

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 18th January 2022

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

L51 21/22 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

L52 21/22 Speaker Mr Tommy Kelly, Armed Forces Covenant Officer

Mr Kelly was welcomed to the meeting and began by explaining he was the Armed Forces Covenant Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. Having served in the army during the 90s he was unsure what to do when he left but found work in software before becoming the covenant officer.

A covenant board had been set up and all the district councils along with Peterborough City and Cambridge City Councils were signed up to it along with representatives of such organisations as the RBL, Relate and HMP Peterborough. Mr Kelly said he was now trying to persuade parish and town councils to sign a covenant.

There was a hidden community in all towns and villages of those serving in the armed forces, their partners and their families. The covenant also reached out to veterans, their families, reservists and the bereaved of service personnel. For most military personnel the transition from military life to civilian life was smooth but for some it was a culture shock and they struggled to adapt. Mr Kelly explained part of his role was to guide people towards pathways of support.

Town and parish councils had local knowledge of those living and working in their towns and villages and it was hoped they could pass on Mr Kelly's details to those needing support. He suggested the Council could appoint a lead officer to be a direct contact. In return he would give documents, information to go on the Council's website, etc.

By signing up to a covenant the Town Council could celebrate the armed forces community, show their appreciation of them and proactively support the community. They would be able to promote the fact the Council was an armed forces friendly community and would be able to promote the covenant to other organisations.

Mr Kelly said he was hoping to produce a quarterly magazine and would be looking for parish and town councils to share their experiences of the covenant.

Chatteris was the first Town Council to agree to sign up to the covenant and it was now a question of working on the pledges to ensure they were not onerous.

Cllr Smith mentioned a member of the RBL who was already active in the town organising events for veterans and the youth club.

The Clerk had already spoken to the RBL in Chatteris who were happy to sign up to the covenant (along with the Women's Section). They had asked a few questions which Mr Kelly was able to answer. She had also approached the Army Cadets but was awaiting a reply. Cllr Carney offered to follow up the enquiry.

Mr Kelly said he was aware that children of serving members of the armed forces were pupils in local schools as the schools were entitled to a service premium to help with their education.

Cllr Smith agreed the Council could use its Facebook account and website to put out information and said a hard copy of the newsletter could go in to the library. Cllr Haggata suggested approaching those who organised the armed police museum in Chatteris.

It was agreed the Leisure working group would look at the list of pledges suggested by Mr Kelly and decide what was achievable. At the official signing of the covenant representatives of the RBL and the army cadets could be invited as it would be a photo opportunity.

Mr Kelly was thanked for attending and it was agreed to contact him once the pledges had been agreed.

L53 21/22 FDC Update

The Clerk had spoken to the Open Spaces manager at Fenland District Council, Mr Simon Bell, and was able to report that work would begin on replacing the play equipment at the Larham Way and Huntingdon Road recreation grounds in early February.

The six cherry trees, donated by the Japanese Government, had been planted at the agreed locations around Chatteris.

Members were pleased to note there had been no further fires in the spinney at Wenny Road Recreation Ground or behind the church.

Cllr Haggata asked why a bench near the skatepark Wenny Recreation Ground appeared to have been replaced by a double waste bin. The Clerk agreed to enquire.

L54 21/22 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L45) Street Furniture: The Clerk agreed to chase up a date when the additional street furniture works would be undertaken.

L46) Caterpillar Trail: Cllr Smith showed a suggested design for the caterpillar trail which formed a caterpillar shape in segments made out of the pebbles. These would be set in concrete circles which would in turn be set in a bed of bark chippings within a wooden frame which would be created by the Mayor's husband from materials donated by Travis Perkins. Members loved the idea and thought it was very original.

L49) Place Shaping Project: The Clerk said she would be sending the wish list drawn up by the Town Council to the Place Shaping Project team.

L55 21/22 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk had met with a second contractor in order to obtain a quotation for extending the hoggin path along the Old Railway Line until it joined up with the path around the Pocket Park. A third quote would be needed.

Cllr Smith was keen to promote the fact that a complete a circular walk would be created. The Clerk was due to meet representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council to discuss way-marking and signage at the Old Railway Line. FLAPP were keen to see a sign at the entrance to the Pocket Park welcoming people to the park and advising them to look out for birds which would be illustrated on the sign. Cllr Smith said Jack's supermarket could be approached again for funding for a sign.

It was hoped a planting day for the Queen's Green Canopy trees from the Woodlands Trust would take place on Saturday 5th March with the help of the cubs. The Clerk had asked the Council's contractors for a quote to clear an area of land at the entrance to the pocket park from the Old Railway Line where the trees would be planted. Cllr Smith asked if the contractors could be requested to clear some of the rushes in the pond which still had a low water level.

Members asked if a new footpath or re-instatement of a former footpath would take place along London Road as a result of funding from the new garden centre. It was believed the provision was a condition of the planning permission.

L56 21/22 Middle Level Commissioners' Reply

The Clerk had received an email from the Chief Executive of the Middle Level Commissioners outlining the likely cost of constructing a mooring on the Forty Foot near Carters Bridge. The cost of a hardwood mooring with steel sheet piles and bankside access steps would be £69K + VAT for a 30m mooring and £115K + VAT for a 50m mooring.

Cllr Smith was grateful for the costs and pointed out that if funding became available the Council now had prices and would be able to make an application without timing being wasted. Cllr Haggata agreed admitting it was expensive but saying it would be worth pursuing at some stage.

It was agreed to enquire if Middle Level still intended to install mooring posts, asking them to inform the Council if potential funding became available and asking if they would be able to help in some way. It was agreed moorings had the potential to help businesses, encourage tourism and be beneficial to the traffic on the Middle Level waterways.

It was also agreed to informally approach former councillor Chris Howes who was chairman of one of the waterways groups and to keep pressing for the opening up of walkways along the waterways.

L57 21/22 New Entrance Signs

Having agreed the wording the Clerk said she was now struggling to find which Highways officer she should approach about new entrance signs to the town. It was suggested she should ask Cllr Hay for a name.

L58 21/22 Queen's Jubilee Arrangements

The Clerk was delighted to report that a Queen tribute band had been booked to play in the parish church on the first day of the long Bank Holiday weekend (2nd June). Security was being booked and the Festival Committee had kindly agreed to help with stewarding duties.

New instructions on lighting the beacon had come through and the lighting time was now 9.45pm (to follow the concert). It was hoped Cllr Carney would once again light the beacon.

The Town was being encouraged to arrange for the Town Crier to give a proclamation cry and for a choir to sing a song written for the Platinum Jubilee. Cllr Ashley suggested the new community choir might sing the song and the Clerk explained that the new Town Crier and a prince and princess for the Midsummer Festival parade would be chosen on the afternoon of the 2nd June by the Festival committee. The Town Crier position would be for a fixed two year term. The crier could make the proclamation cry just ahead of the beacon lighting.

Local pubs would be encouraged to sell alcohol in plastic cups which could be taken into the church during the concert which would also be broadcast outside into the church grounds. Councillors suggested it would be great to organise a hog roast in the church grounds.

It was hoped local tea shops might organise something to mark the platinum pudding competition.

Members asked if any organisations were planning events to mark the Jubilee. The Clerk was aware the RBL were organising a street party and said the County Council had advice on how to close a street for a Big Lunch street party. It was agreed advertise the way to apply for a free street closure licence.

L59 21/22 Any Other Business

The Council had been asked if they wished to take part in a ceremony at midday on the 6th February when the RBL would be raising a Platinum Jubilee flag at the war memorial to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. Members had agreed a few words should be spoken and Cllr Smith suggested asking a bagpipe player to perform. It was hoped there would be a good turnout of councillors.

L60 21/22 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 15th February 2022.

