

**CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 14th June 2016

Present: Cllrs J Burrow (Chairman), L Ashley, W Haggata, P Murphy, F Newell and L Templeman.

L10 16/17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J & A Carney, A Hay and J Smith.

L11 16/17 Speakers from FDC on the recent Leisure Survey Documents

Mr Richard Cassidy, FDC Corporate Director, and Cllr Michelle Tanfield, portfolio holder for leisure, were welcomed to the meeting which had been opened to all councillors. Mr Cassidy gave apologies that Mr Phil Hughes was unable to attend.

Cllr Haggata said Chatteris Town Councillors were upset that the Leisure Survey documents, which ran to hundreds of pages, contained few references to Chatteris and the Town Council had not been consulted. Councillors were agreed that Chatteris always got the short end of the wedge as far as anything happening in Fenland was concerned and were seeking recognition that the town did exist. If it wasn't for community groups little would happen in the town, Cllr Haggata commented.

Cllr Newell was concerned about inaccuracies in the documents, such as the ownership of the football ground at the Sportsman, and the lack of consultation.

Mr Cassidy explained that FDC had been working with Sport England looking at ways to raise the profile of Fenland and the facilities available. Ideas for attracting external funding were also being sought and a sports activator from Living Sports would be encouraging more community sport. Mr Cassidy said a strategic document was needed to back up applications for funding. As a result two pieces of work were commissioned, one looking at playing pitches and the other at built facilities, and these were compiled using national methodology. This included looking at likely growth – Cllr Newell pointed out substantial growth was planned in Chatteris.

Mr Cassidy said the consultation had taken place last summer on-line and there had been three responses from Chatteris, including one from the Clerk, who had emphasised the need for a swimming pool.

The consultants had not recognised the need for a pool in the town, said Mr Cassidy. Cllr Newell described this as “a load of rubbish” and pointed out the present pool was inadequate and had many problems. Mr Cassidy said as it was run by a private club certain rules did not

apply. Cllr Haggata said the report mentioned upgrading the pools in the other three Fenland towns but made no mention of Chatteris.

Cllr Tanfield said Sport England now looked at population figures and ensuring no-one had to travel more than half an hour to access facilities when determining grants. They were trying to ensure funding was properly used. Cllr Haggata pointed out it was not possible to reach the other towns within half an hour using public transport.

Cllr Tanfield acknowledged that on the whole Fenland received very little money and clubs often found filling out the forms difficult. She said the strategy documents would need to be looked at every five years because things changed and in the future a pool in Chatteris might be deemed necessary but it was not at the present time.

Cllr Tanfield said there was a need to focus on what could be achieved in Chatteris and help should be given to those clubs applying for funding. She said Simon Fairhall, of Living Sport, was able to help fill out forms.

Cllr Burrow said more clarity was needed because Chatteris always appeared to miss out. Cllr Newell said the authors of the report did not do their homework properly. Suggesting the youth football club and the cricket club should share resources was foolish and they clearly did not know the individuals involved or realise that the land was privately owned.

Cllr Tanfield said there was a need to amalgamate groups because the number of people taking part in sport was going down.

Cllr Haggata was concerned that the Mepal Outdoor Centre was barely being used because there was no cycle link yet millions was being spent on cycleways in South Cambs and East Cambs. He asked Cllr Tanfield to look at the idea of a cycleway linking Chatteris to Mepal Outdoor Centre because there was huge potential.

When asked how the authors of the strategy documents gained their figures and information, Mr Cassidy said they were given the information in the Local Plan and this showed there was insufficient growth forecast in the town to justify a pool.

Cllr Haggata said the ambition of Chatteris was to have a pool but he suggested there should also be money available for smaller achievable projects. Cllr Tanfield said she had never been contacted by a club in Chatteris seeking help. The Clerk said the youth football club were struggling to find somewhere to play because they only had a short term lease on their current base and were therefore unable to develop the facilities. Cllr Newell pointed out the lack of a hockey club in the town and Cllr Templeman said many children in the town were unable to swim because they received so little swimming tuition at school.

Cllr Burrow said people needed to know there was funding available along with help to access it available. Cllr Tanfield said Living Sport, Sport England and the National Lottery all had small funds available and Living Sport ran funding fairs and was responsible for youth sport. She offered to ask Mr Fairhall to run another workshop and Councillors

requested sports clubs be made aware of the date and venue of a workshop. Cllr Tanfield said the youth district council was able to give up to £1,000 for youth projects.

Cllr Tanfield also said a new national sports strategy had been launched with the Government keen to support more grass roots sports clubs and she acknowledged there were issues with obesity in Fenland. She pointed out the need to work with Living Sport, particularly any clubs that were struggling and needed help to grow. She reiterated again that if clubs banded together they could attract more funding.

Cllr Haggata asked Cllr Tanfield to put Chatteris at the forefront of plans for the future and to think about what the people of Chatter really wanted. He also asked her to contact ACRE about their plans for the Mepal Outdoor Centre. Cllr Tanfield said she looked at how to encourage everyone to take part in sport and get fit. She also promised to send links to funding streams.

The Clerk had received complaints that the car park in Eastwood, leading to the gym, had only been patched and was still in a very poor condition. Cllr Ashley said the car park within the college site was also in a bad state and very unsafe. Mr Cassidy said negotiations were still on-going with the County Council about repairing the car park.

Cllr Tanfield and Mr Cassidy were thanked for attending the meeting.

L12 16/17 FDC Update

The Clerk had obtained a quote for installing an additional CCTV camera to cover the new skatepark. The cost was £14,550 plus VAT and she had asked Mr Bob Ollier if there was money available from Section 106 funds which could be used to purchase the camera since the County Council had paid for the footpath/cycleway around the recreation ground.

Mr Ollier said he would look at the Section 106 funds once the additional landscaping at the recreation ground had been sorted. He also asked if the Council wished to see the blue gazebo, which had been removed some time ago due to vandalism, re-instated near the skatepark. If this was the wish Mr Ollier said he would arrange for a concrete pad to go in beneath the gazebo.

Members agreed they did not wish to see the gazebo returned and asked about the running costs of the CCTV camera. Cllr Murphy reported a new concrete table tennis table would be installed just before the skatepark was officially opened. Cllr Haggata said he was still waiting for the new trees to be planted at Wenny and Cllr Murphy said a new tree had been planted in Larham Way.

L13 16/17 Gas Lamps Project

The Clerk said the architect Mr Chris Davis had been in contact thanking the Council for its patience and promising to get back with a reliable timetable “shortly”.

L14 16/17 Ideas for Little Acre Fen

The Clerk asked for ideas for the pocket park at Little Acre Fen.

Cllr Burrow was keen to see a natural park with running and cycle tracks. He wanted the area to be a flagship for Chatteris.

Cllr Haggata wanted to see the pathway through the site set away from the pumping station and a barrier to stop vehicles driving across the site. He was also keen to see the made up track along the Old Railway Line extended and used as a cycle route to link in with the Tithe Barn development.

Cllr Templeman suggested planting sensory plants.

The Clerk said a number of people had offered to donate trees for the site and she advised any plan should include a maintenance agreement. She also said farmer Mr George Munns had been in contact offering to help any way he could.

It was agreed the involvement of various groups should be encouraged and it was also agreed meetings should be held with landscape groups who could advise on what could be achieved.

L15 16/17 Review of Annual Town Meeting

Everyone agreed the meeting had gone very well and praised the groups who had given presentations.

The Clerk said she was surprised no matters of concern had been raised by those present and Cllr Ashley suggested this was because it was a better meeting, giving information on what the Council was doing. She said the audience was attentive and the meeting did not go on too long. Cllr Murphy said the usual antagonists were not present. Cllr Haggata felt giving out positive messages helped to stop negative comments from the audience.

Cllr Burrow agreed and pointed out it was not spin, it was information backed by clear substance and evidence, and this cut out the criticism. He liked the message that the town was on the move, he enjoyed selling the Council and believed perceptions about the Council were changing.

Cllr Ashley was pleased to see representatives of some of the businesses in the town present at the meeting. She also liked the way everyone stopped to chat at the end of the meeting. Cllr Newell thanked the officers for their hard work.

It was agreed there was a lot to build on for the Annual Town Meeting in 2017.

L16 16/17 Any Other Business

Lamp posts: The Clerk had been contacted by the Town Crier who had set up an on-line petition to save the town centre lampposts. He was seeking the Council's blessing to take the petition to Balfour Beatty's headquarters and make a cry about the lampposts while he was presenting the petition to Balfour Beatty. Councillors had no objections to his suggestion which would attract publicity.

Cllr Haggata admitted he was worried the plan to change the lampposts was a fait accompli because if Balfour Beatty did not carry out their contractual obligations they would be fined. He felt the way forward might be to try and negotiate an agreement on sharing the cost of simply replacing the heads of the street lights. Cllr Murphy said he had written to the leader of the County Council seeking information about the contract and the plans.

Wenny Road: Cllr Murphy asked why the bollards had still not been installed on the build outs in Wenny Road.

Rights of Way: Notification had been received that Cambridgeshire County Council had formally adopted its Updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan which set out the strategy through which the County Council would manage and secure improvements to the local public rights of way network.

L17 16/17 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12th July 2016.