

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

**Minutes of a meeting held at 2 Park Street, Chatteris, on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs L Ashley (Vice Chairman), V Joyce, S Selman, M Siggee and S Unwin.

**L32 23/24 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Charrier and A Hay.

**L33 23/24 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of the Group**

L28: Graffiti Projects: The Clerk said Debbie King, who ran the youth services, was keen to be involved in the graffiti project and the Clerk had been trying to put her in contact with Peggy Mends at MarketPlace. Sgt Chris Arnold had asked Pc Callum McGarvie if he would consider liaising with Cromwell Community College about the underpass mural. Cllr Selman had pointed out there was a new fund available from FDC, the Changing Views grant, which was giving grants of up to £500 for improvement projects. It was suggested to Cllr Unwin that the grant could be helpful to In Bloom.

Ms King had alerted the Clerk to problems with run offs near the skatepark not being long enough and creating a danger to skatepark users. The Clerk had passed this on to FDC but had received no reply so would send it again copying in Mr Phil Hughes.

L23: Pavement Licence: FDC had agreed to investigate if the paved area under the awning was owned by Highways. If the answer came back negative Miss Prior would not have to apply for a pavement licence as she owned the land.

Dog Control: The Dog Control Public Space Protection Order report had been due to go to FDC cabinet the previous day with a recommendation to continue with the existing Order. The report noted that Chatteris Town Council had requested that dogs should be allowed into cemeteries on a lead. 30% of those surveyed disagreed with dogs being excluded from public spaces but the proposal was to maintain the ban as a majority of those surveyed agreed with it. The Clerk said she had yet to request more bins for dogs' faeces in Lode Way but would do so, Councillors agreed that bins were also needed at Wenny Road and Eastwood.

Map: The production of a new map for the town, with a guide, was nearing completion and the final draft had been run by the Clerk, Cllr Ashley and former councillor Mrs Julie Smith. A couple of small amendments were requested and it was hoped the new map would soon be on display near the library and the old police station.

**L34 23/24 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates**

The Clerk reported that Sgt Arnold had confirmed the police were still patrolling the Pocket Park in an attempt to catch the motorcyclists who were using the park and the Old Railway

Line. The Council's contractors had reported finding an increased number of large nitrous oxide canisters at the park. Sgt Arnold said it was now illegal to possess nitrous oxide that was being wrongfully inhaled and the police would be trying to enforce this new law.

Cllr Siggee said the motorbikes were active every Sunday from 10am to 2pm and Cllr Joyce said the police had been more active in recent weeks.

The Clerk had obtained a quotation from the contractors for preparing the ground and re-seeding areas of the park. Unfortunately, it had come back at £1,800 and there were insufficient funds in the budget so she would be looking for a cheaper solution.

### **L35 23/24 FACT Bus Services**

Members had a copy of the following report:

*“Notes of Meeting with FACT bus driver David Negus, Cllr Linda Ashley and the Clerk held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023.*

#### Stops

David advises cutting out Curf Terrace & Wenny as he never picks up there. He does pick up from Green Park, Swan House, Furrowfields (although he also advises changing it to Chatteris Library), East Park Street, and Huntingdon Road. He suggests adding in Aldi. Popular destinations are Seasons garden centre and Tesco's/B & M.

David's suggestion for a route: From Seasons turn into Blackmill, on to Westbourne and then back to London Road. He also suggested taking in Queensway after Green Park. The idea of taking in Railway Lane (for the roads off), Ash Grove (for Quaker Way & The Grove) and The Elms was also discussed.

It was agreed the Council should look again at the route in view of David's advice and then go back to David, his colleague and FACT with suggestions.

#### Barber Gardens

As a result of running a separate service for Barber Gardens residents, taking them to Tesco's, the service is currently losing 12 noon & 1pm round trips. That might be a problem as the Runner is becoming more popular with B & M open. Taking seats out so a wheelchair can be accommodated is also not ideal.

There are problems with some of the residents, aside from the noise levels and swearing, there is one resident who kicks the driver's chair. It was agreed the drivers should feel safe and it was agreed to ask the manager Vicky to ride on the bus so she can see for herself the problems and to suggest the kicking lad is moved to another seat in the bus.

It was agreed to look at the cost of running a service solely for Barbers Gardens on another day – such as a Thursday.

#### AOB

David not sure of name Chatteris Runner, he suggests Chatteris Town Free Transport Service.”

Members also had a copy of the current timetable and discussed which roads could be included in a new timetable along with those suggested by David. These included Lyons and Salem Courts, Quaker Way and Railway Lane. Cllr Ashley and the Clerk agreed to work on a new timetable and once the route was agreed to plot it on a map which Cllr Siggee offered to display in the telephone kiosk.

Members also discussed the use of the service by Barbers Garden residents and their carers. They agreed the Council had a duty of care to the drivers and someone with authority should be accompanying the residents to modify their language and behaviour. Cllr Siggee said the driver should have the authority to stop the bus and order people off if they misbehaved.

It was agreed to ask if the home had funds to hire the bus themselves on another day to allow the service to continue the specified timetable around the town on Fridays. It was also agreed to write and state the disruption could not continue and if the behaviour and language did not improve the service would be cut as the Council had a duty of care to the drivers, other residents of the town and other motorists.

### **L36 23/24 Old Telephone Kiosk, Other Ideas for Use**

Cllr Siggee had examined the kiosk and had discovered the cables to the box were not live and appeared to have been cut off somewhere in the pavement. He had been advised that the cost of re-connection was likely to be £1,500.

It was possible to put in a defibrillator that did not require electricity and the Clerk was getting another quote for such a device but members agreed it would be better to have power in the box and it was suggested a solar panel on the roof might be a solution. Cllr Unwin said she would ask a representative of a solar company if they could help and it was also suggested it might be possible to get a grant from the Red Tile Wind Farm Trust.

It was agreed to ask the leader of Community Defibrillators for Chatteris if she had a device which could go in the box. Cllr Joyce pointed out there were defibrillators at the Huntingdon Road garage and the leisure centre and it was suggested the kiosk could be used as a noticeboard or by In Bloom but members still favoured it being used for a defibrillator, if possible.

### **L37 23/24 Public Byway Query**

The Council had been approached by the County Councils Definitive Map Officer asking if they had any knowledge of the width of Public Byway 22 (which ran from the end of West Street to Little Acre Fen Drove). The byway did not have a recorded width so the County Council was undertaking an investigation to establish and record the width of the byway.

Members said the byway was wider than most and had become wider over time due to agricultural vehicles accessing farm entrances and fields. Cllr Siggee warned there was a main sewer under the byway.

### **L38 23/24 Any Other Business**

TTOs: Notification had been received of two Temporary Traffic Order applications to allow the installation of new zebra crossings in Bridge Street and East Park Street.

The proposal was for full closures of part of Bridge Street (north of the Pound Road junction to south of Beaufort Drive) and East Park Street for short periods and works under two way lights at other times. The works would be co-ordinated to ensure the roads were not closed at the same time. Diversion routes were included with the application which was for road closures from the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 to the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Letter re: Arts Council Funding: The Clerk had received a copy of a letter from the Chair of the Fenland District Council Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee, Cllr Elisabeth Sennitt Clough sent to the South East Area Director for the Arts Council. Those copied in to the letter included Mr Steve Barclay and Ms Lucy Frazer MPs, the leader and portfolio holder for FDC, the Chief Executive of FDC and the Clerk to March Town Council. The letter set out the work FDC was embarking on in Fenland to engage with culture, arts and heritage sectors. It then went on to criticise the Arts Council funding of Gorilla Circus and Marketplace: Creative People and Places. The letter claimed Gorilla Circus were not visible in Fenland and many councillors and residents had never heard of Marketplace. It also claimed that Marketplace commissioned the same small group of workshop leaders and practitioners, mostly from outside of the Fenland area. The letter suggested someone from the Fenland area would increase uptake and awareness.

The letter said Marketplace should not continue to lead in Fenland and this view was supported by FDC, Wisbech Town Clerk, Whittlesey Town Clerk and March Town Clerk. Cllr Sennitt Clough said Marketplace were not delivering and had not done so for an extensive period of time so continued investment in them was not a good use of public money.

The Clerk said she had not been approached for her views and had she been approached she would not have been able to support the letter as she did not agree with it. Cllrs Selman and Unwin were also fully against the letter pointing out that Marketplace had worked with and supported the Midsummer Festival for many years. In addition, Gorilla Circus had performed at the 2023 Festival. They said Marketplace had been very active in Chatteris and they could give evidence of all the culture and heritage projects they had brought to the town. The group had given valuable advice, guidance and experience.

Initially the Midsummer Festival committee had worked well with Colin from Marketplace, who had helped with the youth club's entry in the parade and had organised various attractions at the Festival including a photo booth. Following Colin's sad passing Peggy had taken up the mantle and had organised arts and crafts activities at the Festival. Following a successful taster session at the Festival a new quilting group had been launched at the KEC which was very successful. Peggy had also directed the Festival committee to other events in the area so they could gather ideas for future festivals. Cllrs Selman and Unwin suggested other towns probably did not put themselves out to actively engage with Marketplace.

It was agreed the Clerk should make these points in a letter to Cllr Sennitt Clough and copy in all those mentioned in the letter.

Cllr Unwin said if funding was available there was a building for sale in Chatteris which would be ideal for an arts centre.

Town Guide: Cllr Unwin asked when the Town Guide would be updated. Cllr Ashley explained it was a lengthy task and would be down to councillors. Cllr Unwin offered to take on the work assisted by Cllr Selman. It was suggested she talk to former councillor Julie Smith about what was involved as she had produced the 2020 guide. The Clerk said the project would need funding and would have to be considered as part of the budget process.

Overgrown: Cllr Joyce said at the junction of Southampton Place and Westbourne Road brambles had overgrown and were blocking the footpath and Cllr Siggee reported a bush needed to be cut back as it was blocking the cut through from London Road to Southampton Place. The Clerk agreed to pass both complaints to the Street Scene Officer. Cllr Unwin reported people were cutting back brambles in Wenny Road.

Roadway: Councillors and the Clerk queried who was installing a new road and footpaths to Huntingdon Road recreation ground as it was obviously a costly exercise and appeared to be an unnecessary expense.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.