

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

**Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs J Smith (Chairman), A Charrier (Vice Chairman), L Ashley, J Carney, W Haggata, A Hay and F Newell. Cllr Charrier chaired the meeting.

**L37 21/22 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr A Gowler sent an apology for absence.

**L38 21/22 FDC Update**

Cllr Ashley said the grassed area at the top of St Peter's Drive had finally been cut. She asked the Clerk to chase up the new bin at the cemetery as people were dumping rubbish where the bin should be located.

The Clerk had informed FDC that the dyke between St Stephen's Drive and Furrowfields Recreation Ground needed clearing out and a hedge along a cut through between Farriers Gate and Bridle Close needed cutting back. She had been assured the hedge would be cut asap and the ditch cleansing had been passed on to the Street Scene or Cleansing. It was believed both works were still outstanding.

Cllr Smith reported that while some bollards appeared to have been re-painted in Furrowfields car park there was a CCTV post in the car park which was badly needed re-painting. It was agreed to ask FDC to do something about it. The Clerk pointed out Cabletest had charged a relatively small sum to re-paint the other CCTV posts and the Town Council paid a substantial sum for CCTV monitoring and maintenance every year. The problem of lorries illegally parked in the car park was discussed and Cllr Ashley and the Clerk confirmed that at a meeting with the Street Scene Officer she was aware of the problems and on the case, she was already taking action against a sweeper lorry which parked in the car park over a drain and was continually blocking the drain with mud.

**L39 21/22 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group**

L31) Beacon: The Clerk had registered with the Queen's Jubilee Pageantmaster that Chatteris would be lighting the beacon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June. She had been asked to ensure the beacon was lit at 9.15pm and if a piper could be sourced they should play Diu Rigare at 9.09pm.

L32) Cutting of Old Railway Line: The Clerk had chased up the cutting of the Old Railway Line footpath and bridleway but had been informed by the Rights of Way Officer that there was clear evidence of the cut which was carried out at the beginning of August and he had no intention of progressing a further cut.

L33) Moorings: The Clerk had only recently contacted Middle Level about the mooring at Carters Bridge and was awaiting a reply.

L35) Entrance Signs: It was reported In Bloom had received two commendation certificates in the Britain in Bloom competition but were still awaiting the results of the Anglia in Bloom competition. It was, therefore, agreed to decide on the wording for new signs once the results were known.

The Clerk reported a resident of Chatteris had offered to help Cllr Ashley re-launch Centrepont and it was hoped the first edition of the new three monthly newsletter would come out in February. Cllr Smith had approached the resident about the possibility. He was a member of the Anglian Players theatre group who were now based in Chatteris.

#### **L40 21/22 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates**

The Clerk reported that a family planting day and official opening ceremony was planned for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November. FLAPP was organising the day which would include the planting of trees donated by the Woodland Trust as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and the opening of the park by the Mayor.

Members suggested representatives of organisations who had donated money to the park should be invited including Red Tile Wind Farm Trust, Jacks, Stainless Metalcraft and Court Leet. Unfortunately it was unlikely a representative of the Solar Farm project would be able to be present.

Cllr Carney said FLAPP had used a £200 grant from Court Leet to purchase gardening tools and gloves for children as the cubs were frequent helpers at the park. They cubs had also helped to bag up donated produce, at an event organised by FLAPP. The bags were given to the Foodbank and inside every bag was a note from a cub explaining what was going on. Cllr Carney said it was a great example of community engagement. The cubs were also planning to be part of the tree planting in November.

#### **L41 21/22 Fenland Accessibility Study**

The Town Council's comments were sought on the Fenland Accessibility Report which had been produced as part of the development of the Fenland Transport Strategy. The County Councillor Steering Group had identified accessibility as being a major challenge in Fenland and the report included evidence of the problems and highlighted the accessibility issues. The Town Council was part of the key stakeholders group consultation and later there would be a public consultation.

Members had before them a summary of the of the key findings, the issues and what needed to be addressed. The key findings pointed out that Chatteris, as one of the four Fenland market towns, had seen a significant reduction in bus services between 2010 and 2020. From being one of the most accessible places in Fenland, transport services now required changes of bus and services were typically infrequent.

Councillors were concerned that two bus services referred to in the report had misleading information. It was believed the service from March to Huntingdon Railway Station only ran first thing in the morning, not two hourly, and the bus service to Ramsey no longer ran.

Cllr Haggata said the bus service for Chatteris was pretty dire. It was not possible to catch a direct bus service to hospitals, transport was poor at all times and evening and weekend transport was virtually non-existent.

Councillors were concerned that people on low incomes were only going out for essential services. Cllr Haggata pointed out the Town Council had long raised concerns about public transport but the situation had got worse.

Councillors agreed that it was good to make all the points listed in the report but they asked what was going to be done about the issues.

Cllr Carney said the new Mayor of the Combined Authority was keen on bus services and had held meetings with the head of Stagecoach East as the Combined Authority was responsible for public transport. The idea of franchising was being looked into as bus usage in London increased under franchising. It would hopefully mean more frequent bus services for the whole county.

Cllr Charrier said it was important to encourage people to get out of their cars as this would be better for the environment. Cllr Carney said the state of the roads did not encourage people to travel as journeys took too long and bus use had still not recovered after the pandemic. It was particularly poor in the middle of the day. Cllr Haggata said the lack of service meant it did not satisfy users needs.

Cllr Haggata said the good news was that a car park would be opening at Manea railway station soon and a direct bus service to the station had been promised.

It was agreed to pass on appreciation for the amount of work which had gone into the report and state it was a positive move. It was also helpful to have confirmation that bus services for Chatteris had reduced.

Councillors agreed with the issues which were outlined in the report as in need of addressing:

- Access to hospitals for specialist services
- Access to colleges and further/higher education courses
- Transport services at key times
- Transport services in the evenings and weekends
- Improving walking and cycling
- Ensuring that most people are using computer services and are able to use computers

They agreed the authors of the report should be working with the Mayor of the Combined Authority and looking in to franchising as a matter of urgency.

Cllr Smith said the best way to improve levels of walking and cycling was to get the basics right and improve road and pavement surfaces.

Cllr Haggata urged individual councillors to try and persuade local people to use the bus services or risk using them and Councillors agreed bus companies should be doing more to encourage people to use their services by advertising them properly.

#### **L42 21/22 Any Other Business**

Poppies on a Lamppost: Cllr Carney reported he was once again running the Poppies on a Lamppost project, to raise money for the RBL poppy appeal, and had the necessary permission from the County street lighting department. He said this year was particularly significant as it was the centenary of the RBL and the Chatteris branch was established in 1921.

However after the current year he intended to take a break from organising the scheme. Cllr Smith asked if he would be willing to pass on tips and expertise if someone else came forward to organise the scheme and Cllr Carney confirmed he was.

Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Smith said she was about to make one last appeal for someone to create a structure which could take the varnished pebbles for the covid caterpillar trail. She had varnished all the pebbles and had permission for them to go on parish church land. Cllr Ashley volunteered her husband.

#### **L43 21/22 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021.