

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

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 15th March 2016

Present: J Burrow (Chairman), J Carney (for part of the meeting), W Haggata, F Newell and J Smith.

L60 15/16 Apologies for Absence:

No apologies for absence had been received.

L61 15/16 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

Cllr Haggata opened the meeting as Cllr Burrow was delayed. It was agreed all matters arising from the last meeting were on the agenda.

L62 15/16 Amended Navigation Legislation Proposals

Cllr Carney requested the item be brought up the agenda as he had to leave the meeting early and had comments to make on the proposals.

The Council had received a letter from the Middle Level Commissioners about their plans to amend their navigation legislation as the navigation authority for the Middle Level river system (covering 100 miles of navigable waterways in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk).

The Commissioners outlined the benefits of amending the legislation and sought the Council's views on the proposals.

Mr Chris Howes had e-mailed the Mayor pointing out the proposal would bring the Middle Level waters into line with the rest of the country. He explained it had been unfortunate that the Middle Level was one of only two inland authorities with navigation on their waters who were drainage, rather than navigation, authorities. This meant that they were currently prohibited from charging a boat licence. The negative effects of this were twofold:-

- a) They did not derive income from boaters which could be re-invested into facilities for those boaters.
- b) They were unable to effectively regulate boats on their system.

Mr Howes said if Fenland wished to be a tourist destination, in the same way as the Netherlands, generating income to invest in the currently largely inaccessible waterways was a necessary first stage. He pointed out better access to the water, moorings, pump outs, water points, signage and public information boards were all required. These were available in other parts of the country, administered by navigation boards.

Mr Howes said the MLC's proposals were good news, would be of significant benefit for all Fenland and he urged the Town Council to give them their support.

Cllr Carney said the proposals would allow the MLC to levy a charge on river users which he felt was an important step forward and he wholeheartedly supported their proposals. He suggested there might be the potential for financial support to establish a mooring at Chatteris, in the future.

Cllr Haggata said it was the only way the waterways in the area would be developed and he hoped it would encourage entrepreneurs to set up marinas and would help to attract tourists to the area. It was hoped it would also aid the Fens Waterways Link project.

It was agreed to **recommend** the full Council write in support of the Middle Level Commissioners proposals (a copy of the letter to be sent to Mr Howes).

(Cllr Burrow joined the meeting at this point).

L63 15/16 Old Railway Line/Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Project

Cllr Carney said he and the Clerk had walked along the Old Railway Line Footpath and visited the Little Acre Fen land to see what was required to stop vehicles accessing the footpath/bridleway. They had also spoken to Mr Bob Ollier, at FDC, who had visited the site and had suggested the whole area should be cleared and the Council should then start again. He suggested asking a farmer to spray, plough up and then seed the land before landscape features were introduced.

Mr Ollier had been asked to look at the scheme in the hope he might find some Section 106 funding for the project. It was agreed to approach Mr George Munns and ask if he was prepared to carry out the work for a fee.

The Clerk said she and the Mayor had also examined the deeds for the land and the Old Railway Line and the only people who had a right to access the land at Little Acre Fen were Anglian Water as there was a main sewer pipe running across the land behind the pumping station. They proposed putting in some form of barrier, such as concrete blocks, to stop vehicles accessing the Old Railway Line. The County Council had then confirmed that they used the Little Acre Fen access to get their cutters on to the Old Railway Line. However the Clerk had contacted Bartlett's who had kindly agreed that the County Council's contractors could use their land as the access to the Railway Line if Little Acre Fen was cut off.

Cllr Haggata suggested Section 106 money from the West Street development could be used to extend the hard surface along the Railway Line to the drove which connected with London Road as cyclists would then have a route to the Tithe barn area.

(Cllr Carney left the meeting at this point).

L64 15/16 FDC Update

Mr Ollier had reported that the new skatepark would soon be turfed and bins and a seat installed. It had also been agreed that he would order two benches to be installed at Wenny Road Recreation Ground and these would be funded by the Town Council.

The County Council was busy installing the footpath around the Recreation Ground but there had been complaints about the rubbish in the area, the lack of warning signs and the lack of a portable toilet which meant workmen were urinating in the bushes. The Clerk had passed the complaints to Mr Ollier who had passed them to the relevant County Council officer.

Cllr Haggata and Mr Ollier had come to a compromise on the position of the trees to be planted on the recreation ground. Mr Ollier feared the trees would not survive if they were planted near the skatepark and it was agreed they should be planted in the border between the Juniper Drive estate and the recreation ground as this would help to reduce the noise from the skatepark. In addition the County Council had decided against felling the trees at the entrance to the Recreation Ground fearing their loss would result in a lack of drainage in the area and might cause problems for the wall. They had carried out works to the trees instead.

Mr Ollier had examined the wooded area at the recreation ground following complaints of youths attacking trees with an axe. He said he would tidy up the area once the footpath works were complete.

Mr Ollier had also kindly agreed to order works to two large trees at the top of the Old Auction Yard in the High Street since they were becoming a nuisance for local residents. The trees were on Crown Estates' land but they were not willing to carry out any work.

FDC had planted replacement trees in the churchyard, Jubilee Gardens and Ash Grove and the WI had funded a new tree in Meeks Cemetery. The planting day had been very wet which meant there was a poor turnout for the tree planting ceremonies. It had, therefore, been agreed an alternative date should be sought, suitable for more councillors, when the new Ash Grove tree would be unveiled.

L65 15/16 Gas Lamps Project Update

Cllr Haggata was delighted to announce that Court Leet had agreed to give £3,000 to the gas lamps project. This, added to the solar farm money, £2,500 agreed by Red Tile Wind Farm Trust and £500 from the Tesco fund for the sign, meant the £11,000 needed had been exceeded. Mr Haggata reminded members that it had been agreed any surplus would go to the pocket park project. Cllr Burrow said obtaining money for the gas lamps project was a great achievement.

Cllr Smith asked if the interpretation boards had been included in the costings and the Clerk admitted they had not. Cllr Smith suggested outdoor interpretation boards explaining the history behind the gas lamps were necessary and additional funding should be sought.

Cllr Haggata said Mrs Jenny Furlong believed the museum had two gas lamp heads which might be suitable as replacement heads. It was agreed this idea should be pursued if the lamp heads were a pair.

L66 15/16 Plans for Annual Town Meeting

The Clerk reminded members of the list of organisations who would be invited to give a short (3 minute), punchy, creative presentation at the Annual Town Meeting, preferably with photographs. Cllr Burrow suggested the testimonials should include information on the position of the organisation before they received funding from the Town Council, how the funding helped and the organisation's plans for the future. He was also anxious that Mr Tom Caldwell from the Tour of Cambridgeshire should be invited along.

Other organisations would be invited to bring along leaflets and there could also be a few stalls although Cllr Smith was anxious it would not turn into a volunteer recruitment fair.

Cllr Haggata suggested the Council's presentation should make the point that the only way there would be investment in the town would be by encouraging businesses and development and this was the reason the Council backed development.

It was agreed the presentation should outline what had been achieved (distribution of the Tesco's money, the new skatepark, the LHI scheme for Wenny Road, etc.), projects currently underway (the gas lamps project, the new town plan and the pocket park) and future projects such as the waterways project.

Cllr Burrow was anxious that local businesses should be invited to the meeting, along with organisations, and a list of companies to approach was drawn up. The Clerk agreed to draw up the invitation letters and a poster inviting all electors. Cllr Burrow agreed to arrange for Thai food to be served as refreshments at the event.

L67 15/16 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12th April 2016