

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

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers on Tuesday 18th July 2023

Present: Cllrs A Charrier (Chairman), L Ashley, A Hay, V Joyce, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

L11 23/24 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr A Gowler.

L12 23/24 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of Group

L3) FACT Bus Services: Cllr Carney had confirmed the questionnaire, into the possibility of FACT running a bus to Manea rail station and March, would be ready at the end of August/beginning of September when it would be shown to the Town Council and Manea Parish Council. The questionnaire would go out on social media and Cllrs Ashley and Unwin also offered to handout paper versions. The questionnaire would act as evidence that the service was needed and would be used. Cllr Selman said she had spoken to the Chairman of FACT Mr Gary Christy who was also keen to speak to the Town Council about the possibility of setting up a community fridge in Chatteris which was not means tested. Councillors agreed the main stumbling block would be the venue and ideas were sought.

L13 23/24 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update

The Clerk reported that the contractors had been due to start putting the topping on the made-up footpath extension along the Old Railway Line that day.

Cllr Unwin had received complaints that it was not possible to access the footpath past the Pocket Park going towards Somersham. The Clerk said it was the County Council's job to cut the footpath. The Town Council's contractors had cut as far as the Pocket Park.

Cllr Ashley had followed up the complaint about someone trying to light a fire in the dry pond at the Pocket Park. The man lived at the Lifeways sheltered housing unit and Linda had spoken to the manager who had promised to speak to the resident about the dangers and to warn him the police would be involved if he attempted to light another fire.

Cllr Joyce said there was a problem with cars and motorbikes at the park late at night. Cllr Ashley and the Clerk had both reported the problem to Sgt Arnold who had promised to carry out late night patrols. Cllr Hay was asked to remind him of his promise at the next meeting for council leaders. The problem was the motorbikes were large off road bikes and were a danger to other park users.

Mr James McAdie from Frog Life had been in contact to say he had managed to source a new liner for the pond and a new contractor was on board to help strip the spoil, install the new liner and cover it again. He was just waiting for the contractor's availability.

The Chairman of FLAPP Mr Ian Mason had been contacted by a resident who had a large number of wildlife records for the area which he was keen to make available to local residents. They were currently uploaded to the iRecord platform/database that anyone could see and access. Mr Mason had suggested making the information available on FLAPP's Facebook page and through the Town Council's website. Cllr Unwin asked if it was possible to put up more wildlife boards at the park and the Clerk explained a board identifying birds was planned but funding was required.

L14 23/24 Section 106 Shopping Basket

The portfolio holder for planning at FDC had suggested the Town Council should draw up a shopping list for Section 106 funds should developers be required to pay a Section 106 contribution. Cllr Unwin pointed out this had happened in the past but rarely happened currently despite major developments underway in the town.

Cllr Hay said Central Government was looking at introducing an infrastructure levy which would result in developers having to pay a levy for every property built and the sum would depend upon the value of the properties. The idea was still at the discussion stage.

Cllr Unwin was concerned that in the past developers had gone bust while developments were underway and this had resulted in unmade and unadopted roads. If this happened in the future it might mean the levy would not be paid; she was keen to see the infrastructure put in first.

It was recommended the shopping basket should include the following:

A footpath from the North Cambs Training Centre along the A141 Fenland Way to link up with the existing footpath to Tesco's and the underpass.

A cycleway between Chatteris and Sutton.

An outdoor fitness trail for adults and older youths.

New interpretation boards throughout the town.

A solar-powered water feature.

More benches and picnic tables.

Hedgehog Highway Surrounds to make hedgehog runs.

L15 23/24 Any Other Business

Repair/maintenance: Cllr Unwin reported the footpath/cycleway around Wenny Recreation Ground was in need of repair. She also asked if probation could be asked to undertake more weeding along the footpaths and roads in the town to stop it becoming weed city. She pointed out they had carried out the work in the centre of the town ahead of the In Bloom judging as the County Council was no longer spraying and removing weeds. The Clerk said she would

ask the organiser of the community payback teams if this was possible before councillors drew up a list of 'grot spots'.

Defibrillators: The idea of installing a defibrillator in the old phone box in Wood Street was discussed as former councillor Mrs Julie Smith was no longer in town to change the displays in the phone box.

Rail Consultations: Former Councillor Mr Bill Haggata had asked if the Town Council would support the Combined Authority and contact HM Treasury about the need for critical rail upgrades at the Ely junction. Mr Haggata pointed out the upgrade was important for Fenland and Chatteris as it would enable an increase in rail traffic and more use of Manea station. Members recommended the Council write in support of the campaign.

FDC officer Ms Wendy Otter had also requested the Council's help in fighting proposals to reduce staffing times at March station from 7am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday to 7am to 2pm Monday to Saturday. Ms Otter pointed out that £2m had been invested in March station just over 12 months ago and there were concerns that if the ticket office closed early there would be no access to the toilets. Members agreed reducing the opening times of the ticket office would impact on elderly and disabled people. They worried there would be no-one there to give guidance and they pointed out a manned station made people feel safer. It was agreed to complete the consultation and oppose the suggested changes.

D-Day 80 Celebrations: The Council had been asked if it was prepared to light a beacon to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6th June 2024. Members agreed to do so.

In Bloom: Cllr Unwin said In Bloom was looking to recruit new members, in particular a chairman as the current chairman was planning to step down at the AGM and the head gardener had also handed his notice in. Cllr Unwin said the gardening group would continue with the planting, weeding, etc. but a new leader was needed as the deputy chairman was not well. She said the group would be putting out a notice on social media saying use it lose it but she admitted it was a tremendous amount of work as it was organising everyone and keeping them in line. Someone with good organisational skills was required. Cllr Unwin said In Bloom was not just about the flowers, it was also the feelgood factor and community benefits it brought to the town. Cllr Ashley suggested approaching the U3A and asking if they had anyone able to take on the chairman's role.

L16 23/24 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12th September 2023.