All houses which would be affected by the building of the reservoir had been given notice of compulsory purchase so those on the illegal encampment would not benefit.

Road works: The latest lists of planned road works in Fenland had been received, along with a list of events affecting the Highways in the County and the Traffic Management statistics for March 2024.

21) Correspondence

Members had a list of correspondence received since the last meeting of the Council (**copy attached**). This included a new timeline for the proposed reservoir. Cllr Selman said there would be further consultation sessions at the King Edward Centre in June and July.

22) Reports

Community Café: Cllr Selman reported that she went along to the Know Your Neighbourhood Community Café Event at the library on the 26th April. Local groups had stalls and gave out information. There were also free goody bags containing promotional material and goodies. Cllr Selman said it would appear the group were repeating services already available in the town and she suggested it could be better to engage with existing groups.

Weeds: Cllr Unwin asked when the County Council would be spraying the weeds on footpaths and the side of roads and requested this be carried out before In Bloom judging in July. The Mayor said she would ask the questions and she asked for a list of areas where there were particular problems.

Charity: Cllr Ashley reported that she had attended a meeting of the Feoffee Charity and they had received no applications from local organisations for funding. The Clerk suggested both Court Leet and Feoffees should have a simple application form that organisations would be asked to fill in (similar to the Town Council's grant application form).

23) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

