

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

**Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris, on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Present:** Cllrs L Ashley (who chaired the meeting), A Hay, V Joyce, S Selman and S Unwin.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr J Fuller-Gray.

**L35 25/26 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of the Group**

L28) Nature Recovery: Cllr Unwin and the Clerk, along with the chairman of FLAPP Mr Ian Mason, had attended the first workshop for the Fenland area for the Nature Recovery from the Ground Up project. Cllr Unwin said it was an opportunity to network with others to share expertise but she was concerned it was another quango, with experts often talking down to volunteers and justifying their jobs and funding. Those attending had to list what skills they could offer and Sue pointed out most of the work listed was being carried out by volunteers. The Clerk said it appeared there was no money available, just the offer of help to get projects ready to apply for funding. This was OK for an area such as Somersham where substantial Cil and Section 106 grants were helping to develop the nature reserve (at the other end of the Old Railway Line footpath) but with Chatteris receiving no Section 106 funding there was little opportunity to develop facilities, such as improving the footpath link. Cllr Unwin said she would give it one more meeting and agreed to attend the next meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> March at March library. Cllr Selman suggested the Fenland Community Workers from the Support Fenland Project, who organised voluntary group networking events, were far more helpful and did not talk down to anyone.

L31) Public Toilets & Lights: As requested at the main meeting, Cllr Carney had written to the leader of FDC asking for 3 projects from Chatteris to be put forward to receive funding from the Pride in Place Impact Fund. These were the installation of outdoor lighting at Wenny Recreation Ground (the skatepark/The Elms end of the park), the installation of outdoor lighting at Furrowfields Recreation Ground and the renovation and fully re-opening of all the public toilets at Furrowfields car park. Cllr Boden had written back saying £250k had been allocated to projects for each of the four towns to be spent on play equipment and local councillors had been asked for feedback on how the money should be spent (the money had to be spent by March 2027). Cllr Boden said the three projects would have to be assessed for their compliance with the Fund objectives, the costs and would need to be supported by a majority of district councillors representing Chatteris. The schemes would then need to be approved by FDC's cabinet. The Clerk read out the objectives and the schemes appeared to meet the criteria. Cllr Hay said she would send out details of Cllr Carney's proposals to seek the support of the remaining four councillors representing Chatteris.

### **L36 25/26 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update**

The Clerk said she and Mr Mason had submitted a joint bid to Anglian Water for funding for an artesian well at the Pocket Park (as a water supply) and dipping tanks at the allotments. The bid had taken a full morning to complete. Mr Mason was now asking about footpaths around the town, in particular missing or blocked sections of footpaths. Unfortunately, the Clerk no longer had a definitive footpath map for the area (as it was lost to the damp when 14 Church Lane was renovated) but promised she would request another one. The Mayor pointed out her son Alex and Cllr Gowler had walked most of the footpaths and she suggested it might be helpful if they met with Mr Mason.

Cllr Joyce said every night cars were flying along the drove to the Pocket Park. He suspected it was a drop off point for drugs and had reported his concerns to the police. Cllr Unwin said there was suspicious activity in the dark corners of Huntingdon Road Recreation Ground in the late evenings. In addition, she had been sent a video of people breaking into the Persimmon Homes development site next to the travellers' site on Fenland Way. There were apparently frequent break ins to the site and new homes, thefts from the site and threatening behaviour towards the security staff. Cllr Ashley said it was allegedly difficult to get people to work on the site as they were often attacked. Those breaking in often wore high visibility vests so they did not look out of place. Concerns were expressed that the police did not dare go on to the travellers' site to challenge alleged perpetrators. The Clerk agreed to pass the concerns to the police and members agreed to raise the issue with Sgt Moulton when he attended the March council meeting.

Cllr Unwin also spoke about a friend, whose house had been attacked, when he reported suspected drug activity to the police. It was agreed local intelligence was needed to help the police gather evidence of drug activity.

### **L37 25/26 Annual Town Meeting Ideas**

The Clerk said she had been reading a magazine for Clerks when an article about taking a new approach to the Annual Town Meeting had taken her eye. Members agreed that it was disheartening when few people attended the meeting and those who did often wanted to have a go at the Council.

The Clerk said a village in Essex had decided the theme of their Annual Parish Meeting should be "celebrating our volunteers". They recognised the village thrived due to the dedication of countless individuals who gave their time and energy to various groups and causes. They invited the groups to set up stands and speak about their work.

To further honour the unsung heroes, they asked each community group to nominate one of their most dedicated volunteers to be specially recognised during the meeting. The nominees were encouraged to bring a guest and the Clerk of the village council said seeing the look of pride and surprise on the faces of the individuals as their hard work was publicly acknowledged was a highlight of the evening. Finally, the evening came to a close with

refreshments and the opportunity to chat. The Clerk said the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.

The Clerk to Chatteris Town Council suggested a similar event could be held in Chatteris and could become an annual event. She had downloaded a suggested certificate which could be framed and handed out to all the volunteers nominated. Cllr Selman said all the groups in Chatteris were listed in the town guide and could be approached and asked to nominate someone.

Members **agreed** the annual town meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> May should have the theme of ‘Celebrating our Volunteers’ and every group, including sports groups, should be asked to nominate an unsung hero who would receive a certificate.

### **L38 25/26 In Bloom Update**

Cllr Unwin said the good news was that In Bloom now had a licence to take over the Market Hill Gardens. The licence was necessary ahead of local government reorganisation. The area had previously been looked after by FDC and now joined Huntingdon Road and Station Street gardens as areas tended by In Bloom.

Cllr Unwin was also pleased to report that the group now had an FDC officer they could contact to discuss plans, etc. The first meeting with the officer had been a success.

Cllr Unwin was delighted to report that Chatteris In Bloom’s nomination as a finalist for the RHS’s Britain In Bloom competition had now been accepted and the town would be going up against a town in Scotland, Glastonbury and Henley on Thames! As a result, Cllr Unwin was keen to undertake a first impressions project, in particular improving the signage on the outskirts of the town. The plan was to bypass the County Council (who had been less than helpful in the past) and replace existing signs and set up new signs in fields. Cllr Unwin was also planning to approach the developers in the town, who had money set aside for landscaping, and ask for their help to improve areas and signs.

The main theme of the displays would be Around the World in 80 Days (the Festival theme) and pieces of artwork would be displayed around the town. Some existing displays, such as the teacups would be re-purposed and the group would be working with an artist who lived in Victoria Street. The town would be marked down for graffiti so Cllr Unwin was keen to see graffiti properly removed by FDC.

It was agreed that Cllr Unwin should keep County Councillor Daniel Divine up to date on what was planned.

### **L39 25/26 Any Other Business**

Nomination: Cllr Unwin said she had been approached by the owner of the Cross Keys Inn asking if the Council would support an MBE nomination for Mr Chris Savill, the Chairman of the Christmas Lights Committee. The nomination recognised his work for the community of Chatteris. The Clerk read out the citation and members had a copy of a suggested letter of

support for the nomination. The Clerk said she would make a few amendments to the letter and then ask Councillors to sign it at the full council meeting. This was **agreed**.

Training Centre: The new Community and Learning Co-ordinator of the North Cambs Training Centre had sent an email of introduction. Cllrs Ashley and Selman said they would be attending a celebration event at the NCTC the following day, as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and would make a point of meeting the new Co-ordinator.

Footpath Proposal: The Council had received an email from the developer of the land next to 134 London Road. Permission in Principle had been granted for 4 houses on the land. The Town Council had supported the planning application and asked for a contribution towards the proposed footpath linking Stocking Drove to Seasons Garden Centre. The developer said he was assessing if a contribution was viable and asked how much the Town Council had raised towards the project and how the project would be progressed - would the Town Council lead and manage the project or would the developer be expected to take responsibility? It was agreed the Clerk should go back and say the Council was unaware of the cost implications but would be pursuing the possibility of other developers contributing to the scheme (it was suggested approaching Barretts Homes who were developing in London Road) and had applied for funding from the County Council, who would have to agree to any scheme as it was on their land. On the latter point it was agreed to ask Mr Nick Munns for his view on who to approach for permission.

#### **L40 25/26 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026.