

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 15th June 2021

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

L12 21/22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and A Gowler.

L13 21/22 FDC Update

FDC Open Spaces Contract Manager Mr Simon Bell had responded to complaints about the length of grass in the recreation grounds by explaining that all cuts had been done on time and staff had been working evenings and weekends to keep up. He pointed out the grass was growing extraordinarily quickly. The Clerk said she had been promised an extra cut on Furrowfields ready for the Festival.

Cllr Hay said an area of land at the junction of Farriers Gate and New Road had been missed from the cut. When she queried this it appeared the land was an FDC asset but whilst it appeared on the old cutting map it had disappeared from the new map. Cllr Ashley said there was a similar problem at the junction of St Peter's Drive and New Road and the grass was also long in front of the Army Cadet hut on New Road. Cllr Hay said she had asked for a comparison between the old cutting map and the new.

Cllr Ashley said Meeks Cemetery had been cut and looked really good. Areas had been left for wildlife. The Clerk reported the old part of the New Road cemetery was very overgrown and Cllr Ashley said it needed to be cut back as it was a haven for drug dealers.

Concerns were expressed about the state of litter bins around the town and the Clerk said she had been assured there was a programme to replace bins. It was agreed to raise the matter at the next full council meeting.

Cllr Ashley was still concerned about the bench in the middle of the High Street which was so out of keeping and was now falling into disrepair. Cllr Smith suggested waiting until the street furniture refurbishment had been completed and then honing in on the bench.

The Clerk confirmed part of the refurbishment works was the replacement of Perspex on information boards. Cllr Smith pointed out the board outside the library was out of date as it referred to a leaflet which was no longer printed and a walk which was no longer possible. It was agreed the information in the board should be replaced with a map of the town which showed the underpass. The Clerk agreed to order an amended map from the printers.

L14 20/21 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of Group

L8 & 9) Trails: Cllr Smith said she would be circulating a sketch of a proposed art trail for perusal by the committee. She also said she would be collecting the pebbles from the caterpillar trail to preserve them. The Clerk said she had spoken to the Vicar who confirmed the PCC had granted permission for the caterpillar trail to be created in the church grounds near the vicarage wall.

L6) NHS Day: Having informed the Masons that the Council had limited plans to mark NHS Day, the Masonic Lodge representative admitted they were at a loss to know how to mark the event and it was likely they would have a barbecue and drinks party.

L15 20/21 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Footpath

Cllr Smith said she had been corresponding with the speakers from Think Communities, who had attended the last leisure meeting, exploring ways to attract more funding to improve the Old Railway Line Footpath and Bridleway. Mr Adam Garford had liaised with Somersham Parish Council but had admitted they were not convinced by the improvement plans.

Cllr Smith also reported that Cllr Haggata was meeting with FDC officers to promote cycling in the town and a survey was being carried out which everyone was urged to take part in. Cllr Smith pointed out that if Councils wished to promote cycling they needed to improve road surfaces to make it safer for cyclists.

The Clerk reported that the Council's contractors had fallen behind with their cutting schedule at the Pocket Park but were now catching up. Unfortunately whilst strimming they had cut down ornamental grasses planted by Cllr Smith. Cllr Smith said the next plan was to ask Cllr Carney to ascend a ladder to put up some bat boxes. FLAPP were also planning an open day at the park which all those who had helped with the development of the park would be invited to attend. They were also considering asking the apprentices at Stainless Metalcraft if they could design and manufacture a tree guard to go round a tree planted to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Cllr Hay said the apprentices had quite a few outstanding jobs but might be interested in making such a guard.

Cllr Ashley said police patrol cars now visited the pocket park after the reports of vandalism.

L16 21/22 FACT Bus Services

Cllr Ashley had a suggestion for a bus service which could be provided by FACT. She explained that Age UK's day centre for the elderly which had been held at Salem Court, was now being held at the Cricket Club in March and those attending were not only having to pay £13 for attendance and a meal but also £7 for transport. Cllr Ashley suggested FACT could be asked to provide free transport (the cost of the service to be met from the Tesco fund held by FACT). It was agreed to initially ask Age UK why the day centre could not return to Chatteris. It was also agreed to raise concerns about the run down appearance of Lyons and Salem Courts.

It was agreed to revisit ideas for bus routes to be provided by FACT in a month's time when it was hoped all restrictions might be lifted.

L17 21/22 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Details had been received of the planned national celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

It was hoped an extended Bank Holiday, from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June, would provide an opportunity for communities to come together to celebrate the historic milestone.

On the Thursday the Council was being encouraged to make a proclamation at 1pm and light its beacon in the evening, on the Saturday there would be a broadcast of a special live concert from Buckingham Palace and on the Sunday people were being encouraged to share friendship, food and fun with neighbours at a Big Jubilee Lunch ahead of a pageant which would be broadcast to the nation.

The Clerk asked for ideas on how Chatteris could mark the Jubilee. Ten years ago Festival weekend had been moved to Jubilee weekend with limited success as it had been difficult to attract entertainers, keep audiences, etc. However the Clerk warned that with Festival weekend scheduled for the end of June she would not have time to organise the Festival and the Jubilee celebrations.

Councillors agreed to light the beacon and believed the best time to organise an event would be Sunday lunchtime. Cllr Charrier said it should be an inclusive event for everybody such as a picnic in the park at Furrowfields and the hiring of a large screen to show the pageant. Another idea put forward was a party in the park with musical entertainment for all ages.

Cllr Smith said if such an event was to go ahead it would need a new committee to organise it. The Clerk warned it would take a lot of organising; the Council would not be able to rely on the support of FDC (as they did with the Festival) and it was likely it would be difficult to source staging, lights, toilets, a large screen, etc.

Cllr Smith suggested it might be best if the Council took on the role of co-ordinator and encouraged community groups to put on events and possibly open them to a wider audience.

Cllr Hay suggested using Facebook to ask if organisations had considered putting on an event or if residential streets had considered staging a street party. If they put forward their ideas the Council could then issue a programme of planned events. The Clerk said it was possible to close many streets to traffic for a party without going through the whole rigmarole of applying and paying for road closures. It was also agreed the Council could offer small grants to help fund events.

It was agreed to put the ideas to the full Council at the 6th July meeting.

L18 21/22 Any Other Business

The Council had been asked for feedback on the monthly Town Council newsletters as FDC was planning to review the documents to ensure they were providing useful information for town councillors. Members were asked to review the content, format and frequency.

The Clerk said she would put the questions to the full council but asked for members' views. Everyone agreed a monthly update was important in case there were any issues. They thought the littering and dog fouling updates were particularly helpful and said it would be helpful to compare issues with other areas and for a more extensive list of contact details for Fenland District Council officers.

L19 21/22 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 20th July 2021.

Cllr Smith apologised that she would be unable to attend the full council meeting on the 6th July and asked vice chairman Cllr Charrier to present the minutes of the leisure meeting.