

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

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th February 2016

Present: J Burrow (Chairman), J Carney, W Haggata and J Smith.

L54 15/16 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Hay and Newell

L55 15/16 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L52) Queen's Birthday Celebrations: The Clerk had sent out enquiries to the Salvation Army Band and the Fenland Youth Swing Band. The Salvation Army band had responded by asking for more details of the event. It was agreed they should be asked to play patriotic tunes for about 20 minutes leading up to the beacon lighting.

All other items had been concluded at the full council meeting or were on the agenda.

L56 15/16 FDC Update

Mr Bob Ollier had sent apologies for not attending but he did send an update stating the construction of the skatepark was now complete (a photograph was attached). A seat, bin and sign were to be installed and the banks would be turfed when ground conditions allowed.

County Highways had forwarded a map showing the route of the new footpath/cycleway around the Wenny Road Recreation Ground and a copy of a letter sent out to local residents outlining the work to be undertaken. Mr Ollier said the two large Poplar trees at the entrance to the Recreation Ground which were diseased would be felled from the 8th to 12th February and there would be a diversion of foot traffic through the play area whilst the works were undertaken. Work on the footpath was due to begin on the 15th February and would take six to eight weeks. The Clerk had checked that bases were to be installed for new seats along the footpath and Mr Ollier had confirmed these would go in at the same time as the footpath.

Mr Ollier had also promised to advise the council when tree planting was scheduled. Cllr Haggata said children were already using the skatepark and the noise did drift to the nearest houses so there was a need for trees to be planted between the skatepark and the homes.

L57 15/16 Gas Lamps Project Update, Funding and Schemes

Gas Lamps: Members were reminded that the full Council had agreed to proceed with the £11,000 scheme for the gas lamps project which meant that there was a shortfall of £8,000 on the scheme if the offer from Red Tile Wind Farm, the Tesco grant and the Council's commitment to the project were taken into consideration.

In the meantime the Clerk had contacted the developers of the Solar Farm (who had offered to give a community contribution of £10,000) outlining the gas lamps project and plans for the Old Railway Line and Little Acre Fen site. The developers had confirmed they had no objections to the money being used for the projects and said the gas lamps project fitted very well with the solar farm project.

The Clerk had also submitted applications for funding for the gas lamps project to two local charities – Feoffee and Court Leet. The application to WREN had been abandoned due to the lack of match funding and another application for LEADER funding was on hold.

A letter had been received from Red Tile confirming they were prepared to offer a grant of £2,500 to cover 50% of the cost of re-using the former gas lamps (estimated to be £5,000). Payment of the grant would be made once an invoice or receipt had been received and the Company might withdraw the offer if the grant was not claimed within 12 months of the date of the letter (3rd February 2016). The contribution should be acknowledged in some way in publicity for the scheme and a report on the project would be required one year after receipt of the grant.

It was agreed the Clerk should write informing Red Tile that in view of their comments the Council had decided to cut its cloth and proceed with the less expensive scheme. It was hoped this would not affect the grant offer.

Cllr Haggata spoke in favour of the bulk of the solar farm community contribution being put to the gas lamps project while Cllr Carney argued part of the sum should be spent on purchasing concrete blocks to prevent vehicles accessing the Old Railway Line and making good the track leading to Little Acre Fen.

Cllr Smith suggested other funding schemes, such as WREN, might be more sympathetic to the Old Railway Line scheme and suggested funding should be actively sought.

It was agreed to **recommend to the full council** that up to £8,000 of the solar farm community grant should be spent on the gas lamps project; with any money offered by Court Leet or Feoffee to be deducted from the £8,000. The remaining sum, from the £10,000 grant, to be spent on the Old Railway Line and Little Acre Fen sites.

Projects Priority List: Cllr Burrow suggested it would be helpful to have a list of projects that the Council wished to achieve in priority order. This would fit well with the Community Planning Team's work.

It was agreed the gas lamps project was top priority with the Old Railway Line and Little Acre Fen second. On the latter Cllr Carney suggested managing the site by cutting back foliage, buying established trees to plant and possibly temporarily installing fencing. The Clerk was keen to see more memorial trees planted on the site.

Other projects mentioned were a country park, the waterways project and cycle connections throughout Chatteris. It was agreed the third priority should be the landing stage on the Forty

Foot river, along with benches along the waterways and the promotion of the linear park (although it was pointed out parking could be an issue near the linear park).

Cllr Smith said reports on Chatteris indicated the need to increase the potential for visitors to the town which already boasted over 100 listed buildings. She said minor environmental improvements, such as the gas lamps, could make the town more attractive. Cllr Burrow spoke about the potential benefits of a spin off from the Tour of Cambridgeshire cycle race.

Tourist Information: It was agreed encouraging people to visit Chatteris to enjoy the walks would be beneficial to the town. They could be encouraged to use the Old Railway Line footpath, where parking was available, especially if it was mentioned on the Millennium walk leaflet to be prepared by Mr Ian Mason and Dr Marianne Bryant. The leaflets could be sent to neighbouring towns.

Cllr Carney even suggested sending a copy of the footpaths map to “Explorer Guide” so it could be distributed nationwide.

Clear information signposting visitors to attractions in the town was required, members agreed. Cllr Carney said tourist signposts on the outskirts of Chatteris needed to be replaced as they were in a poor state of repair, these could be used to advertise the walking and cycling facilities.

The Clerk pointed out fishing was a very big, popular sport which was not promoted in the town despite the excellent fishing opportunities nearby.

Cllr Smith said a visitors’ guide was needed; the town guide was good for local residents but not for visitors. Cllr Burrow spoke of the need to involve the community in the projects and to profile Chatteris as a place for outdoor people. Cllr Haggata suggested asking builders, public transport providers, etc., to promote the benefits of Chatteris.

Little Acre Fen: Other ideas for the Little Acre Fen site were discussed including the planting of rare types of trees and trees which would attract wildlife. Cllr Smith suggested building a wildlife hide. Cllr Burrow suggested setting aside time for a brainstorming session to come up with ideas for the site. The Clerk suggested asking along an expert in trees and shrubs such as Mr David White.

L58 15/15 Plans for Annual Town Meeting

With the King Edward Centre booked for the meeting on the 20th May, ideas for the evening were discussed. It was agreed refreshments should be offered.

Progress since the last meeting should be reviewed, particularly projects the Town Council had been involved in, along with short presentations from those who had been helped by the Council (Cllr Burrow said the presentations should focus on situation, task, action and result).

Invitations to make a short presentation should be sent to the Christmas Lights committee, Chatteris In Bloom, Chatteris Community Plan team, the museum and a sporting club which

had been helped by the Town Council (such as the football club) and a club which had been helped by a Tesco grant (the netball club). Cllr Burrow was also keen to invite along Mr Tom Caldwell from the Tour of Cambridgeshire team.

It was agreed key people should also be invited to the meeting such as the MP, the leader of FDC, portfolio holders and the county councillors for the town. Cllr Burrow was also keen to invite people from the business community. It was agreed the invitations should go out after the next leisure meeting.

Cllrs Carney and Burrow would comper the evening. Organisations seeking volunteer helpers could have a stall and would be invited to give information on what volunteers would be required to do, the time commitment, etc.

Another idea put forward was a slide show of photographs of the town to be shown before the presentations began.

L59 15/16 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15th March 2016.