Agenda Item

CHATTERIS TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris, on Tuesday 10th June 2025

Present: Cllrs L Ashley, J Fuller-Gray, A Jones, V Joyce and S Unwin.

L1 25/26 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Jones be elected Chairman, seconded by Cllr Joyce and agreed by all.

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Unwin be elected Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed by all.

L2 25/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Hay (who was representing the Council at the Red Tile Wind Farm Trust meeting) and Cllr Selman.

L3 25/26 Chairman of George Clare Surgery PPG, Mr Mike Quinn

Mr Quinn was welcomed to the meeting and explained he was the new Chairman of the George Clare Surgery Patient Participation Group and he handed out copies of the group's constitution and a guide to Patient Participation Groups.

Mr Quinn said he was completely independent from the Practice and had only recently got involved after retiring and moving to Chatteris. He was keen to ensure that the surgery operated at the highest standard.

He said PPG meetings were poorly attended and, until he took over, had been run by the practice. Mr Quinn said he was interested in raising awareness of the PPG so it represented all the patients using the practice. Currently those attending meetings were older males and did not represent the patient population of Chatteris. He was keen to change the demographic and see younger people and families represented. He asked how he could make people more aware of the PPG and Councillors advised drawing up a poster which could be displayed on noticeboards and on social media.

At least 5 patients were needed to make meetings quorate but Mr Quinn said he would prefer to see 12 to 20 people present. One positive was that there was always a practice doctor present at the meetings. He said every practice had to have a PPG whose role was to represent patients' interests.

As manager of the KEC, Cllr Ashley said many groups met at the centre including the U3A, WI, playgroup, diabetes clinics and the All Seasons group for families. She suggested contacting the groups and going along to give a quick talk explaining the work and

importance of the PPG. She also pointed out groups met at the library, Salem Court and the Bricstan Room, while Cllr Unwin suggested linking with Age UK who ran a befriending service. She said the Council had discovered that loneliness and isolation were major problems when they organised their over 75s Christmas party for residents.

Mr Quinn said Chatteris was growing and changing and the practice needed to work in the most productive way possible and understand the views of patients. Better communication was needed so people were aware of what went on. He said it was interesting to note that while the population of Chatteris was growing the number registered at the practice had not increased in the same way, this was a problem as funding was based on the number of patients.

Councillors spoke about the alternatives to the surgery – the 111 service and the Jet team – which had led to less involvement with the practice.

Mr Quinn was keen to hear the views of patients so he could put these to the meeting. Cllr Ashley said a previous chairman had been very good. She had replied to all correspondence and passed on the issues. Mr Quinn said would be asking the practice to let him know of any planned operational changes so the views of the patients could be sought before the changes were brought in.

Cllr Unwin said one problem was having to outline your illnesses at the front desk when everyone could listen in. She suggested setting aside a triage room.

Cllr Unwin also referred to a meeting between the Town Council and the practice manager and doctors, when the manager had closed down many lines of discussion and only seemed interested in throwing facts at councillors.

Councillors pointed out some of the positives and negatives of the surgery. Cllr Unwin said they were good at supporting those with chronic illnesses but the onus was on patients to look after their bodies and weight. Doctors often did not have time to cover more than one problem, although Cllr Joyce had had a different experience. There were concerns that the practice was relying more and more on the pharmacies and 111.

Of particular concern were the problems with the appointments system, which Cllr Joyce described as “diabolical”. Often those ringing in were told that all appointments had gone while those who turned up at the surgery were given an appointment. Cllr Jones said she was frustrated when the phone was put down on her. Mr Quinn said he was concerned by the high turnover of receptionists.

Mr Quinn explained that three doctors owned the surgery and a further 7 were employed at the practice. He was asked if he thought the practice could cope with all the additional patients it was likely to see when all the house building projects were delivered. Mr Quinn believed there might be a need for another practice. Councillors said they had been assured the practice could expand on its present site and Mr Quinn suggested parking might be a problem.

Cllr Joyce was keen to know if the doctors thought they were doing a good job and asked if the manager was employed by the doctors, Mr Quinn confirmed she was. He said there was no organisation chart to give information on who worked at the practice and their roles, so he had requested one and he promised to share it.

Mr Quinn offered to attend future meetings of the leisure group and agreed to return in October, after the next PPG meeting, scheduled for September. He was thanked for attending.

L4 25/26 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of the Group

L64) Mural: The Clerk said there was still funds remaining in the mural account and she asked if councillors wished to see the mural protected in some way. Perspex was considered or lacquer to protect the paint. The Clerk was asked to consult the artist. Cllr Unwin said the mural had so far not been damaged as the youths seemed to be very impressed by it.

L5 25/26 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk reported that members of FLAPP and In Bloom had spent Saturday morning at the park planting out flower beds and Cllr Unwin said she and fellow In Bloom volunteers had also been busy weeding the soft fruit bushes area. The In Bloom judges would be visiting the park. The Clerk said she would chase the contractors as the park had clearly not been cut for a few weeks.

Cllr Joyce asked if there was evidence of motorbikes using the park as he had heard them go by. Cllr Unwin said she had seen a couple on the hill on one occasion. The Clerk said there were no obvious signs of damage or regular visits.

She spoke about the plans to develop the bund by putting in a tunnel and slide, which were being donated by the builders on the Persimmon site. She had also applied to Persimmon for a grant towards the cost of planting.

In addition a member of FLAPP had prepared a large piece of stone so it could take a plaque. The plan was to purchase a memorial plaque to former Mayor Bill Haggata and install the stone on the bund which was known as Bill's Hill. Councillors were in favour of the suggestion.

Cllr Unwin reported that In Bloom volunteers had spent the day tidying, painting and planting up the area outside the former Age UK premises on the corner of Victoria Street and East Park Street. The area had been an eye sore and had lost points for In Bloom in the past on judging days.

L6 25/26 Sportsman/Fairway Playing Fields

The Clerk said she had put the formal request to FDC for the Town Council to take on the playing fields and the request was now going through the consultation process. Cllr Ashley said she had mentioned the project when speaking to the consultants evaluating the CPCA's Growing Fenland project. They had asked if other projects were planned and Cllr Ashley had explained that the hope was to preserve the football field and look into the possibilities of

other sporting activities and a youth centre on the field. Cllr Unwin said the snooker club in town was popular with young people who were using it as a youth club.

L7 25/26 Any Other Business

Planning Application: The Clerk said she believed a planning application had been determined and had, therefore, not sought the views of the Town Council. However, a resident had pointed out it was still to be determined and on checking the Clerk had found it was indeed still pending. As a result she asked for councillors views on the application and it was agreed to make the following comments to FDC:
F/YR25/)258/VOC - Variation of condition 7 (southern access) and removal of condition 16 (LEAP) of planning permission F/YR22/0967/FDL (Erect up to 80 dwellings) at land east of The Elms - *Recommend Refusal. The variation of condition 7 and removal of condition 16 should not be permitted. Councillors are particularly concerned about the removal of the vehicular access to a future link road as the roads leading to the site (St Martins Road, Birch Avenue and The Elms) cannot cope with the additional traffic the development will generate.*

Public Rights of Way Hierarchy: The Clerk had been approached by the County Council about a proposal to introduce a Public Rights of Way Hierarchy. This would cover footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways. The aim was to introduce a system of ranking Public Rights of Way so maintenance activities could be prioritised on the most important routes. A list of the PROWs in Chatteris had been received along with a very small and difficult to read map. The Clerk had requested a much larger map and she asked if anyone was willing to make observations about the routes once the map arrived. In particular the County Council wished to know if the Town Council agreed with the ranking; if it was a priority route for active travel; if it was a priority route for leisure or recreational purposes; if it was unsuitable due to obstructions, poor surface, overgrown vegetation, etc; if it was necessary to walk/ride on a roadside verge or road to access the PROW or to connect PROWs.
Cllr Fuller-Gray said she was happy to answer the questions about the two bridleways identified and Cllr Ashley said her son, a keen runner, was happy to investigate and then comment on the footpaths and byways.

L8 25/26 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15th July 2025.