

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

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

Present: Cllrs A Jones (Chairman), L Ashley, J Fuller-Gray, V Joyce, S Selman and S Unwin. Cllr Daniel Divine, County Councillor for Chatteris.

Apologies: Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A Hay

L22 25/26 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of the Group

L20) London Road Footpath: Cllr Fuller-Gray said another meeting was scheduled with the manager of Seasons Garden Centre and the owner of the nearby Pilates studio had been in touch to say she had a number of people interested in signing the petition. Cllr Fuller-Gray had found an old photograph which appeared to show a previous footpath and she believed she and Cllr Divine had found the remains of it. However, the County Council said they had no records of a footpath in that location. It was suggested looking at old maps to see if they showed a footpath. The Clerk said the Town Council had put forward the idea of applying for an LHI to cover the costs of a new footpath.

Bin: The Clerk also updated members on attempts to get a dog bin at Queensway. The owners of the green at Queensway Clarion had agreed a bin could be installed as long as it did not adversely affect the maintenance of the area. The Street Scene officer had suggested a dual bin to take rubbish and dog mess and this was agreed. The Clerk said she would settle on a suitable location then carry out a survey of residents basically telling them what would happen unless they wished to protest.

L23 25/26 Speaker from the Nature Recovery from the Ground Up Project

Mr Phil Clark, the County Council's Biodiversity Manager, was welcomed to the meeting. The Clerk said she had worked with Mr Clark in the past as he had helped to plan the Pocket Park.

Mr Clark explained that 'Nature Recovery From the Ground Up' was a new project which involved working with parish and town councils and local community groups to help establish projects which local people wanted. The aim was to conserve and enhance local biodiversity and natural habitats such as ponds and meadows.

It was a four-year project funded by the County Council and was concentrated on five cluster areas in the County. Five parishes made up the Fenland cluster, including Chatteris. Under the Nature Recovery Strategy local councils had to agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. Habitat and biodiversity maps were being drawn up and would be helpful to the project, said Mr Clark.

In consultation with groups the County Council would help identify ideas that local people could get involved in and would draw up a bank of projects which could be delivered should future funding become available. Mr Clark explained that the information compiled would help groups to submit successful grant applications.

Among the projects which could be considered would be pond recovery, setting up friends' groups, guided walks, etc.

Mr Clark said the County Council would be working in partnership with Natural Cambridgeshire and the Wildlife Trust.

Cllr Unwin said the Save Wenny Meadow group were likely to need help as about a third of the land at Wenny 'Meadow' was not being developed but would need to be maintained in future. She said In Bloom always won with their biodiversity projects. Cllr Unwin also gave details of nature projects in the schools and suggested contacting the U3A group. Mr Clark said it was important to get young people involved.

Members pointed out that up-to-date surveys of the wildlife and maintenance plans for Meeks Cemetery and the old part of the main cemetery were needed.

Cllr Selman asked if the reservoir project had been considered but Mr Clark said this was beyond the timescale and scope of the project. Mr Clark was hopeful the project would continue after the planned local government reorganisation as environmental duties would still exist.

The Clerk agreed to pass on contact details of any groups who might be interested in the project and to formally register the Council's interest in the project. She asked if the Council could look to work with Somersham Parish Council on making the entire length of the Old Railway Line more accessible with more wildlife corridors.

Mr Clark was thanked for attending the meeting and explaining the project.

L24 25/26 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update

The Clerk had no updates as the next meeting of FLAPP was the following Monday. Cllr Joyce said the problem with motorbikes and scrambler bikes at the park appeared to have abated. Cars were using the drove in the early hours of the morning but not a regular basis. The Clerk said the police could only investigate if it was a persistent problem at a regular time.

L25 25/26 FACT Bus Services Update

The Clerk had received all the figures for the amount of people who had used the Saturday bus to Cambridge and the Friday free bus around Chatteris.

The Cambridge bus was launched in July 2022 and had carried 350 adult passengers and 185 children. After initially running with 2 to 4 people on board it now usually carried 3 to 5

people, although in the past it had carried up to 13. If bookings were low or non-existent the bus did not run and the Council was not charged.

The Friday bus was initially launched in August 2022 and attracted only 1 or 2 people at that time. However, it was re-launched in January 2024 and after starting figures of 6 to 8 people it now usually carried 22 to 25 passengers. In fact numbers had not dropped below 22 since July 2025 and most weeks there were 25 on board.

Cllr Ashley said the Friday bus was very popular, picking up people all over town and taking them to Seasons garden centre, Tesco's, Aldi and even the doctors' surgery. It was a lifeline for many elderly people.

The Clerk then ran through the figures pointing out that the starting pot was £49,993.00 and each journey now cost £200. On the 10th August 2024 the fund stood at £24,142.32 and on 27th September 2025 there was just £10,771.32 left. This meant the services would have to cease in July 2026 unless the Council covered the costs. The only way to do this was to include the costs in the precept. Cllr Selman suggested putting a donation box on the bus to help towards costs.

It was pointed out that there were now alternative methods to get to Cambridge including catching the service bus to Ely and then the train or catching the new Tiger 7 bus to Manea and then getting the train to Cambridge, March or Peterborough.

Councillors agreed that the Cambridge bus should only run until Christmas but were very keen to see the Friday bus continue.

It was **agreed to recommend** to Council that a budget to continue the Friday service was included in the precept calculation (the Financial Officer to confirm the figure which would be required) and the bus to Cambridge should only run until Christmas.

L26 25/26 Any Other Business

Licensing and schemes: The Clerk reminded members of the Statement of Licensing Policy review being undertaken by FDC and ran through the major changes. Members did not wish to comment on the review. They did, however, pick up on the points raised about the Ask for Angela scheme and the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act (commonly known as Martyn's Law). They requested that Ask for Angela posters go up at 14 Church Lane and at the King Edward Centre and asked the Clerk to look into obligations under Martyn's Law, which was soon to become legislation.

White lines: Cllr Joyce reported a resident of West Street had painted his own white lines in front of his house to try and stop motorists parking there. The Clerk agreed to report this to Highways.

L27 25/26 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 18th November 2025

