

# CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes Dated 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022

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Minutes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris.

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

### 23) To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Charrier, Hay and Taylor. Cllr Carney apologised that he would be a little late.

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

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

### 25) Open Forum

There were no members of the public present and it was, therefore, agreed to move on to the next item on the agenda.

### 26) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 and the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 27) Matters Arising from the Minutes

Annual Town Meeting 8) Poll: The poll demanded by 31 electors at the Annual Town Meeting, was being conducted until 9pm that evening. The question was: "Would you like Wenny Meadow to be designated as a local green space and protected from development?" and voters were being asked to vote yes or no.

It was agreed the Clerk should publicise the result of the poll on the public noticeboard and on the Council's website.

The Clerk asked councillors what action she should take if the poll resulted in a majority voting yes and she was asked to take action. It was agreed she should point out Chatteris Town Council was not responsible for designating green space, that was the responsibility of Fenland District Council.

## 28) Police Matters

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

### Local Police

Members have received a copy of the confidential report of the meeting between Neighbourhood Sergeant Joe Punton and council leaders held on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

### Neighbourhood Alert

3/5/22: May edition of Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.

4/5/22: Notification of the jailing of a stalker who harassed a woman in Wisbech.

4/5/22, 9/5/22, 17/5/22, 23/5/22, 30/5/22 & 6/6/22: Latest news from the courts.

5/5/22: Advice on how to protect your home on National Garden Day.

12/5/22: Notification that a Chatteris man has been charged with possession of a knife.

18/5/22: Comedian John Bishop says hello to Neighbourhood Watch Week.

18/5/22: Notification that Cambridgeshire Constabulary is looking to recruit more police officers.

18/5/22: Notification that a team who investigate paedophiles online have received the Employee of the Month award from the Chief Constable.

20/5/22: Warning about fake emails purporting to be from Ofgem.

30/5/22: Notification that almost 40,000 hours were given up by volunteers to keep the streets of Cambridgeshire safe.

1/6/22: Notification that 40 years of Neighbourhood Watch was marked by the Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston.

The Mayor said she would be attending a meeting with Sgt Punton and other council leaders the following evening. This would be the last meeting with Sgt Punton as Sgt Lugg was returning in July.

## 29) FDC, Street Scene, CCTV & Section 106 Updates

Members had a copy of the FDC, Street Scene, CCTV and Section 106 Updates (**copy attached**).

The report included notification that two elderly dog walkers had been given a verbal warning about walking their dogs in New Road Cemetery, which was not permitted. The Mayor suggested people should be allowed to walk their dogs in the cemetery as bereaved people liked to be accompanied by their dogs.

Cllr Murphy explained dogs were banned from certain areas, including cemeteries and children's play areas, because of the mess they left behind.

Cllr Haggata said the swing at the Wenny Road Recreation ground had been replaced but a bench was still missing. It was suggested the bench from the church grounds, which had been

replaced by a special Jubilee bench, should be installed at the Recreation Ground. Cllr Murphy agreed to follow up the idea. (Cllr Carney joined the meeting).

### 30) Financial Officer's Report

Members had before them a budgetary control statement for the Revenue (Precept) Account as at 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 showing expenditure of £42,305.05 and income of £81,853.53 (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.

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

### 31) Internal Auditor's Report

Members had before them copies of the Internal Auditor's Report and his signed certificate of the Annual Return for the year end 31st March 2022.

Members noted that the Auditor had no issues that he wished to draw to the attention of Members for this financial year.

However, going forward he did raise his concerns about the following points: -

- General fund balances would be too low on a full budget spend for 22/23, the Precept should have been increased rather than taking funds from the general fund. Council needs to be able to show 6 months' worth of working costs.
- Holding accounts and reserve accounts need addressing at the end of 22/23 financial year, funds from the general reserve and other smaller holding accounts could be transferred into the general fund to bring the balance up to the acceptable level of 50% of the Precept. Once earmarked funds are used the reserves would be under the recommended level.
- The Council Offices and Barclays Bank should have a valuation undertaken as at March 2023 so the asset register can be updated on a valuation figure rather than the insurance figure that has always been used.
- The Internal Auditor recommends that we look into the vat implications of the work to 2 Park Street and 14 Church Lane.
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It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved.

### 32) Reinvestment of Council Assets

Members were advised that the Council's investment with Nationwide Building Society (£85,000 at 0.30%) would mature on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

Nationwide had advised a new reinvestment interest rate of 0.80% for a 1-year fixed term. The rate offered was comparable to other high street financial institutions.

The Financial Officer recommended that the full £85,000 should be reinvested at this stage and advised Members that if the funds were needed for the Growing Fenland project, then the investment monies could be drawn down, albeit with a loss of interest. In the meantime, the funds were protected under the FSCS whilst earning interest.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and approved for reinvestment of the £85,000 at 0.80% for 1 year with Nationwide Building Society.

### 33) Payment of Accounts

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

Barclays	Bank Charges May 22	11.50
R J Warren	Gardening Services	1,025.24
Cllr Ashley	Reim: Mileage CAB Event	16.20
Cllr Ashley	Mayor's Allowance	500.00
F/O	Reim: Glasses & Eye Test	240.00
Morton & Hall Consulting	Professional Fees Growing Fenland	2,880.00
Cambs CC	Hire of Chatteris Library re CAB face to face	507.00
Onecom	May phone bill	74.84
Clerk	Payroll June	1,854.95
F/O	Payroll June	1,336.21
Cambs Pension	Payroll June	1,146.00
HMRC	Payroll June	1,079.42
Chatteris in Bloom	Grant Payment Vol Org	5,000.00
Clerk	Reim: Zoom & Sundries re Summer Fest	84.01
Clerk	Reim: crowns for Summer Fest princess's	22.00
Financial Officer	Petty Cash Reim:	45.48
Chatteris Museum	Grant Vol Org	3,609.93

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Dean Odell	Summer Fest Entertainer	<b>5 of 8</b> 175.00
Dog & Duck Show	Summer Fest Entertainer	930.00
M Gillett	Repairs & Maintenance Town sign	40.00
March Town Council	Mayors' charity afternoon tea	40.00
Ethos	Printing	38.26
R G P Security	Queen Jubilee Event	148.20
Youths of Fenland	Well Being Café Senior youth service provision	1,486.24
Adrian Bond	Queen Jubilee Event (Bondy Band)	400.00
Chatteris Parochial Church	Queen Jubilee Event church hire	150.00
Viking	Stationary Order	172.80
Zen Internet	Jun-July website	11.99
M Saunders	Internal Audit of 21/22 accounts	350.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>23,375.27</b>

#### **34) To Consider Grant Application from Ukranian Hub**

A request for a grant for the Ukrainian hub had been received from the Vicar, the Rev Wendy Thomson, as the Church was being used to host the meetings. The letter requested a donation of £500 to help with admin costs and hosting the meetings. Members agreed they required more information, about how a grant would be spent, before making a decision.

#### **35) Planning**

Cllr Haggata (Chairman) presented the minutes of the Planning Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 (**copy attached**).

Members ratified the group's recommendations on applications a) to i) (as shown on the **appended list**) and it was agreed to return the planning applications to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) No knowledge of history of site.
- b) Support
- c) Support
- d) Support

- e) Support
- f) Support
- g) Support but only if the 8 illegal mobile homes on the site are removed.
- h) Cautiously support conversion of building but the issue with parking remains. Residents and office workers will not use the car parks identified due to their distance from the site and on-road parking is a problem. The parking difficulties could be alleviated by using the open space at the front of the site.
- i) Support

### **36) Growing Fenland Project Update**

The Clerk and the Financial Officer said the purchase of Barclays Bank had taken another step forward as an indemnity statement had been signed, although the Council's solicitor was still waiting to receive the document. Unfortunately this meant the hoped for date of completion at the end of May had been missed. The Council was obtaining good advice from the solicitor which would protect the Council in future.

Cllr Benney was thanked for all his hard work in chasing up the freeholder and his solicitor.

It was also reported that two companies were busy drawing up quotes for the required works to the building. Unfortunately it would be a difficult estimate as many of the materials and works had to be agreed with the Conservation Officer. Other companies had been approached for quotes but had turned down the opportunity. Cllr Carney suggested a company from the Stamford area might be interested in quoting if three quotes were needed.

### **37) Leisure & General Purposes Working Group Report & Recommendations**

Cllr Carney (Vice Chairman) presented the minutes of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 (**copy attached**).

There was just one recommendation which was considered **In Committee** at the end of the meeting.

### **38) Midsummer Festival Update**

Members had received a copy of the Midsummer Festival programme for the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June. The Clerk reported that fortunately it would be a full weekend again, for the first time since 2019, and would include a parade, party in the park, arena events, funfair, dog show, colour fun run and cream teas.

The Festival Committee were thanked for all their hard work and the Mayor commented that those who moaned about a lack of events in the town did not realise just how long it took to organise such events. Planning for the 2023 Festival would begin in September. Once again the Clerk said any help over the weekend would be very welcome.

### 39) Road Safety Initiative

The Council had been notified that Vision Zero would be delivering their Surround a Town road safety initiative along with community safety advice from the Community Safety Partnership in Chatteris in the summer. The plan was to hold an event at Furrowfields car park and the email sought suggested dates in July.

Councillors queried whether children would be invited to take part and whether it would be better to have the event during term time or the school holidays. The dates of Fridays 15<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> July were suggested.

### 40) Traffic Issues

Disabled Parking Bay: The County Council had advised the Town Council that a disabled parking bay in The Elms was no longer required and the proposal was to remove it. Councillors had no objections to the proposal.

LHI: Official confirmation had been received that the Council's LHI application for a reduction in the speed limit in Doddington Road, and associated speed reduction measures, had been successful.

Cllrs Murphy and Hay had been approached by a resident of Cricketers Way requesting speed reduction measures in Wenny Road. The Clerk had outlined the LHI process and the resident had requested a scheme be considered as the Council's LHI application for 2023/24. Cllr Gowler said he would also be putting forward a scheme for Burnsfield.

Traffic Orders: Notification had been received of the proposed closure of the C307 Doddington Road for surface treatment works sometime between the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and the end of January 2024. There had also been notification of a parking bay suspension outside 54 High Street from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August and temporary closure of Fenland Way from 8pm to 6am on the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June for carriageway patching works.

Mepal Viaduct: Notification had been received that Mepal Viaduct would be shut from 8pm on Fridays to 6am on Mondays on the weekends of 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July and 29<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August for joint installation works.

Reports: The latest Highways events diary had been received, as had the IHMC incident report for April and the latest works and highway events information for Fenland.

Bus Service: Notification had been received of changes to the Cambridgeshire and Busway timetables.

#### 41) Correspondence

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

Library: Cllrs Ashley and Murphy and the Clerk expressed a wish to attend the celebrations to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the library on the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

#### 42) Reports

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations: The Mayor reported that the previous Thursday's Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations had gone really well. On behalf of the Council there had been a concert in the Church which was well attended by all ages. There had been problems at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour as the Queen tribute band had pulled out but local musician Bondy had stepped into the breach and the event had been very successful. The community choir had then sung and the beacon had then been lit by Cllr Carney. Earlier in the evening the Midsummer Festival committee had crowned the Festival princesses and chosen a new town crier Matthew Sinclair. The Mayor said she had been very disappointed that other councillors had not attended (Cllr Haggata had attended the beacon lighting ceremony).

Town Sign: The smart new town sign had been unveiled by the Mayor on the 13<sup>th</sup> May at a ceremony attended by fellow councillors and the signs creator Mr Ric Savage, who was thanked for donating his time. Unfortunately the Mayor of the Combined Authority did not attend the ceremony.

#### 43) Items for the Next Agenda

No items were put forward for the next agenda.

The following item (44) was taken **In Committee** due to the confidential nature of the item to be considered.

#### 44) Tenancy Agreement for 2 Park Street