

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

**Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**Present:** Cllrs L Ashley, J Carney, A Charrier, A Gowler, W Haggata, A Hay, P Murphy and J Smith.

**L1 22/23 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Newell had sent an apology for absence.

**L2 22/23 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Group**

Retiring Chairman Cllr Smith took nominations for the position of Chairman. Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Charrier, seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed by all.

Cllr Ashley thanked Cllr Smith for doing a “sterling” job as Chairman.

Cllr Charrier proposed Cllr Carney as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Cllr Ashley and agreed by all.

**L3 22/23 Speakers: Mr Aarron Locks and Mr Dan Horn from FDC on CCTV Monitoring**

Mr Aarron Locks, Shared Service CCTV Manager, and Mr Dan Horn, Acting Assistant Director, were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Locks began by giving the background to the CCTV service in its current format. He said there was a single control room based at Peterborough covering a shared service between FDC and Peterborough City Council. The shared service had been in place since January 2020. This service had allowed the number of operators to increase from 4 to 8, double crew operations and a dedicated police officer to review the cameras. All the cameras had been updated as had the recording service providing full HD playback.

Mr Locks said now Covid restrictions were over he was keen to show CCTV partners (including Chatteris Town Council) around the new CCTV control room which had been funded by Peterborough City Council. Invitations would be sent out.

In 2020-21 67 incidents were recorded in Chatteris and in 2021-22 93 were recorded. Before the merger there were 48 recorded. There had been a similar increase in camera patrols up from 3,700 pre-merger to 6,500.

In Chatteris the CCTV cameras had been used for Focus on Safety Partnership work by gathering evidence of vehicles at Furrowfields car park following anti-social activity/driving and this had been acted upon by the police. Last year there had been the spate of youth related ASB and once again the cameras had helped the safety partnership get a grip of the problem.

Mr Locks showed members photographs of the control room and assured them that paid for CCTV cameras (including all those in Chatteris) were always on display on the monitoring screen. Mr Locks praised Chatteris Town Council for being the first to pay for CCTV cameras and confirmed that as a result the town had more cameras than March or Whittlesey.

Cllr Hay said she had been told at a meeting that of 17 incidents captured by CCTV in Chatteris only one was finalised and this concerned her.

Mr Locks pointed out Chatteris was the safest town in Fenland and he also pointed out the cameras were not only used to pick up crimes investigated by the police they also helped FDC by picking up fly tipping and littering, drug incidents and helped to locate missing people. Cllr Smith acknowledged the cameras were about the protection of citizens

All crimes were reported to the police control headquarters at Huntingdon which meant the Neighbourhood policing teams were not always aware of what had been reported.

Mr Horn assured members that the cameras in Chatteris were helping to keep the town safe. The Home Office was pushing local authorities to provide even more cameras to help protect women and young girls.

Cllr Murphy asked about the long running problems at Jubilee Gardens in 2021 and asked why it took so long for any action to be taken. He also asked if the cameras caught drugs transactions. Mr Horn said retrospective evidence was used when the safety group focused on youth ASB in Chatteris. Mr Locks confirmed the cameras did pick up drugs transactions which were reported and he said the cameras were very good. Cllr Gowler acknowledged it was difficult to quantify the prevention benefits of CCTV cameras. Mr Locks said CCTV was usually third on the list of citizens' priorities.

Mr Horn said the shared service helped to capture criminals who did not just stick to one town or area. Mr Locks confirmed ANPR was possible but was not operating at present.

Councillors gratefully accepted Mr Locks' offer of more detailed CCTV reports each month. Mr Horn suggested the CCTV service needed to communicate better about what it was doing and how it was helping to keep communities safe. Cllr Smith asked if there was some way of showing the public just how good and clear the cameras were and reassuring them that they were being permanently monitored. It was agreed more publicity should go out.

Cllr Charrier thanked Mr Locks and Mr Horn for attending the meeting.

#### **L4 22/23 FDC Update**

Mr Simon Bell had reported that the teen shelter and bench at Huntingdon Road Recreation Ground had been re-painted as had a bench at Cricketers Way. Cllr Murphy reported that FDC had found the money to replace play equipment at Cricketers Way but the work would be carried out after the summer. Councillors asked about decisions on which equipment was provided and Cllr Murphy said companies suggested the most popular equipment.

The Clerk had enquired about locking the cemetery at nights. Mr Bell confirmed it was no longer locked at nights and anyone volunteering to lock it should think carefully as it was a big responsibility. Cllr Murphy said that was why the locking up was no longer undertaken by FDC employees. It would be necessary to check every night that no-one was in the cemetery when the gates were locked.

**The following confidential item (L5) was considered in committee:**

**L5 22/23 Tenancy Agreement for 2 Park Street**

The Clerk requested the urgent item be added to the agenda. Members had received a copy of an email from the accountancy firm occupying the first floor of the building stating they would only sign a new lease if they had a clear understanding of when work on the building would commence, what it would entail and that rent would only commence once the premises were fit to occupy.

The Clerk had sought legal advice on the sitting tenants and members had a copy of the solicitor's advice and 3 options for the Council to consider.

Members voted 7 for and 1 against giving the tenants notice to quit as soon as the Council owned the building, having noted that, as periodic tenants, six months' notice would need to be served on the accountants and grounds for termination would need to be given. This could involve the Council paying compensation.

Cllr Hay preferred Option 2 which was to accept the tenants as periodic tenants and receive the existing rent and try to get the tenants to enter into a new written lease down the line.

**L6 22/23 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group & Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates**

L84: Pocket Park: The Clerk reported that Somersham Nature Reserve and the Timebank had gone ahead and organised a walk along the Old Railway Line on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. (Cllr Murphy left the meeting at this point).

L86: FACT bus service: The new transport manager for FACT Hannah Shackcloth had requested a meeting with councillors to discuss how the pot of money lodged with FACT (amounting to a substantial sum) could be spent. Cllrs Haggata, Ashley and Charrier all agreed to attend a meeting with FACT to discuss bus service ideas. The Clerk agreed to arrange a meeting.

**L7 22/23 Entrance Signs**

Cllr Carney reported that the Highways Officer had said his proposed design for new entrance signs were not acceptable because:

1. There was too much text on the sign face, which could distract drivers.

2. Regulations said there should be a singular phrase denoting an item of geographical or historical interest such as "Market town". The officer said the three items James had suggested (Christmas Lights, In Bloom and Engineering excellence) could not really be described as geographical or historical, or of any great interest to the passing motorist.
3. It was not acceptable to refer to Christmas Lights when they were only up for about 10% of the year.
4. "Anglia in Bloom Gold Winners" should be on a separate plate underneath with relevant years
5. Reference to farming could be added but should be described as "Historic Fenland Farming Town"
6. "Historic Fenland Town" was fine, but there was no need for "home to:" as this was superfluous.
7. Regulations stated the number of symbols on the brown panel should not exceed three and the WC and fuel pump symbols were not acceptable.

Cllr Carney said he was composing a response arguing his case, pointing out he was disappointed by the officer's response and giving examples of entrance signs for other towns which contained a great deal of information. He gave members a sheet showing such signs. Cllr Hay asked for a copy of the email and a copy of any further correspondence so she could follow it up with the Highways officer.

#### **L8 22/23 Transport Strategy Questionnaire**

In view of the late hour and the length of the questionnaire it was agreed to postpone completion of the questionnaire to the next leisure meeting. Cllr Haggata also mentioned the public consultation on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Councillors asked about movement on Manea Railway Station car park. It was confirmed it was nearing completion and the benefits of a regular bus link between Chatteris and Manea Station were highlighted

#### **L10 22/23 Any Other Business**

The Clerk requested decisions on two urgent planning applications and it was agreed to return them to Fenland District Council marked as follows:

- a) F/YR22/0503/CERTLU - Certificate of lawfulness (existing): Occupation of annexe as self-contained dwelling without compliance with condition 7 of planning permission F/YR01/0787/F relating to ancillary use at annexe west of 14 London Road – *Members have no knowledge of the history of this site.*
- b) F/YR22/0512/TRCA- Works to various trees within a tree line in a Conservation Area, including Leylandii trees, Sycamore trees and Ash trees at 8 London Road – *Support*

#### **L11 22/23 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022.

