

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 19th January 2021

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

L38 20/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Hay gave apologies that she arrived a little late due to another meeting.

L39 20/21 FDC Update & Meeks Cemetery Request

FDC Update: Mr Phil Hughes sent the following FDC update:

‘Work underway to clear the scrub bushes at Wenny Recreation Ground; Cllr Murphy and others are sorting out the RAF memorial in the Church grounds, Tivoli will install a base and fit the memorial once it is known where it is to go and when; FDC are investigating a fence issue at the New Road Cemetery following a complaint from Cllr Benney; the CCTV unit in Wenny Recreation ground has a water problem which is being investigated.’ Mr Hughes concluded by stating Chatteris Leisure Centre was closed due to lockdown.

Meeks Cemetery: The Clerk had been contacted by a member of the public asking if an entrance to Meeks Cemetery could be created in St Stephen’s Drive (allowing access from Furrowfields Recreation Ground). The author claimed it would be beneficial to have a second entrance and escape route if there were uncontrolled vicious dogs in the cemetery, it would also allow access for elderly people unable to walk the long way round.

Members were not in favour of the idea pointing out Meeks Cemetery was a nice, peaceful haven because it was self-contained. They said there was room to get out of the way of unruly dogs and feared there would be problems at night if a gate was installed. They also felt it would be less respectful if it became a thoroughfare and was unlikely to be welcomed by those who had family members buried in the cemetery. Cllr Smith said if the idea was go forward those living near the entrances would need to be consulted.

It was agreed not to pursue the idea but to ask Mr Hughes if there was a plan to once again cut back the brambles in the cemetery.

Zipline: The Clerk had been approached by a resident, of The Shrubbery, whose garden backed on to Wenny Recreation Ground, asking if the zipline could be re-located as it was a constant nuisance. The resident’s husband had put the request in writing to Mr Hughes pointing out it was within 6 to 8 metres of their back fence and was in daily use from early in the morning until the early hours of the following day by groups of youths and then young adults who used the platforms for drinking, singing, shouting and playing loud music. Some of the users had been verbally abusive. The resident asked if the zipline, which had been taken out ready for replacement, could be repositioned within the park somewhere where there were no residential dwellings and where it would not cause stress, anxiety and nuisance to residents.

The Clerk had not heard from Mr Hughes about the issue and said she would enquire if the residents request was being considered.

L40 20/21 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L30 Bins: Members asked what was happening with the bins at Furrowfields Road (which had disappeared) and near Glebelands School (which was broken). The Clerk promised to enquire.

L34 Sculpture Trail: Cllr Smith said it was Cllr Ashley who had been in contact with Cromwell Community College. Cllr Ashley said she had yet to receive a reply to her enquiry about the whereabouts of a mural of the town and a depiction of Oliver Cromwell but she would approach another teacher at Cromwell.

L41 20/21 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update

Old Railway Line: The Clerk said the application for a grant towards the cost of creating a cycleway along the Old Railway Line had been turned down by Places to Ride. The letter said the fund had received over 100 applications and the board had decided the application was not eligible as it did not constitute a destination for cycling and focused on an active travel cycle route instead. The letter did offer help with finding alternative funding but the Clerk pointed out as Somersham Parish Council had also rejected the idea it was difficult to take it forwards.

Instead she asked for permission to seek formal quotes to extend the current made up path along the Old Railway Line so it connected with the footpath around the Pocket Path. This was agreed.

Cllr Ashley said she had looked further into Slow Ways which mapped out pathways which linked villages and towns across the UK. It was agreed to investigate if the Old Railway Line had been included.

(Cllr Hay joined the meeting at this point).

Pocket Park: Cllr Smith reported that the Council's gardening contractors had kindly donated a large number of hedging plants which would shortly be planted. The Friends group FLAPP had met again and were pursuing funding streams for the park in particular they were applying for grants towards the cost of an information board at the pond and a sign at the entrance showing the layout of the park. The Clerk commented that with all the wet weather it was fortunate that the park was well drained.

L42 20/21 EVCs Update

The Clerk reported on a telephone conversation with Mr Garry Edwards, engineering manager at FDC, following a request for permission to site the EVCs at Furrowfields Car Park. Mr Edwards said to expect contact from Cllrs Chris Boden or Jan French but this had yet to happen.

Mr Edwards would not agree to any EVCs being installed in Furrowfields at present because of the Civic Parking Enforcement scheme which was currently being appraised ready to be submitted to the Combined Authority.

His argument was that FDC could not provide EVC parking spaces because the car park might be covered by an order which did not allow 24 hour parking and the spaces might be needed to accommodate all the cars which would be unable to park on the streets.

The Clerk argued this might be a problem in other towns but in Chatteris the car park was always almost empty and if CPE was brought in it was only likely to be half full at any point. (She also pointed out at the meeting that it would surely be easy to ensure the EVC parking bays were not included in a parking order).

The Clerk said that, according to the County Council and the Government, local councils should be encouraging the installation of EVCs to meet the 2030 deadline and told Mr Edwards that she had received helpful information from Emily Bolton, at the County Council, and UK Power Networks, who had confirmed there was excess capacity which would enable EVCs at Furrowfields.

Mr Edwards said he had been looking into EVCs and FDC might install some in all their town centre car parks especially if they were able to make money from them to help offset the costs of CPE. The Clerk pointed out they would be very helpful in Chatteris as the town was in the centre of Cambridgeshire with links to most of the major Cambridgeshire towns. She also asked if he was sure Chatteris would be included and it wouldn't just be Wisbech and March and Mr Edwards was unable to answer that.

Mr Edwards asked why the Town Council could not put EVCs on land the Council owned and the Clerk explained the Council did not own land in the centre of Chatteris. The Clerk said the Town Council was hoping a fast charge EVC would help local businesses post Covid as people would be able to go into town and have a coffee or do some shopping while their car was charging.

Cllr Hay said it was likely to be at least two years before CPE was brought in, if it was agreed, and she suggested in the meantime contacting Cllr Boden. Cllr Smith advised the Clerk to point out that it would be a good opportunity for joint working as the Town Council was willing to invest in EVCs if FDC was willing to donate the land. Cllr Hay queried if the car park near the toilets was owned by the County Council and suggested approaching them if the bid to FDC failed. Cllr Smith said those parking spaces were rather tight making manoeuvrability more difficult.

L43 20/21 Outdoor Sculpture Trail Update

Cllr Smith said she was still working on her map to show the location of outdoor sculptures and artwork around Chatteris. She would ask the creator of funky maps for a price to design a map based on her information.

Cllr Smith had also spoken to the Chairman of In Bloom about using the pebbles from the caterpillar trail in a feature on one of the gardens in the centre of the town. The Chairman had

promised to raise the issue once In Bloom started meeting again. The Clerk said she had tried to contact the Vicar to ask who was responsible for the trail so she could seek permission to use some of the pebbles but had not received a reply. It was agreed to ask Cllr Carney if he knew who organised the trail. Members pointed out many of the pebbles were already fading so would need to be varnished to preserve the children's decorations.

Cllr Smith said several of the art installations were in need of a spruce up before any trail was launched. These included Ormond's train and the underpass mural. She hoped to encourage people to volunteer to help with the re-painting.

L44 20/21 Council's Website

The Clerk said she had been in contact with the Council's website creator who had confirmed he was able to make the website compliant with the accessibility requirements and had asked if the website needed further work. The Clerk had compared the websites of neighbouring town councils and suggested better and bigger photos were needed, along with the ability to attach videos, connect to the Council's and other Facebook pages. She had also been impressed by bright graphics on one Council website and rolling messages on another.

Cllr Smith suggested a link to maps of footpath routes around the town would be helpful and it was agreed to contact Cllr Gowler who had set up a Facebook page for those looking for walk ideas. Cllr Smith pointed out there were people without Facebook who were looking for footpath ideas.

It was also suggested a page of links to the websites of other organisations in the town - such as the schools, CCAN, the museum – would be helpful.

The Clerk said she would obtain an estimate for the cost of the work.

L45 20/21 Any Other Business

Cllr Hay and Cllr Ashley said they had been contacted by a resident of Victoria Street concerned about illegal and inconsiderate parking by people visiting the vets. The resident told them that cars pulled up using the drop kerb to her property and parked on the path blocking her driveway. The resident said she was willing to pay for the installation of a bollard on the path to stop the parking but had been advised by Highways to contact the Town Council.

It was agreed it was definitely not the Town Council's responsible, County Highways were responsible for the pathways and would need to give permission.

Cllr Smith said it was a long standing problem, which was often exacerbated by parents collecting and delivering boys to the scout hut, she said enforcement was needed. Cllr Hay said if Civil Parking Enforcement was brought in, this was a problem that could be tackled as the District Council would have some control over parking but this was some way off.

L46 20/21 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 9th February 2021.

