

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 17th November 2020

Present: Cllrs J Smith (Chairman), L Ashley, J Carney, A Hay and F Newell.

L22 20/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Gowler sent apologies for absence

L23 20/21 FDC Update

The Clerk had received the following answers to questions posed to Mr Phil Hughes, Head of Leisure services at FDC:

Q: Councillors noted on one communication that your contractors are beginning work to cut back trees and bushes. Will the bushes and trees in Wenny Recreation Ground along the border with Juniper Drive be tackled please?

This work is on the plan for January 2021. We shall complete about 50% of the work by February 2021 and then cease operations for the wildlife season. The final part of the work will be completed late next year / early 2022.

Q. The fencing around the Wenny Road Recreation Ground play area is in a very poor state of repair and in need of replacement please could this be looked into.

Currently FDC has no plans to replace this fence. The fence and the play area is inspected weekly and there are no health and safety implications with its current condition. We will review its condition and if it requires replacement we will add that to the play area improvement plan for some point (years I'm afraid) in the future. Should further S106 funds become available for the town in the short term that could potentially mean earlier improvement action.

Q. The Mayor reported that when the football pitch behind the Sportsman was cut by your contractors they made tracks across it. The football club now has its own mower and would prefer to cut the actual pitch themselves if your contractors could just tackle the grass around the pitch please.

FDC will leave this area in the future. I'm pleased to hear that the Club is taking care of the space that it uses now. Our experience is that a club who wants grass in a certain condition, along with the lines, will usually do a better job with volunteers than a contractor who has a vast number of different jobs to carry out, without a football focus.

Q. In the last financial year you may recall that Section 106 funds for Chatteris were spent on work to trees in the cemeteries when this work should have been funded by FDC. You promised at that time that the money would be repaid in this financial year and would be spent on play areas. Please can you confirm when this will happen. Councillors are

particularly keen to see improvements to the Larham Way play area since the money was originally given for that area by the developers.

The money was S106 funding for open spaces – not any specific area. FDC has a plan for play area refurbishment works in Chatteris that includes, over the next 3 years, £50,000 of FDC capital funding to supplement the £5,734 S106 funding currently available. Larham Way is the first area on the list; we had planned to carry out the work in this financial year, but Covid issues and third party funding application timeframes mean that it is to be addressed as early in next financial year as possible.

It was agreed the Clerk should look back through the minutes to discover how much of the £50,000 promised was actually owed as payback for the cemetery tree works and to remind Mr Hughes of the sum. It was also agreed to ask him to begin drawing up plans for the Larham Way site and to carry out any public consultations necessary so FDC were ready to install the equipment in the spring ready for use during the summer of 2021.

Mr Hughes also reported that the leisure centre was closed again due to lockdown and when able would re-open with reduced hours as it did in July, due to depressed demand. Mr Hughes admitted December would be a grim month for the leisure team. On a positive note he said the grass cutting season had gone well with limited issues, Tivoli were performing well and it was nice to see that the sustainable planting had been recognised and was looking great.

Cllr Smith reported the bushes around the Furrowfields car park needed cutting back and one of the double street lights in the car park was not working allowing youngsters to misbehave near the bottle banks and gate.

It was also reported that overhanging trees were making the footpath along London Road between the turning to Wood Farm and junction with Stocking Drove even more impassable. The footpath itself was in very poor condition. The Clerk said she would report the matter to Highways.

L24 20/21 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L14) EVCs: The Clerk had sent a message to UK Power Networks asking for advice on the best location for an EVC in Chatteris but had yet to receive a reply. As a result she has asked Miss Emily Bolton if she had contact details for anyone working for UK Power Networks.

L16) FACT Bus: Thanks to the latest lockdown the new bus service to Peterborough and the re-launching of the bus service to St Ives had had to be postponed again. A number of people had booked on to the St Ives bus in November so that was particularly unfortunate. FACT had promised to begin the services when it was safe to do so. It had been too late to pull the newspaper advertisements at the end of October/beginning of November but members agreed that the adverts planned for the beginning of December should be postponed.

L18) Letter from Mrs McTavish: The Clerk read out the email she had sent to Mrs McTavish answering many of the points raised in her letter. The email read as follows:

Active Fenland: Thank you for your offer of help with an Active Fenland website. At present the Council is not sure how this is going to pan out and it might be that existing sites (such as the Town Council Facebook page and website) might be expanded to include outdoor information. If this is the case your offer of help would be greatly appreciated.

Markets: Unfortunately despite best efforts to attract stall holders markets in Fenland seem to be declining but I know FDC continue to try and keep them going. In Chatteris the location of the market was changed a number of years ago when the town centre was regenerated. Unfortunately this resulted in uproar and residents demanding it return to Park Street where power sources were installed.

Covered spaces for youths: There was another shelter at Wenny Recreation Ground which the youngsters unfortunately decided to uproot and it had to be removed. The Town Council does fund 2 youth clubs to give youngsters a place to meet – one for younger children at the KEC and the Connections Bus for older children. Unfortunately the latter is not running at present due to Covid but the Town Council is paying for outreach workers and is keen to see the service re-established.

Splash Pool: This is an interesting idea which was briefly explored in the past but it would be good to hear more of your views on this.

M11 Extension: The Town Council always welcomes and supports schemes which will potentially improve travel arrangements for residents and actively opposes any ideas/projects which are likely to have an adverse impact.

The Clerk also invited Mrs McTavish to attend the leisure meeting but Mrs McTavish declined pointing out the only point which required further discussion was the splash pool and due to the pandemic this was not the time to pursue such an idea.

L25 20/21 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk said a neighbour had kindly agreed to donate some logs from a Eucalyptus tree which could be used as additional seating at the Pocket Park. The Council's contractors would have to move the logs which were very heavy and the Clerk asked for the best location for the logs.

Cllr Smith suggested under the power cables as it was not possible to plant trees there or near the pumping station. Cllr Carney suggested near the bund but Cllr Smith was concerned that those running down the bund might be injured if they fell over the logs.

The Clerk also reported that she had applied to Places to Ride for funding to convert the Old Railway Line footpath and bridleway to a cycleway, footpath and bridleway by extending the made up surface. Somersham Parish Council were due to discuss the idea at their next meeting but had indicated that there might be the need to install some bollards to stop tractors driving across the railway line at various points and not using the recognised droves. Cllr Ashley said she believed the public would be firmly behind the idea of a cycleway along the Old Railway Line and she said the Government was keen to map links between villages and towns to encourage people to walk and cycle.

Cllr Smith asked if a public consultation was required (the Clerk said it would be required at stage 2) and suggested getting a questionnaire together. Cllr Smith said a cycleway would fit in with the Growing Fenland theme of Chatteris Outdoors. Cllr Carney said information in the Town Plan would help to prove the desire for cycleways in and around the town.

Cllr Carney said he had helped to re-fashion the vandalised bug hut at the Pocket Park and had planted some more pond plants. Cllr Smith said she and another FLAPP member had planted more trees and hedging and the Park was coming along really nicely thanks to the work of FLAPP. More hedging was required.

A laminated notice giving the What3words location had gone up but it was agreed a more permanent sign was required. Cllr Smith said another permanent sign, near the pond, was still being considered and it was agreed in the short term that stickers giving the What3words information should go on existing signs, the gate and fencing.

L26 20/21 Outdoor Sculpture Trail

Cllr Smith reminded members that the idea of a sculpture trail around the town had been mentioned in the past and she suggested now might be a good time to look at the idea to give visitors a reason to visit and look around Chatteris post-Covid.

She pointed out to members that there was already a sculpture outside the library, the Fen Tiger in the Pocket Park, the train in Huntingdon Road, the plough in the Huntingdon Road gardens and the RAF crash memorial would soon be installed in the churchyard, so there was already the beginnings of a trail around points of interest.

Cllr Carney said he agreed with utilising what the town already had but he did not believe it was the right time to be spending a substantial amount of public money on such a venture. Cllr Smith explained that most of the existing items had been provided or commissioned by community organisations in the town and her plan was not to spend a large sum of money but to ask local people if they could create new pieces (Cllr Carney suggested approaching students).

Other possible items of interest also mentioned included a statue of Oliver Cromwell which was once on display in Cromwell Community College, the underpass mural, the new town sign which was being created, and the old gas lamps outside the Council Chambers. Cllr Smith suggested the old glass from 16 Park Street, which was being donated, might be worked into another piece of art and it was agreed the caterpillar trail of painted stones currently in the churchyard could be concreted in somewhere as a Covid feature – possibly at the Market Hill or Jubilee Gardens.

Cllr Newell agreed it was a good idea and Cllr Smith was given the go ahead to look into creating a trail.

L27 20/21 Any Other Business

Fens Biosphere: An invitation had been received to attend the virtual Fens Biosphere Conference on the 13th January 2021. The Clerk asked if any councillors were interested in attending and said she would attend for part of the day as the Biosphere had been mentioned in the past and she was keen to learn what a Biosphere was and how it would bring benefits to the area.

Men's Sheds: The Clerk said the idea of creating a Men's Shed in Chatteris had been mentioned and there was the opportunity to bid for a grant from the County Council's Innovate and Cultivate Fund to get the idea up and running. Cllr Smith said the sheds were good for men who had limited social contact as they provided a social network for them. Cllr Hay said a successful Men's Shed had been set up in Soham and she suggested approaching them to find out how they launched the scheme and what was required. Cllr Smith said there were also pink sheds where women could learn practical skills. It was suggested the U3A group or Mr Ted Croucher might be interested in running with the idea.

Correspondence: The Clerk had signed up to email notifications of funding opportunities for the Cambridgeshire Community. She had been approached by Finding Fitness Ltd who were keen to run a Finding Fitness club for primary school children during a week of the school holidays. Councillors agreed the cost of £1,500 for a maximum of 15 children (during Covid) was too high.

Road Closure: Members were asked if they had any objections to the closure of part of Newlands Road for 5 days in January to allow for roadworks to be carried out. The diversion would be via Queensay. Councillors had no objections.

L28 20/21 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 8th December 2020