

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

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris, on Tuesday 15th April 2025

Present: Cllrs V Joyce (Chairman), L Ashley, A Hay, J Fuller-Gray, A Jones, S Selman and S Unwin.

L62 24/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr M Siggee.

L63 24/25 Speaker from Chatteris Cricket Club

Mr Max Kelly, vice chairman of Chatteris Cricket Club, was welcomed to the meeting. He said the Club was looking for a steer in the right direction. Mr Kelly explained that the club had been in existence for well over 100 years but in the past 10 years cricket clubs had been disappearing from many of the villages around Chatteris and it was becoming harder to keep going. Mr Kelly was worried about the current trajectory and said with the town expanding this did not sit right.

In some towns clubs were thriving but that was mainly in towns with a private school as local schools such as Cromwell played very little cricket. The fall in juniors taking up the sport meant there was no progression into the adult side. Mr Kelly said he had been on the committee for many years and the club now had its lowest membership; extra hands were needed. The problem was not funding, it was getting people to know about the club and the great facilities. 20/20 style tournaments with the tennis club and the football club had helped to raise the profile and the club also ran events for the Willows Day Nursery. The clubhouse was hired out for birthday parties and weddings, etc.

Mr Kelly asked councillors if they had any ideas to help the club.

Cllr Hay said as membership secretary of the bowls club they were experiencing the same problems. One of their initiatives was to teach the primary school children from Cromwell Community College how to play bowls and she suggested putting out information via the schools' email systems.

Mr Kelly said the cricket club had run an All Stars scheme through the ECB. Children had been invited along to play on a Friday night but that had to end as the club did not have enough people to run it. The Club had hoped to have an under 11s team but that had been pulled. Fortunately, the club still had 2 adult teams playing on a Saturday and one on a Sunday.

Cllr Hay also suggested leafleting the new estate at Fillenham's Way, as there were a large number of children living on the estate, and putting information in the show home.

Cllr Unwin said there had formerly been a group called Sport Chatteris which had attracted representatives from many of the sports clubs in the town and she suggested it might be helpful to resurrect the group to make it easier to apply for funding, etc.

A school summer camp was also suggested but again the problem was numbers.

Cllr Selman suggested it might be an idea to invite along the scouts and guides as they were able to gain sports badges. She gave details of Cambridgeshire Voluntary Service and suggested registering on their portal stating that help was needed to run the cricket club. Cllr Selman also suggested having a stall at the Midsummer Festival (possibly running a cricket activity) and walking in the parade to raise the club's profile. She mentioned putting information and adverts in the Primary Times (which went out to young children) and Chatteris Scene.

Mr Kelly thanked councillors for their input and left the meeting.

L64 24/25 Matters Arising from the Previous Meetings of the Group

L53) Mural: There was still no sign of the mural in the bus shelter so both the Clerk and Cllr Unwin had chased the artist.

L61) Defibrillator: Cllr Joyce reported that he had installed the defibrillator box in the telephone kiosk, along with a light which came on when you entered the kiosk and he had repaired the door. He was waiting for the defibrillator to be registered (which was imminent) and queried how the defibrillator would be accessed if the kiosk door was locked. The Clerk said the door would have to be left unlocked.

L65 24/25 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

Cllr Ashley reported that a very successful Easter activities and egg hunt had been held at the Pocket Park on Saturday 12th April. The event had been organised by FLAPP member Sandie Mellors, with the help of other FLAPP members, the scouts and guides, In Bloom and Sandie's friends. Over 40 children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in various games, such as pin the tail on the bunny, a duck race and an egg and spoon race. Cllr Ashley had helped (along with the Clerk) and had been asked to judge a scarecrow competition later in the summer. Cllr Ashley said for some of those present it was their first visit to the pocket park and they were very impressed.

The Clerk said she was trying to organise a meeting between FLAPP and the contractors as the contractors needed to be aware of the plans for the park before they undertook re-seeding works.

L66 24/25 Land at Old Auction Yard

The Clerk had received an email from the Government Legal Department about bona vacantia land. The email said in order to decide if the land at the Old Auction Yard was bona vacantia land the department would need full details of a dissolved company, up to date Land

Registry title documents for the land, or, if the land was unregistered, sight of a transfer, title deed or conveyance showing the company was party to the land.

The Clerk said this would all cost money and time and it was agreed not to pursue the matter further. Cllr Unwin reported that some works had been carried out to the trees by persons unknown.

L67 24/25 Sportsman/Fairway Playing Field

Cllr Murphy had supplied documentation for the land at the Sportsman including maps and land registry entries. Whilst it was true that some small parcels of land were in other ownerships the large parcel of playing field, which the Town Council was interested in, was in the ownership of Fenland District Council.

The Clerk had found the Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy of 2016 which showed the land was needed for football at that time. The strategy also mentioned the field at Peacock Paddock which was no longer used for football. The Clerk suggested it made the case that the field should be used for football and this supported the Town Council's idea of seeking funding to develop the area as a youth zone, to include a football pitch and changing facilities.

A discussion took place on the history of the site before the group agreed to make the following recommendation to full council:

'It is recommended that Chatteris Town Council approaches Fenland District Council asking them to gift the parcel of land they own at the Sportsman/Fairway to Chatteris Town Council to ensure it stays as a playing field; ahead of local government reorganisation.'

L68 24/25 VE Day Timings

The Clerk had suggested timings for the VE Day 80th Anniversary celebrations on the 8th May. The following timetable was agreed upon:

2pm RBL service at the War Memorial
Followed by Afternoon Tea in the Bricstan Hall
8.40pm – 9.30pm Performance by the Community Choir
9pm Proclamation to be read
9.25pm I Vow to Thee My Country
9.30pm Beacon Lighting

The Clerk still needed to find out if the church bells were to be rung at 6.30pm (Cllr Joyce agreed to enquire), to inform the vicar of the plans and to draw up a poster for the event and a risk assessment. Cllr Joyce agreed to prepare and light the beacon and Cllr Unwin and the Clerk agreed to be on firefighting duties. Cllr Unwin said in addition to I Vow to Thee my Country, the choir would also sing the National Anthem.

L69 24/25 Any Other Business

Deans Drove: Cllr Fuller-Gray had passed on details of problems along Deans Drove (Chatteris Byway 24), including large dangerous potholes made by vehicles and dirt

bikes/quad bikes which made it difficult for walkers and horse riders, fly tipping and gates which had been rammed and bent so access could be gained when the gates were locked. The Rights of Way Officer had replied stating fly tipping should be reported to FDC but acknowledging that there had been difficulties in preventing unauthorised access to the drove via private farm tracks. He said he was looking at the potential to erect additional gates along the byway but warned that access had to be maintained for horse riders so quad bikes and motorbikes could also gain access. He also planned to visit the site to assess the condition of the surface and he was hopeful that a local farmer would be kind enough to assist with some surface repairs as he did in 2024. Cllr Fuller-Gray said the drove had been maintained well in the past but there had been a change of farm manager. She did acknowledge that the situation was improving and was grateful for the intervention of the Rights of Way Officer.

Circus: The Clerk had been approached by a director of Tequila Circus, a Mexican touring circus, who was keen to discuss a visit to Chatteris. Councillors were not against exploring the idea but the Clerk warned that ultimately it would be down to Fenland District Council as the circus would have to use FDC's land.

Highways & bins: Cllr Selman reported that a new green, highways directional sign had appeared near the North Cambs Training Centre and the rubbish bin at Eastwood had been returned to its rightful spot.

Spike: The Clerk confirmed that she had put Spike Bailey forward for an award. Cllr Unwin said he worked really hard for In Bloom and the town, usually putting in 10 hours a day gardening and cleaning the streets. He was very sociable and friendly and was popular with everyone.

L70 24/25 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 20th May 2025