

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 9th March 2021

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

L54 20/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Carney and Benney sent apologies for absence. Cllr Carney had spoken to the Clerk that day and given his views on several agenda items. Cllr Haggata also sent apologies - as the meeting was open to all councillors - however he submitted his views on the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy.

L55 20/21 FDC Update

Mr Phil Hughes had sent in the following information:

‘The grass cutting season is underway. Some scrub trimming has taken place at Wenny Recreation Ground.

FDC will be ensuring our Chatteris green space assets are looking good for In Bloom & we are supporting the group too.

We are awaiting Parochial Church Council sign-off to put the RAF Memorial in place in the churchyard.

The Leisure centre will be re-opening – just the gym – from April 12th. We expect exercise classes to follow, subject to Government approval, at the next step – May 17th.

The Leisure Centre car park (the old bit) has been tidied up and plants removed.

Cllr Murphy has reported the damaged bench close to Spectacular to me.’

The Clerk said she had already been assured that the bench near Spectacular would be one of the first to be replaced. She had also been contacted about missing benches at Wenny Recreation Ground. It appeared there were now two missing and the Clerk agreed to chase up their re-installation.

L56 20/21 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of Group

L42 EVCS: As promised Cllr Benney had raised the issue of the Town Council using spaces in Furrowfields car park for EVCs with Fenland District Council and had informed Cllr Smith that FDC had plans to put their own EVCs in their car parks. Members suggested it should be a joint effort.

L52 Victoria Street Bollard: Cllr Hay said the householder wishing to put bollards outside her home had met with the Highways Officer who had informed her that she could either apply for a Highways Initiative or pay for the bollards herself. She was grateful for the help given, however Cllr Hay had the impression she would not be proceeding as the problem appeared

to have been alleviated by the vets asking customers to be considerate when parking and their receptionist requesting customers move their vehicles if they are parked badly.

L51 In Bloom: Cllr Smith said as the Town Council's representative she had attended In Bloom meetings and their plans were well afoot for the displays which would constitute their Britain in Bloom entry. The group appeared to be well organised and was meeting fortnightly. The group was appreciative of the Town Council's grant and was working hard to gain sponsorship from businesses in the town, no easy task in the current climate. Cllr Hay said the In Bloom route usually included the bowls club but she warned Cllr Smith that the club had lost the help of its usual gardener due to illness.

L57 20/21 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park Update

Cllr Smith reported that on behalf of FLAPP Cllr Carney had applied to Jacks and been successful in gaining a £500 grant for a new noticeboard for the park which would go near the pond. Three new tree trunks to be used as benches had been delivered to the park (the trunks were donated by a neighbour of the Council and transported by the Council's contractors). Hedge planting had continued and Anglian Water had spread some hardcore on the approach road.

MP Mr Steve Barclay would be meeting volunteers of FLAPP at the park on the 12th February. Cllr Smith said it was hoped it might be possible to officially launch the park in the autumn, depending upon Covid lockdown lifting.

L58 20/21 Trees Offer

The Clerk had been contacted by MP Mr Barclay offering six cherry trees for planting in the community. This was part of the Sakura Cherry Tree project, the flagship project of the Japan-UK Season of Culture which would see thousands of cherry trees, donated by Japanese businesses, planted at sites around the UK.

The Clerk asked members for ideas of sites where the trees could be planted and Wenny and Huntingdon Road Recreation Grounds were suggested as was the churchyard. It was agreed FDC's permission would be required before the sites could be used and members queried how tall the trees would grow.

It was agreed to gratefully accept the offer of the trees, to enquire about the size they would grow to and to then decide where they should be planted.

L59 20/21 Sculpture Trail and Caterpillar Trail Updates

Cllr Smith said the lockdown had prevented her from visiting the local artist who created metal sculptures. She suggested it might be wise to preserve the batman painting at the Bridge Street amenity area by covering it with Perspex. Members agreed Cllr Smith should look into obtaining the Perspex. Although the owner of the painting was unknown it was

hoped they would have no objections. Cllr Smith added that the willow sculptures which were to be part of the Wenny Estate roundabout display would be added to the sculpture trail.

She said the caterpillar trail project had gone quiet and she was still waiting to hear from anyone who needed help in varnishing their pebbles. It was suggested the organiser should consider putting an article in the local newspaper. Cllr Smith said the organiser had been seeking children's input into the design for the permanent display and had also been seeking professional advice on the best way to display them. Cllr Hay suggested with schools opening it might be easier to interact with children and their parents.

L60 20/21 Recordings of Zoom Meetings Policy Requirement

The Clerk had sought CAPALC's advice on whether the Council had to publish recordings of its Zoom meetings on a social media platform such as Youtube and if it was a legal requirement.

The executive officer had confirmed that it was not a legal requirement, it was optional. She suggested it was a matter which should be discussed by the full Council and there should be in place a policy or protocol to cover recordings and a process about how long the recordings should be kept before they were deleted.

The Clerk reminded members that the Council did have a Recording of Meetings policy but this was adopted before Zoom meetings began. She said she had enquired about publishing the recordings on the Council's website but the file was too large.

Cllr Hay pointed out that FDC and County Council Zoom meetings were published on Youtube, however she was not in favour of Chatteris Town Council using Youtube. Cllr Newell agreed and it was pointed out members of the public were able to join the Zoom meetings live as joining details were published.

Members **agreed to recommend** to the full Council that:

- 1) Recordings of Council meetings held via Zoom were not published on Youtube,;
- 2) The Council kept Zoom meeting recordings until the minutes were approved and the recording would then be deleted;
- 3) The above decisions be included in the Council's Recording of Meetings Policy.

L61 20/21 Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy

The Council had been invited to take part in a survey into FDC's proposed new Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy. The aim of the strategy was to capitalise on the increase in sustainable travel during lockdown and help people to continue making more journeys by bike, on foot or with a mobility aid.

Residents, businesses and community groups were all being encouraged to share their views on how cycling and walking provision and mobility access could be improved by completing an online survey.

The group began to undertake the survey on behalf of the Council but found it was more suited to individuals and agreed instead members should complete the survey as individuals and the group should send in the views submitted by Cllr Haggata as follows:

‘Cycling in Chatteris is poorly served by not having a single safe cycleway connection to March, Manea, Ely and many other small towns and places of interest around Chatteris.

The existing cycleway that stops at Sutton needs connecting up to Chatteris, this will enable cycling to Mepal and the planned RSBP bird sanctuary.

Funding should also be found to connect Somersham and Chatteris along the Old Railway Line footpath and further negotiations with Somersham Council should be undertaken, with encouragement from FDC and CCC, to explore the tourist possibilities.

All new building developments should include integrated cycleway connection to all areas of Chatteris.

The tourist possibilities which could be created by opening up cycleways around Chatteris have yet to be realised by FDC and CCC.

All the routes suggested above should also be open to those walking. Plus the land beside the waterways surrounding and across Chatteris needs to be opened up by the creation of footpaths alongside the waterways. Negotiations should start with Middle Level Commission, Environment Agency and landowners where waterways are located. The waterways potential for the benefit of Chatteris residents and tourists have yet to be explored.’

Cllr Smith was concerned that the survey did not appear to deal with the leisure and tourism aspect of cycling and walking and she felt if FDC concentrated on the leisure aspect the rest (walking and cycling to work, shopping, etc.) would follow.

L62 20/21 Any Other Business

Doctors’ Surgery: Cllr Hay said she had received a number of complaints about difficulties in booking appointments at the doctors’ surgery and the propensity for telephone consultations. Cllr Newell said she had also received complaints about people being left outside in the rain as they waited for an appointment. Members understood the concerns about keeping the surgery staff safe but suggested the doctors needed to balance risk for staff against care and compassion for patients.

It was **agreed to recommend** to the full Council that the Council should write stating they had received complaints about the difficulty in getting appointments, the lack of face to face appointments and patients being made to wait outside in all weathers.

Fair: FDC had received a request for the fair to attend Wenny Recreation Ground from 25th April (opening from the 29th April to 1st June). FDC officer Ms Layna Warren pointed out that legally outdoor attractions could re-open from the 12th April and the organiser had advised he would have a robust risk assessment in place.

However, Ms Warren pointed out it was an outdoor attraction which would prompt visitors to gather and as Covid cases in Fenland were high she was seeking feedback from the Town Council.

Members agreed that with Covid cases still so high it was not advisable and agreed the fair should not take place in April but suggested it might be possible later in the year.

Disposal of Land: FDC had also contacted the Town Council regarding the proposed disposal of a small area of Public Open Space land adjacent 15 Bridle Close in Chatteris. The owner of 15 Bridle Close (and FDC) believed the land belonged to him as it was included in his garden thanks to a fence being erected in the wrong place when the estate was built in 2003. FDC agreed the owner had an excellent case for claiming adverse possession of the land as he had maintained it for 17 years. It had, therefore, been agreed that the homeowner could buy the land for a small sum and payment of FDC's legal fees. A restrictive covenant would prohibit building on the land.

Members agreed this was the best solution and had no objections to the disposal of the land.

Allotment Land: The Clerk informed members that on behalf of the Town Council she had provisionally agreed to take over the administration of allotment land at Queensway in Chatteris. There were six plots, three were already occupied and three were vacant. The latter had been the subject of many complaints over the years as originally FDC often forgot they owned them and when they were transferred to the housing association they were unaware they were responsible.

The Clerk had provisionally agreed with Clarion Housing to take over the allotments initially under a Licence to Occupy agreement (at no cost to the Council) with a view to them being transferred into the ownership of the Town Council in future. Clarion had agreed to help clean up the unoccupied allotments and had forwarded the names of the tenants of the occupied allotments. The Clerk would request the tenants' sign an agreement and would then collect a rent for the allotments which she suggested should be £25 a year, below the rent for the Honeysome Road allotments as there was no water supply at Queensway.

The Clerk sought members' agreement to sign the Licence to Occupy agreement and this was given.

Skatepark: The Clerk had been approached by Team Rubicon who were looking to promote a nationwide Talent Pathway programme for skateboarding ahead of the sport becoming part of the Olympics. Their plan was to provide a morning of skateboard lessons and an afternoon event. Members agreed the cost of the day, £920, was too expensive.

L63 20/21 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 13th April 2021.

