

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers on Tuesday 21st June 2022

Present: Cllrs A Charrier (Chairman), L Ashley, A Gowler, W Haggata and A Hay. Cllrs F Newell and J Smith joined via zoom.

L12 22/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Carney sent apologies for absence.

L13 22/23 Speaker: Janine Hagger on Crime Prevention

Ms Hagger, from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, was welcomed to the meeting. She explained she was formerly a police officer based in Chatteris but now worked at the Police Headquarters as part of a multi-agency partnership team looking at crime prevention and anti-social behaviour.

The team was currently looking at ATM ram raids which happened every year as part of a vicious cycle of never-ending offending. The team was looking at ways to try and stop it happening by using crime prevention orders and measures to protect ATMs. This meant looking at the locations of ATMs and considering how to change the environment. Ms Hagger pointed out Barclays Bank in Chatteris was never ram-raided thanks to the wall and railings in front of the ATM which meant the risk outweighed the reward. Nisa had no such protection and the ram raiders took just 3 minutes to smash into the shop and take the cash machine.

Ms Hagger suggested erecting railings with planters or large, heavy planters on the paving outside the shop would deter would be thieves. Outside the Post Office she suggested heavy duty bollards. Ms Hagger suggested the safety measures could also help the town to look more attractive.

Cllr Haggata said he believed there had been objections in the past to bollards outside the Post Office because it was in the Conservation area and Cllr Smith warned that railings would have to meet highways standards.

It was agreed to write to the planning department at Fenland District Council about the suggestions and ask for guidance on what would be allowed.

The positioning of ATMs in shops was then discussed before Ms Hagger was thanked for attending the meeting.

L14 22/23 FDC Updates

Cllr Smith said she believed the bench had not been re-instated at the newly refurbished Larham Way play area. It was agreed to ask Cllr Murphy to investigate.

L15 22/23 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of Group

L7) Entrance signs: Cllr Carney had sent a copy of his response to the Highways Officer who had argued against his design for new entrance signs for Chatteris. He had pointed out the items he had suggested on the sign might not be of interest to the officer but they were to residents. The town was renowned for its high standard of Christmas lights with people travelling from all over to see them and other larger towns looking to Chatteris for inspiration. The third line referred to the engineering heritage (and future) of the town and Cllr Carney had pointed out the importance of engineering in the past and the current success of Stainless Metalcraft and Aerotron. He said he did not find pottery an interesting subject but appreciated the references to The Potteries around Stoke on Trent. He did acknowledge that the Anglia/Britain in Bloom awards could be on a separate board beneath the main sign. Cllr Carney argued many other places around the UK had more than 3 pictograms on their signs – including the current sign in Chatteris which had 7 – and he pointed out the importance of WC and fuel pump symbols for those on a journey.

Councillors were very impressed by Cllr Carney's answer and fully endorsed his comments.

Covid Caterpillar: In Bloom had queried if more work was to be carried out to the Covid Caterpillar memorial as it was somewhat overgrown and the fence needed painting. Cllr Carney had offered to trim the grass and Cllr Smith said anything planted near the caterpillar would need to be hardy as the soil was not good and should also be low maintenance to reduce the need for watering and weeding. It was believed children from Kingsfield were interested in helping with the project. Cllr Ashley said the fence had a rustic look and should not require painting.

L16 22/23 FACT Bus Services

Cllr Charrier reported on a very successful meeting with two representatives of FACT which she had attended along with Cllrs Ashley and Haggata and the Clerk.

FACT had acknowledged they still held a substantial pot of money, given by Tesco's, for bus services for Chatteris.

After discussion it was agreed that FACT would run a bus service to Cambridge on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month beginning on the 9th July. The bus would leave Chatteris at 10am and return from Cambridge at 5pm. Initially the cost would be just £1 return with under 16s free but they would have to be accompanied by an adult. Places would have to be booked with FACT by 12 noon the previous day. The buses would be disabled and buggy friendly.

Cambridge had been chosen as it was always busy with plenty going on.

It was agreed to put up posters and Cllr Charrier said she would get noisy about the service on social media. She intended to make the first journey with her family and would take photographs to further promote the service. Cllr Ashley said she would promote it to groups using the King Edward Centre.

Cllr Charrier explained it had been agreed to keep the price very low initially to generate interest and it was agreed to then review the service after three months.

Cllr Ashley said it had also been agreed to offer nursing homes for the elderly and those aged over 65s living in sheltered accommodation free buses for days out a few times a year. The trips could include visiting the coast in the summer and a nursery at Christmas.

The final idea was to run a service to Tesco's. This would be a door to door service every Friday with passengers being collected from their home address and then dropped back again. There would be two services one in the morning beginning at 10am with a return from Tesco's at 12 noon and the other beginning at 1pm with a return at 3pm. Bookings would be taken up until 1pm the day before and bookings could be made 7 days in advance. This service would be completely free to users.

Cllr Haggata explained that the money had been given by Tesco's to FACT as part of the planning conditions for the new store in Chatteris. When that store failed to open the money had sat in FACT's account largely forgotten until Cllr Haggata asked about its whereabouts.

The Clerk said the Town Council had already approved running a service to Cambridge but it would be good practice to ask councillors **to approve the idea for the Tesco's bus at the next Council meeting.** This was agreed.

The Clerk also said it was necessary to point out the service was not just for the elderly (as FACT had an image they were just for older people), it was for all ages.

L17 22/23 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

Members had noticed reports of damage at the Pocket Park which they said was very disappointing. The Clerk said a sculpture had been damaged and the bench, which was being repaired by Warrens. Fortunately the Park had been designed in such a way that there was little which could be vandalised.

The Clerk said In Bloom had raised concerns that the pond was dry. Cllr Carney had written to Anglian Water asking if there was any way they could help. Cllr Smith pointed out the weather had been very dry for several months and as the pond was not fed by springs it was not surprising that it had dried up. She asked if there had been any take up of tours of the park offered by the Chairman of FLAPP, Mr Ian Mason, as part of the Fascinating Fens weekend. The Clerk said the event had been very poorly advertised by the organiser of the Fascinating Fens project, in fact Mr Mason had had to chase for a poster in the final week.

L18 22/23 Transport Strategy Questionnaires

Members helped the Clerk to complete the questionnaire on the Draft Fenland Transport Strategy submitted by Cambridgeshire County Council. The Council's answers emphasised the need for better bus services, better connectivity, better cycle ways and walking routes and the need for links to train stations and hospitals. When asked about other transport improvements needed Slade End Roundabout and junctions on to the A142 were mentioned.

The Council has also been asked to comment on the Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Cllr Haggata, who had read both strategies, said it was very similar and it was agreed to delay filling in that questionnaire until the next meeting.

L19 22/23 Any Other Business

Cllr Ashley reported that Chatteris Football Club had been given notice to quit Peacocks Paddock by the start of the new football season as the new owner wished to sell it for development.

Members agreed the field had been used for football for 25 years and should, therefore, be protected in some way. Cllr Ashley had advised the club to contact the head of planning at FDC to ask his advice and to look into applying for the field to be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Councillors asked if the lease on the field was at an end and asked how the land was shown in the new Local Plan. In the last Local Plan it was not shown as development land. Cllr Newell, who was responsible for negotiating access to the field across the Cricket Club site, said the Council should fight against the land being used for houses as it had been used by the football club for so many years.

L20 22/23 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 19th July at 7pm.