

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

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 16th July 2019

Present: Cllrs J Smith (Chairman), L Ashley, A Charrier, W Haggata, A Hay, F Newell and M Petrou (for part of the meeting).

L11 19/20 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Carney (who sent in his views on several items on the agenda). Cllrs Benney and Hay were believed to be at an FDC meeting.

L12 19/20 FDC Update

Mr Phil Hughes, FDC Head of Leisure and Open Spaces, had sent through the following information:

Recreation Grounds: In response to the Council's request that the new play equipment be installed in time for the school summer holidays, Mr Hughes said there was no chance of the new equipment being ready in time. Deadline for bids was fast approaching, these would then have to be assessed and awarded accordingly. Once awarded the lead time to attending site would be 6 weeks and build time would be a further 3-4 weeks. Mr Hughes also said the see-saw would not be refurbished and he was awaiting information from the bidders about which equipment would be installed.

Cllr Ashley said Cllr Benney was planning to chase up an early installation date for the equipment. Members agreed they would like to see the bids for the equipment so they could have a say in what was most appropriate. They pointed out they had always been consulted in the past. Cllr Charrier said inclusive equipment would be preferable as there was currently no equipment for disabled children.

Mr Hughes had also reported that urgent work would be undertaken to cut back bushes overhanging the Hazel Close and Elms entrances to Wenny Recreation Ground and to remove a dead willow tree near the Elms entrance (photographs were supplied). Members were in favour of the work and asked the Clerk to remind Mr Hughes about the promised works to the trees and bushes along the boundaries of the recreation ground and Hazel Close and Juniper Drive.

Section 106 Funds: The Clerk said she had not written objecting to Mr Hughes' plans to use Section 106 funds for tree and cemetery works because she had received an email from Mr Hughes stating that he had discussed Fenland's Section 106 Funding with the Portfolio Holder and his corporate director. The Portfolio Holder felt it was unreasonable for Chatteris to lose some S106 to tree work in the town.

Mr Hughes admitted that other towns' S106 had not supported tree work and it had, therefore, been decided to:

- 1 Continue with the play area replacement works as already discussed using the S106 funding.
- 2 Carry out the cemetery tree works as already discussed using the S106 funding.
- 3 Ensure that FDC puts aside the equivalent cost of the tree works into the capital programme for Chatteris FDC play facility maintenance & improvements from 1 April 2020.

Mr Hughes stated this approach would ensure there was no potential 'claw back' of the S106 funding on 22 September by the developer. It also ensured that tree works were carried out promptly, following the formal assessment of the cemeteries, and that those areas remained safe for residents to visit. The sum available in 2020 would be c. £38k and Mr Hughes said he hoped to match that with a funding bid for, say, £30k, for a total pot of c. £70k.

Mr Hughes then asked for a list of priorities for the funding for FDC play area assets within the town. He said the plan was to hold a community consultation in the new year with grant applications completed around Easter and works taking place shortly afterwards.

Members agreed to the proposal but stressed they would ensure the money was paid back as promised in April 2020.

It was agreed to put forward the following suggestions about how the money should be spent:

- a) Improvements to Larham Way play area (as that was the original destination of the funds); in particular improvements to the safety surfacing, refurbishment of play equipment and the bench.
- b) Some form of play equipment or goal posts to be installed at the Doddington Road play area (which is behind Willey Terrace) as there had been a request for equipment there. It was agreed a public consultation would be a good idea.
- c) If money remained, improvements to St Paul's Drive play area.

Cemeteries: Cllr Newell said she had been approached by FDC councillor Mrs Jan French who had visited Meeks Cemetery and had commented on the high standard of some of the memorials and had suggested setting up a Friends of the Cemetery group to help maintain the area. Members agreed this was a good idea and suggested approaching groups such as the RBL, RBL youth section and the WIs for help. The Clerk said she would also mention it to FDC Street Pride Coordinator Rebecca Robinett.

Cllr Ashley said she had been approached by a teacher working with a group of disruptive pupils at Cromwell Community College who was looking for a project to keep the pupils engaged. It was suggested they might be able to help with the Meeks Cemetery project and might also be able to look after a flower bed. Cllr Smith said such projects could win accolades for the In Bloom entry.

L13 19/20 Matters Arising from the Minutes

L6) Church Meadow Bench: The Clerk said she had put forward ideas about where the Church Meadow bench could be re-located but had yet to hear if any sites were suitable.

L8) Town Guide: Cllr Smith and the Clerk had spoken to Mr Chris Richards at DJ Richards Printers about giving the guide a more modern look and he had stated this was possible and was unlikely to make much difference to printing costs. The Clerk had requested an updated cost of printing the guide in time for the main council meeting. Cllr Smith asked for ideas for the front cover of the guide and Cllr Charrier suggested a collage of photos. Cllr Smith assured members the guide would be ready shortly.

L14 19/20 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Update

Cllr Smith and the Clerk updated members on the latest developments at the Park and both remarked how good it was looking. The dry pond was now in and looking good and the footpaths had been completed. Cllr Smith said a container for spent syringes and needles had been discovered at the park and had been reported to the police and then FDC for collection.

Cllr Smith also reported that the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park were meeting with the Froglife representative on the 25th July for advice on how to develop the pond. The Clerk had arranged for the pond to be filled up. Due to a lack of water in the dykes the pond was half filled but the level had already fallen and there were some concerns there might be a leak. It was agreed to ask Froglife's opinion. Cllr Smith suggested the pond should fill up naturally over the autumn and winter.

Cllr Smith said the water tank in the Anglian Water compound now had a plastic cap after the tap was stolen but it was still possible to access the water to use in the park.

The Clerk had taken measurements for the Welcome sign to the park and was now awaiting a draft layout and cost from a local supplier. It was agreed a 'warning deep water' sign should go up on the dipping platform next to the pond and the Clerk should also order a basic life-saving ring to minimise risk, although there were concerns it would soon disappear. The Clerk suggested waiting until the pond had more water in it before installing both. One quote for two refuse bins had been received and the Financial Officer was seeking a second quote for comparison purposes.

It was agreed FLAPP should be invited to help plan the official opening of the park once the sign was up and the bins installed. The Clerk asked if FLAPP were interested in designing the interpretation board for the orchard.

Cllr Ashley asked about the memorial trees and the Clerk admitted these had still to be sorted and would have to wait for the next planting season in early 2020. Cllr Smith said other trees were growing well and she still had a supply of spare trees for any that failed. The hedge was also doing well and FLAPP had plans to plant a hedge in front of the Anglian Water compound.

Cllr Smith said she and FLAPP had looked into the idea of filling the potholes in the approach road to the Park from West Street. Unfortunately there were insufficient funds to carry out the work at present (although Cllr Ashley said a few had been filled by the County Council) and the County Council, who owned the road, only had to ensure it was passable by pedestrians. They were, however, unlikely to object to a third party making good the roadway and Cllr Smith was hopeful funds might be available in future.

L15 19/20 Brown Tourist Information Signs

FDC officer Mr Garry Edwards had confirmed with the Clerk that the brown tourist signs were the responsibility of the County Council and he had given details of the new local highways manager, Mr Martin Brooker, who was responsible for the signs. Mr Edwards had passed on the Council's wishes to see the brown tourist information signs outside the town replaced.

Cllr Carney had reported that there was a new brown Chatteris sign on the road from Huntingdon (outside Bartletts) and he commented that it was an improvement to the approach to the town. He suggested putting an additional sign underneath it but members thought there was insufficient time to read too many signs.

The Clerk asked members to note the brown signs around the town and decide which ones needed replacing. She warned that the information which could be included on the signs was strictly regulated.

L16 19/20 Growing Fenland – Chatteris Consultation – To Agree Submission

The Clerk told members that all Councillors had been asked to pick their top 3 choices from the 14 ideas put forward in the Growing Fenland – Chatteris interim report. Eight councillors responded to the request. The choices were scored to give an overall top 3 from the Council.

Top of everyone's list was: 1.1 Grow Our Business Base
In second place was: 1.2 Develop the provision of skills training for residents (with widespread support for the Launchpad)
In third place was: 1.3 Encourage mixed housing development around Chatteris

There was also support for (in no particular order):

- 2.1 A stronger cultural offer and evening economy
- 2.2 Better car and bike parking management
- 3.1 Set up a commuter shuttle bus
- 3.3 New cycle infrastructure
- 4.1 Chatteris Outdoors

Members agreed to the submission which would be forwarded to the consultants.

L17 19/20 Future Projects

Electric Charging Points: Members were still keen to look into the idea of supplying electric charging points in the town - an idea put forward in the Growing Fenland plan. It was suggested local companies could also be encouraged to put them in and possible locations were discussed, including Jack's car park and Furrowfields car park. The Clerk offered to ask ACRE if any towns or villages had supplied such charging points and if they had been successful.

Cycleway: Cllr Haggata suggested the Council should pursue the idea of a cycleway connecting Doddington Road to the underpass. It was agreed this would create a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians from Doddington Road and Curf and Willey Terraces to the schools and the town centre. Cllr Haggata suggested the Town Council could be the instigators of the idea and could approach the developer of the Tesco site and those on the site (including a national bakery chain who, it was alleged, were looking at the empty unit on the site) as it would make the site more attractive to future developments. He also suggested there was a scoping option on a development of 250 homes between Doddington Road and the retail area and if the development went ahead the cycleway could be part of the Section 106 agreement.

Jack's Roundabout: As there had still been no improvements to Jack's roundabout it was agreed to write a letter of complaint to the Leader of the County Council stating numerous emails, letters and phone calls had been made complaining about the roundabout and asking for action (it was agreed the cycle path could also be mentioned).

Information Boards: Cllr Smith was keen to see the town information boards, originally installed by FDC in Furrowfields Road, Park Street and the Parish Church grounds, updated and the benches near the war memorial re-furbished. It was agreed to ask if FDC had any plans for improvements or to ask what the likely costs were in case the Town Council wished to take on the work. Cllr Smith did point out that the board in the church grounds might be used as an interpretation board for the planned RAF crash sites memorial.

Any Other Business

In Bloom: Cllr Ashley said it had been a pleasure to go along to the In Bloom judging event and the In Bloom volunteers' displays were stunning, however she had been disappointed by the flower beds tended by FDC. In particular she disliked the Bandstand (Market Hill) gardens which were normally a mass of colour but had only one colour flowers and the border at the rear was very tatty. The bench near the war memorial should have been re-painted (a point noted by the judges) and the Station Street flower bed looked "awful" and was surrounded by areas of overgrown grass.

Clarion: Cllr Ashley was also disappointed by the standard of grounds maintenance work carried out by Clarion's Housing Association. She said the grass outside the bungalows in Wenny Road had not been cut and was waist high, the grass outside the Station Road

bungalows had only been partially cut and the track which ran between properties in London Road and 1-19 Tithe Road had not been cut and was completely overgrown. Cllr Ashley said she would be reporting the problems and the Clerk said she would also pass on the complaints to the Chief Executive of FDC. Cllr Smith said the grass in front of Salem Court (in Huntingdon Road) was the responsibility of Clarion's but had been cut by In Bloom volunteers as Clarion had not undertaken the work.

Salvation Army: Cllrs Newell and Ashley had received a letter from the new Commanding Officers of the Salvation Army in Chatteris, Majors Richard and Pauline Cook, introducing themselves and stating they hoped to meet the Council at some point. It was agreed to write thanking Majors Cook for their letter and inviting them along to the Open Forum part of the Council meeting to introduce themselves.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 17th September 2019.