

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Dated 4th July 2023

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Minutes of the Meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 4th July 2023 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

45) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and A Charrier. The Financial Officer also sent apologies for absence.

46) Declarations of Interest & Dispensations to Speak and Vote on Declarable Pecuniary Interest Items & Co-Opted Councillor to Sign Acceptance of Office Form

Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest in all planning applications, Cllr Unwin declared an interest as president of Chatteris In Bloom.

Cllr Joyce signed his Acceptance of Office form and was welcomed to the Council by the Mayor.

47) Open Forum

Three members of the public were welcomed to the meeting. Two indicated a wish to speak. The first, a resident of The Gables, said she had lived in Chatteris for 50 years and was worried about the town as there was no law and order, no police and no police station. She said cars cruised the streets from 5am until 9 or 10pm. On anti-social behaviour she said the mural in the bus stop of the King of England had been covered in dogs faeces and 'paedo' had been written across his face. The resident claimed it was the work of secondary school pupils and said she had spoken to the headmistress of the school that afternoon who had promised to try and do something about it.

The resident said she had been protesting because Chatteris people wanted their police station back.

The Mayor said she had monthly meetings with the police and would bring the resident's concerns to their attention.

Cllr Ashley said the police were investigating the vandalism at the bus stop and would be taking it further.

The second speaker was a resident of Lode Way who was objecting to the planning application for 9 properties on land east of 13B Bridge Street. She was also representing her immediate neighbours who shared a 70m boundary with the proposed development. (Cllrs Benney and Murphy declared an interest, as the plan was likely to be determined by FDC's planning committee, and left the room).

The resident spoke about the detrimental impact on residential properties and the biodiversity loss which would occur if the green space was built on. She outlined the wildlife which had been seen in the field and the diverse variety of plant life. She also spoke about the destruction of a 60m length of hedgerow and the removal of a tree from a neighbour's property which occurred prior to the submission of the planning application.

On loss of privacy and overlooking the resident claimed at least 11 of the properties in Lode Way would lose significant privacy and she was concerned by possible overshadowing and loss of light.

The resident also spoke about highway safety and the problems caused by multiple junctions on to Lode Way and cars parked on bends. The proposed junction was opposite a junction and close to a corner with many parked cars on it, she explained.

The resident questioned the sustainable drainage strategy which stated that surface water would naturally drain away. She pointed out that for several months of the year the field was waterlogged and the development would lead to a net loss of permeable surfaces to absorb the water,

In 2004/5 similar concerns had been ignored and a development had gone ahead and existing homes - close to the current proposed site - had flooded. The resident was concerned that the developers had failed to learn from the mistakes of the recent past and asked who would be responsible for paying compensation if home owners again suffered flooding.

The Mayor thanked the residents for attending and said the planning application would be discussed later in the meeting.

48) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 6th June 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

49) Matters Arising from the Minutes

42) Email: The Clerk reported that she would shortly be going over to the .gov email account and asked members to ensure their .gov email addresses were set up by following the instructions which had been sent over.

36) Planning: The Clerk had received a response to the email sent to FDC's portfolio holder for planning, Cllr Dee Laws, regarding the lack of Section 106 payments.

Cllr Laws said FDC knew how highly valued s106 payments were and said FDC always tried to maximise the amounts that any development could provide to the community. However she went on to say: "Unfortunately, Fenland has a viability issue in relation to housing and any additional payments we can request from development that albeit more positive the further south you go in the district, still exists. You may be aware that as part of the Local Plan process, FDC commissioned a viability report. This can be found on the FDC website. This report illustrates that we are only able to ask for a certain amount of s106 to ensure developments coming forward remain viable. If a developer challenges this report, they have to submit a viability assessment which is scrutinised by an external specialist against government guidelines. As frustrating as this is for us all, this is the process that must be adhered to not just for FDC but all Councils. There are of course other processes in place for Councils which operate CIL schemes which is not viable in Fenland. The application at

Womb Farm adhered to these parameters delivering 20% affordable housing and £2k per plot.”

Cllr Laws concluded by saying: “If Chatteris Town Council have any community projects which would benefit from s106 funding that can be linked to the development, it would be helpful if these could be flagged when commenting on planning applications.”

It was agreed the Council should draw up a new basket of asks from Section 106 payments and this should be discussed by the Leisure Working Group.

50) Police Matters

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

‘Local Police

Members have received a copy of a confidential report and a Powerpoint presentation following the meeting between Sgt Chris Arnold and council leaders held on the 8th June. Unfortunately the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were unable to attend.

Neighbourhood Alert

7/6/23: Latest court news.

10/6/23: Invitation for members of the public to put their knowledge on contacting the police to the test by looking at ‘10 common myths about contacting Cambridgeshire Constabulary’.

17/6/23: Information about ASB Awareness Week, 3rd to 9th July, which includes the chance to view 4 webinars.

20/6/23: Appeal for help in identifying properties that may be being used as cannabis factories.

20/6/23: Notification that 21 million reports have been made to the Suspicious Email Reporting Services resulting in the removal of over 235,000 malicious websites.

21/6/23: Appeal for support for a crowd funder initiative from Neighbourhood Watch which will pay for innovative community work with 16-24 year olds.

30/6/23: July edition of the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter Our News.

3/7/23: Information about the three main types of Anti-Social Behaviour as part of ASB Awareness week.’

The Mayor said she had been in touch with the new neighbourhood police officer for Chatteris and had invited him to attend a meeting.

51) FDC, Street Scene and CCTV Updates

Members had before them the latest FDC and Street Scene reports (**copy attached**).

Cllrs Carney and Gowler had attended the CCTV liaison group meeting on the 29th June. Cllr Carney had submitted a written report on the meeting and commented that he had been impressed by the quality and tenacity of the CCTV operators and there had been a good, in depth question and answer session after the PowerPoint presentation.

Cllr Gowler said he was very impressed by the monitoring station and the quality of the cameras. He asked if Chatteris was getting value for money from the CCTV and was told that there were not only police incidents captured, there were also patrols and incidents with a positive outcome such as a missing child or an elderly person who had fallen over. He

confirmed there was a dedicated police officer liaising between the constabulary and the monitoring station and said he believed the main problem was a lack of resources for the police to follow up all incidents noted.

The screen showing images from the monitors was shared between Fenland and Peterborough and Fenland got the better service as they put in more money.

Cllr Gowler admitted he had been won over by the visit and said the staff were receptive to any councillors who wished to visit the monitoring station.

Cllr Unwin said the cameras were definitely worth having and did work in helping to catch criminals. She also pointed out it was the only deterrent the council had.

Cllr Siggee had been surprised to see FDC council workers cleaning the streets around Westbourne and asked if it would be a regular occurrence. Cllr Murphy said the County Council were no longer getting rid of weeds around the streets and it was now up to residents, shopkeepers and volunteers and shopkeepers had largely stopped helping to keep the streets clean. Unfortunately FDC workers could only carry out the work when they had the time but the road sweepers did go out ahead of the Festival. Cllr Unwin said probation were helping to clear the weeds from the streets ahead of In Bloom judging.

52) Financial Officers Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 27th June 2023 showing expenditure of £176,584.89 and income of £185,514.34 (included a half 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.

53) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members were reminded that the Council's current policy was to consider grant applications at the April, July, October, and January meetings each year. Budget limitations meant that grants given by the Council were an expression of support for an organisation and were not at a level where, on their own, they could sustain a group's financial viability.

The approved budget for grants in **2023/24** was **£4,500**

There were separate approved budgets set in 2023/24 for the following: -

	£
Chatteris King Edward Centre – Staffing contribution	10,000
Chatteris Museum Trust	6,500
Chatteris Christmas Lights Committee	10,500
Chatteris Town in Bloom	5,500
Chatteris Junior Youth Service Provision	4,500

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Chatteris Town in Bloom Paid Watering service	1,000
Summer Children's Fun	1,500
Summer Festival Contribution	5,000
Senior Youth Service Provision	5,400
Rural Citizen's Advice Bureau Face to Face Service	6,280

There was one application for consideration by Members at the meeting.

Organisation

Recommended Grant £

Chatteris Community Car Scheme

500

Grant towards running costs; they have additional costs due to petrol prices rising and increase in hospital car service.

Councillors approved the grant application of £500 on the understanding that the funds were used for Chatteris residents only. (Cllr Selman declared an interest as a driver for the car scheme).

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

54) Payment of Accounts

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

Barclays	Bank Charges	8.50
Clerk	Reim Zoom & Mileage, tug of war rope hire	38.09
Clerk	Reim Keys cut 2 Park Street Museum	25.00
Cllr Hay	Reim Mileage sundries re Civic duties as Mayor	64.40
J T Chambers	Valuation 9 works to 2 Park Street	31,920.00
Zen Internet	Jul-Aug 23 Website	13.79
British Gas	Gas Bill	83.66
Lucky's Rosettes	Rosettes Dog Show Summer Festival	24.15
Yvonne Suswain	Dog show expenses and agility items	154.73
WJ Kinn	Robbie Williams tribute act Summer Festival	300.00
The Old Bakery	Scones & Clotted Cream for Summer Festival cream teas	73.00
S & P Larham	Scouted & Booted Act Summer Festival	750.00
Upwood Ukuleles	Ukulele Band Summer Festival	100.00
Morton & Hall Consulting	2 Park Street Professional fees	4,149.60

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British Gas	Elec Bill	105.96
British Gas	Gas Bill	102.18
A G Cannon	Removal Company for Museum move	6,414.00
F/O	Cash re-float for Summer Festival to be repaid after fest	1,500.00
F/O	Reim Mileage Summer Fest	27.00
Vision ICT Ltd	Annual Email hosting .gov emails	302.40
Vision ICT Ltd	Registration of all .gov domain names CTC	180.00
RJ Warren	Gardening Services	790.04
R J Warren	Little Acre Gardening Services	264.38
World of Flooring	Completion, final invoice for 2 Park Street flooring	10,771.14
Aitch	Summer Festival photographer	200.00
Onecom	June phone bill	94.01
Cambs CC	Library hire re CARB	306.31
Payroll	JULY 23 Payroll	8,201.49
Abigail Miller	Summer Festival Entertainer	100.00
Total		67,063.83

55) Planning

Cllr Gowler (Vice Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 27th June 2023 (copy **attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to h) (as shown on the **appended list**) with the exception of f) (erection of 9 dwellings at land east of 13B Bridge Street) which required a decision. The application was fully discussed and it was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) Support
- b) Recommend Refusal, over development of site and access issues
- c) Support (Cllr Gowler declared an interest)
- d) Fully Support, best use of building
- e) Recommend Refusal, the new build will be too close to existing buildings, over development of site, will remove a parking space and where will refuse bins go.
- f) Recommend Refusal, existing surface water drainage problems in the area will be exacerbated as a riparian drain has already been lost and caused problems when a

development was built in the vicinity in 2004/5. In addition development will lead to loss of biodiversity. Hedgerows have already been cut down. (Cllr Keating abstained from voting).

- g) Strongly Recommend Refusal on the plans to fell, no objections to the works. There is no evidence the trees to be felled are diseased or unhealthy and no evidence is provided that the crack in the wall is due to the trees which have been in position for many years (note date of TPOs). Indeed removal of the trees could have an even greater impact on the wall. The wall can be repaired and underpinned. The trees have significant amenity value and their removal will change the street scene and will have a detrimental impact on a Conservation Area and a Grade I listed building (the Parish Church).
- h) Noted

56) Growing Fenland Project Update

The Clerk updated members on the Growing Fenland project and began by confirming that the Museum had begun to move into 2 Park Street that very day. Work was continuing on the accountants' offices and a new lease was being drawn up. The accountants main concern appeared to be that the windows would not open as they had been painted shut for many years. A solution to this was being sought.

The good news was that the project was coming in within budget.

The architect had been out to view 14 Church Lane again and after a meeting with the Clerk and the Financial Officer was now drawing up the schedule of works which would soon be going out to contractors for quotations.

The Mayor said she had passed on details about the Cambs Community Fund being launched by the County Council which might be able to fund part of the extension works to the King Edward Centre. The Financial Officer was getting more advice from a County Council officer before submitting an expression of interest in the scheme. The Mayor suggested the Town Council might also be able to apply for funds to help furnish the community rooms being created under the Growing Fenland project. The main objective was to show money from the fund would benefit the community.

57) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations

Cllr Ashley presented the minutes of the Leisure Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 (**copy attached**).

L3) FACT Bus: Councillors were very pleased to note that many more people were using the Chatteris runner bus service and it was now a question of promoting the bus to Cambridge. Cllr Carney said he would be putting together a questionnaire about a FACT bus service to Manea railway station which would be ready for distribution in late August/early September. He had spoken to Mr Christy at the Midsummer Festival who had re-iterated that FACT trustees were keen to support the service and believed that funding would be available.

L5) Pocket Park: Members agreed not to carry out a feasibility study into buying or hiring cutting machinery for the pocket park.

L7) Wellness Sessions: The Mayor reported that wellness sessions for the elderly were to be held at the library and would be run by the yoga teacher from the leisure centre.

58) Midsummer Festival

The Clerk reported the Midsummer Festival had been very popular. Takings showed there had been a record attendance on the Saturday and the Mayor had been very impressed by the live band at the Party in the Park. Cllr Ashley reported that everyone had still been rocking at 10.30pm but by 11.15pm everyone had left the field. Her brother, who lived abroad, had thoroughly enjoyed the day and had commented on the sense of community in the town. Fortunately there had been no trouble.

Unfortunately numbers were down on the Sunday and the dog show had to be cancelled due to the very hot weather but the colour fun run had still proved to be very popular. The Clerk thanked all the volunteers who had helped, particularly the three councillors on the committee, and also praised the FDC officers, in particular Ms Isabel Edgington. In turn she was given a vote of thanks by councillors for her work in organising and running the festival.

59) Councillor Training Opportunities

Members had received a copy of an email from CAPALC offering training courses for new councillors either in person or via Zoom. The Clerk asked members to let her know which courses they wished to attend.

Cllrs Joyce, Keating and Selman also expressed an interest in attending the planning training being organised by FDC on the 19th July.

60) Youth Work Update

The Clerk reported that Youths of Fenland had been unable to run the well-being café and youth group in May and early June due to staffing problems but had kept her informed about the position. Fortunately the groups had begun again on the 20th June and would run until the 18th July, the start of the summer holidays.

61) Traffic Issues

Pothole: It was reported the pothole in Wenny Road, under the speed hump, had still not been repaired despite being reported on numerous occasions. The Mayor said she would pursue the highways officer and Cllr Unwin offered to send a photograph. Cllr Gowler said there was also a large hole in Station Street which had not been repaired despite being reported.

Junction: Cllr Gowler had drawn the police's attention to the visibility problems when exiting Clare Street onto Huntingdon Road due to the van continually parked on double yellow lines obscuring vision when looking left and overgrown trees blocking the view to the right.

Road and Footway Works: Notification had been received that planned surface treatment works to Doddington Road had been brought forward. The work was carried out at the end of

June. A temporary traffic order showed carriageway resurfacing works were due to be carried out on Fenland Way, from the Huntingdon Road roundabout to the Isle of Ely Way roundabout, from the 7th August to the 8th September with night time closures and 30mph restrictions during the day time. Notification had also been received that Footway Slurry Sealing works would be carried out in Fairview Drive, Fairview Gardens and Tithe Road at the end of August.

Capital Projects: An email had been received asking for the Council's views on the demand for real time passenger information for Chatteris town centre. The email asked if the signs would be beneficial, whilst admitting there was no funding available at present. Councillors asked why the information would be needed when there were barely any buses for Chatteris. The Mayor said she had seen a list of capital highways projects but there had been no sign of the promised zebra crossings in Bridge Street and East Park Street. Councillors also asked what had happened to the extension of the footpath along Fenland Way from the travellers site to Tesco's and pointed out a footpath between the new training centre and Tesco's was more important than real time passenger information.

Events: Notification had been received of road works and events which would affect roads in Chatteris, the TMC incident report for June and the highways events diary for July.

62) Correspondence

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

Reservoir: Councillors Gowler and Selman offered to represent the Town Council on the proposed New Fens Reservoir Community Liaison Group.

63) Reports

In Bloom: Cllr Unwin said the Chairman of In Bloom would be resigning at the end of the season due to the pressures of time and work. Cllr Unwin said being chairman of the group was a huge commitment and preparing for In Bloom judging this year had been a struggle and the weather conditions had made it even harder. The problems with recruiting volunteers was an ongoing struggle and the to do list was getting bigger and bigger. This year the group had called on probation to help clear the streets of weeds. There was a need get more young people involved. Cllr Murphy said recruiting more volunteers was a problem everywhere and Chatteris was now the only town in Fenland to go forward for judging.

Cllr Unwin gave a brief history of In Bloom in Chatteris which began in 2005. She said Fenland District Council, the Town Council and the County Council had all been involved and the volunteers worked closely with and enhanced FDC's work. In addition there were monthly litter picks around the town.

64) Items for the Next Agenda

Cllrs Joyce, Keating and Unwin all gave apologies for the next meeting.

