

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

**Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

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

**L44 21/22 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs J Carney, A Charrier and W Haggata sent apologies for absence.

**L45 21/22 FDC & Street Furniture Updates**

FDC Update: The Clerk reminded members that FDC would be updating the Huntingdon Road and Larham Way play areas in the New Year and members agreed the new litter bins which had been installed by FDC looked very smart.

The bench at Wenny Recreation Ground had been uprooted and moved into the spinney again. The Clerk suggested putting some form of seating in the spinney but members felt this could be seen as encouraging the youngsters who were setting fires in the spinney. Ultimately it was FDC's decision.

Cllr Ashley asked who was responsible for cutting the grass outside the bungalows in Station Road and next to the Fire Station recycling bins as it was very overgrown. It was agreed to report the problem to the Street Scene officer for her to investigate.

Street Furniture: The Clerk reported that she had toured the centre of the town with two representatives of the company responsible for undertaking the street furniture refurbishment work (Milestone Infrastructure) to look at extra work as there was an underspend in the budget. They had since submitted a price for refurbishing the town noticeboard and repainting the CCTV camera post, benches and bollards in Furrowfields car park. The quote had been accepted and it was anticipated the work would be carried out in the New Year at the same time as the re-painting of the street name plates ordered by FDC.

Once all the works were complete it was planned to organise a joint promotional and publicity event with the Mayor of the Combined Authority, who had financed the works, to include the unveiling of the new town sign.

Cllr Smith, who had originally suggested the idea of refurbishing the street furniture, was delighted with the results and pointed out if the town looked smarter it would not only attract businesses and visitors but it would also make the residents feel better. She suggested also writing to thank the voluntary groups who helped the town to look good including In Bloom, the Christmas Lights committee, Street Pride and the Royal British Legion.

#### **L46 21/22 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group**

L39) Old Railway Line: The Clerk said the Old Railway Line had been cut by the Town Council's contractors ahead of the official opening of the pocket park.

L39) Moorings: The Clerk had not received a reply from Middle Level about the mooring on the Forty Foot river and agreed to chase them.

L42) Poppies on a Lamppost: These had been put up by Cllr Carney with the help of Cllr Benney. It was agreed to send a letter of thanks to Major Norman Larke who was stepping down as Chairman of the RBL after 20 years' service. It was agreed Major Larke would be a hard act to follow as he had done so much to raise the profile of the RBL and had organised so many commemorative events, including the installation and unveiling of the RAF memorial stone. Cllr Hay said she had already sent Major Larke an email thanking him in her capacity as the County Councillor for Chatteris.

L42) Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Smith confirmed she and Mr Ashley would be getting together to sort out the measurements and construction of the box which would contain the covid caterpillar trail.

#### **L47 21/22 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update**

##### Park Opening

The Clerk reported that the official opening of the Pocket Park on the 13<sup>th</sup> November had gone very well. The cubs had been very enthusiastic in helping with the tree planting. Unfortunately the trees supplied by the Woodland Trust, which would form part of the Queens's Green Canopy project, had not arrived on time. However there were a number of donated trees and shrubs planted to begin work on the project. These included a Walnut tree supplied by the Mayor, an apple tree and some small Oak trees.

Organisations which had helped with funding for the Park had been invited and a few sent representatives, including Mr Neil Kirby from Stainless Metalcraft, who helped with the planting.

The Mayor opened the park and gave a speech thanking those who had helped with its creation (including Cllr Smith), FLAPP members who helped to maintain it and those who gave grants. She also gave a brief history of the park. Photographs were taken by FLAPP member Mr Colin Silvester and a couple had been sent to the Fenland Citizen.

The Clerk said the Woodland Trust trees had now arrived and although they were only whips Cllr Smith said the trees supplied would help to attract birds when they matured.

FLAPP members had identified an area where they could be planted – at the entrance to the Pocket Park from the Old Railway Line – and the Clerk would be asking Warren's to clear the area ready for planting, hopefully with the help of the cubs.

### Way marking of Old Railway Line

There had been further communication from the Think Communities Community Connector asking Cllr Smith if there had been any progress on way marking the route between Chatteris and Somersham. Mr Adam Garford had produced a Project Initiation Document but this had not been taken further as he had been under the mistaken impression that the Clerk would be meeting with Somersham Parish Council. The Clerk said this was pointless in view of comments from the Parish Council.

It was agreed to push forward with plans to way mark the Chatteris end of the Old Railway Line only. FLAPP were keen to see a sign at the entrance to the Pocket Park from the Old Railway Line, possibly with information about birds which could be seen in the area. Members also suggested there should be a larger sign at the top of Blackmill Drove and a sign at the Huntingdon Road entrance to the Old Railway Line pointing out it linked to the Pocket Park and a sign just before the Pocket Park as it was approached from the Somersham end. Cllr Gowler suggested logs with arrows, and possibly distances, would look good.

Cllr Smith was still keen to work in partnership with Somersham Parish Council if it was at all possible.

Cllr Gowler also suggested organising a charity walk along the footpath. It was agreed if this was organised during the weekend of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations (at the beginning of June) the walkers could stop off at the Park to view the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting. The Think Communities caravan could possibly be used to serve refreshments and promote the projects. If participants walked to Somersham return transport could be organised.

It was agreed if Think Communities were unable to help with the way marking the Town Council would take on the project.

### **L48 21/22 New Entrance Signs**

It was agreed new signs were needed at the four entrances to the town – Huntingdon Road from the A141, Wenny Road from the A142, Doddington Road and London Road. The signs should mention the achievements of In Bloom and the Christmas Lights. As the signs were the idea of Cllr Carney it was agreed to ask his advice on the wording and then get the agreement at a full council meeting.

### **L49 21/22 Any Other Business**

Place Shaping Project: Cllr Hay had attended the Place Shaping workshop for Chatteris (along with Cllrs Haggata, Smith and very briefly Cllr Murphy) but she was not impressed by the event. Those attending were sent in to break out rooms and told to take on roles but there were no representatives of the organisers in the rooms and participants were unaware of what the sessions should achieve. Cllr Hay described the questions as “airy, fairy” while Cllr Smith

said they were trendy and participants struggled to work out what concepts the organisers wished them to address.

The Mayor and the Clerk had met on a one to one basis with an organiser and had found it a useful exercise with the concept clearly explained and straight forward questions about the strengths and weaknesses of Chatteris and what was required in the future.

Cllr Hay and the Mayor had spoken to Mr Steve Barclay MP about the project, which he was helping to fund, and he explained the company responsible had done a good job in Felixstowe, Lowestoft and Hull. He explained the steering was to find the best way to put in funding bids to the Government because the way to obtain funding from the Government had changed. In the past much of the funding had gone to big cities but cost benefit was no longer the only criteria, it was now about how to make changes to people's lives.

The Fenland towns were being asked to put forward their needs so these were ready to go forward to central government. Cllr Hay suggested liaising with the district and county councillor and Mr Barclay was also willing to meet and talk about the project.

Cllr Hay said Chatteris should draw up a list of what it wanted and she suggested putting the item on the agenda of the next council meeting seeking ideas so a list could be drawn up. This was agreed and the Clerk was asked to send out a briefing note.

Cllr Smith said lists had been drawn up in the past and there was a town plan but she agreed those lists needed to be updated.

Among the needs highlighted were an arts venue and a youth centre (both of which could be accommodated in the old Budgens building).

#### **L50 21/22 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (unless a meeting was required in December).