

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 13th April 2021

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

L64 20/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Carney and Benney sent an apology for absence but had submitted comments on two agenda items.

L65 20/21 FDC Update

The Clerk had received the following update from FDC Open Spaces Manager Mr Simon Bell:

”Back to normal for a fully-staffed Tivoli team and despite wet weather in early March the first cuts were all made on time with minimum fuss or disruption. Cemeteries have benefited and the better weather later in the month saw them looking close to their best. Play areas remain open, despite the Covid restrictions, although closure will take place quickly if circumstances change. Inspections have continued to take place weekly throughout the pandemic. All play areas in the district were inspected by ROSPA in March (some 900 pieces of equipment) with only one high risk fault identified – resolved the same day.

Elsewhere in the town:

- St Peters Church – bench refurbishment
- Chatteris Leisure Centre – perimeter bramble clearance (car park)
- Zip wire in play area (Wenny Rec) – new and relocated
- Hedge clearance Wenny Rec
- New bench Wenny Rec
- New Road perimeter fence clearance
- Planters (3-tier) taken to Doddington Nursery on behalf of CIB
- Grave clearance New Road
- Tree lopping – play area Wenny Rec
- Drains jetted New Road cemetery”

The Clerk reported the neighbouring householder keen to see the zipwire moved was delighted with its new location and asked if a bin could now be moved.

Cllr Carney had received an email from a resident asking if more benches could be replaced at Wenny Recreation Ground as the park was becoming increasingly busy.

The resident had also reported that the owner of the horses, kept in a field at the side of the park had left the gate open for a period of time. The resident was concerned there could have been an accident if a child had run out of the children's play area or a dog off lead had run on to Wenny Road. The Clerk said she had also found the gate wide open at teatime on Saturday. It was agreed to raise the matter with FDC and ask them to contact the horse owner. Cllr Ashley pointed out both Tivoli and Warren's closed the gate as soon as they were through it and opened it again when they left.

Cllr Hay said she had received a complaint about the gate at the Old Railway Line banging and disturbing a local resident. The Clerk said she had received the same complaint and had explained to the resident there was nothing that could be done as it was a new gate with a new fixing and was necessary to allow entrance to horse riders and to hopefully prevent motor vehicles. She said putting up a sign asking people to close it quietly was likely to have the opposite effect. Cllr Ashley pointed out the gate was there before the resident moved in and said she used to live opposite and after a time you did not notice the noise.

L66 20/21 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L56, L58, L60 and L61: All matters had all been covered at the full council meeting. The Clerk had noted Cllr Hay's request to amend the minutes of the Victoria Street Bollard report; members had been informed they would only know about the species and size of the cherry trees when they were available for planting in the autumn but had taken up the offer of 6 trees; the Recording of Meetings policy had been amended and the Council's comments on the cycling and walking strategy had been noted and the Clerk had been assured there would be a full consultation before the strategy was adopted.

L59) Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Smith said she believed the trail had permission from the Faculty to be installed in the Parish Church grounds and the organiser was planning to run a competition asking parents and children to submit ideas for the design of the trail.

L67 20/21 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

Cllr Smith passed on a report from Cllr Carney that, following the vandalism at the Pocket Park when the bug hotels were destroyed and then set on fire in the dry stone pond, he had been offered two replacements and had installed them. Cllr Smith passed on thanks to Cllr Carney.

Cllr Smith admitted that although it was soul destroying to see the vandalism at the park the offers of support and help on social media had shown the area was appreciated. Some trees had been replaced because they had either been pulled up or had not survived and more hedging had been planted.

The Clerk said a member of the public had very kindly offered to plant more trees along the Old Railway Line footpath and bridleway so they could be appreciated by future generations. The Clerk had met the couple at the Railway Line and had agreed the positioning of the small copse of trees so they would hopefully be safe from the flail cutters of the County Council

(which had destroyed trees in the past). The couple had also planted a couple of cherry trees and were planning to plant up the two small hillocks at the entrance to the Railway Line. They had been warned that the Council could not offer help with maintaining the trees and could not guarantee they would not be targeted by vandals but they had been happy to proceed. Cllr Smith suggested they should be given publicity for their public spirited work and Cllr Hay pointed it would send home the message that the Council welcomed people who were prepared to do things for the town.

The Clerk had received yet another letter of objection from a resident of London Road complaining about motorcycles using a field near his home for illegal motocross activities, having accessed the field from the Old Railway Line. The matters had been reported to the police.

The Clerk had written back a number of times pointing out that although motorcycles were not permitted to use the Old Railway Line it was impossible to patrol the footpath 24 hours a day; that the Council had no jurisdiction over private land and that the problems should be reported to the police. She asked what more she could do.

Cllr Ashley said there were a number of ways to access the field, including the Old Railway Line. She had reported the problems to Sgt Lugg and the police were sending out patrols but it was very difficult to catch the offenders. The landowner had put in measures to try and prevent access to his land but the motorcyclists always found a way on.

Cllr Smith said it was unfortunate but it was not down to the council or the police it was up to the landowner. She suggested the Clerk continue to send the same response she had sent in the past.

The Clerk said she was hoping to shortly get quotations for extending the made up surface of the Old Railway Line so the work could be completed before the winter.

L68 20/21 NHS, Social Care & Frontline Workers' Day

An email said civic leaders were being encouraged to lead their community in remembrance and tribute to NHS, Social Care, key workers and those who had passed away due to the pandemic on the 5th July. It was suggested there should be a 2 minute silence at 11am and a toast to the heroes of the NHS, Social Care and Frontline workers at 1pm. Cllr Hay said those who volunteered and other unsung heroes should not be forgotten.

It was agreed to take a low key approach by mentioning the Day on the Town Council website and Facebook pages but make sure that volunteers and all those who had continued to work through the pandemic were also mentioned.

L69 20/21 Any Other Business

Prince Philip: The Clerk said she had now received details of where to send letters of condolence following the death of HRH The Prince Philip on the 9th April. She asked members when the letter from the Mayor should be sent. It was agreed it should go as soon as possible and should make mention of the messages of condolence which had been posted on the Council's website. The Clerk said she had followed all the advice given by the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council, NALC and CAPALC. Although a protocol was in place to mark the death of Prince Philip it had not been possible to follow many of the procedures due to Covid restrictions. Physical books of condolence were discouraged as was the laying of flowers. As a result the Clerk had asked members of the public to post messages of condolence on the Council's website and these were now visible thanks to help from the Council's web designer. A message of sympathy from the Mayor had been posted on the afternoon of the 9th along the same lines as the message on Huntingdon Town Council (as their Clerk had trained councillors on protocols). The Clerk had also put a message on the website explaining why it had not been possible to follow the protocol (preservation of life being the main reason) and asking people to make donations to charity rather than lay flowers in memory of Prince Philip. Cllr Smith thanked the Clerk for her prompt work and the Clerk thanked Cllr Smith for posting the message of sympathy on Facebook.

Cllr Smith suggested one way of commemorating the Prince might be to name a street after him Mountbatten Way or the Duke of Edinburgh Way were suggestions put forward and it was agreed to add his name to the list of potential names for developments in the town.

Post Box: Cllr Smith reported she had made many attempts to discover what had happened to the Post Box which had been located at the junction of London Road and Blackmill Road. She had eventually discovered that the box was being repaired and would be returned to the location but instead of attaching it to a wooden post as in the past the plan was to attach it to a metal post and this apparently required planning permission. The planning application was submitted in January but there had been no movement to date. Cllr Hay offered to pursue the issue with the head of planning at FDC as she was also planning to raise with Mr Harding the issue of the state of the roadway at Ellingham Gardens. The road had not been adopted by the County Council and would not be adopted because it was falling apart.

St Martins Close: Cllr Hay had reported back to the resident of St Martins Close that it was unlikely the Council would apply for an LHI grant to make the road one way as LHI initiatives had to be for the benefit of most residents, she had suggested the work could be financed by residents of the Close and had agreed to get a likely cost. Cllr Smith asked about the hedge which appeared to be part of the problem and was assured the hedge was well kept and not overgrown. It was suggested the householder should use the other roadway into St Martins Close as an exit.

L70 20/21 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th May 2021

