

**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 January 2025

Present: L Ashley (Vice Chairman), A Jones, S Selman and S Unwin..

L44 24/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs A Hay, V Joyce and M Siggee

L45 24/25 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meetings of Group

L38: Defibrillator: The Clerk confirmed the defibrillator had arrived and was awaiting inspection by the Community Defibrillators for Chatteris co-ordinator before its installation in the telephone kiosk. Cllr Selman said a couple in Wenny Estate were willing to have a defibrillator on their home and she would pass this information to the co-ordinator.

L31: Mural: The artist had stated he hoped to begin work on the mural on the 23rd January. As a result Cllr Unwin had arranged for the portrait of the King to be taken out of the bus shelter and this had been re-positioned on the wall of the museum so it was visible from East Park Street. Cllr Unwin said the F-stop camera group were planning to film the painting of the mural.

L42: George Clare Surgery: Cllr Unwin said she was still waiting for a copy of the George Clare Surgery Patients Participation Group constitution. Cllr Selman said the chairman stated he did not have one as it was being updated. Cllr Unwin was keen to ensure the meetings would not be chaired by the practice manager. She agreed to attend the next meeting of the group on the 16th January.

L46 24/25 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk said she had little to report as the first FLAPP meeting of the year was scheduled for the following Monday. One matter to note was that some newly planted Ash trees had been infected with the Dieback disease and needed to be taken out and replaced with a different species, according to the Council's contractors.

L47 24/25 Consultation on Strengthening The Standards & Conduct Framework for Local Authorities

The Clerk had received, from SLCC and CAPALC, information about a Government consultation seeking views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England.

Members went through the Consultation and answered questions on plans to:

- 1) Introduce a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England.

- 2) Require all principal authorities to convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches and publish the outcomes of formal investigations.
- 3) Introduce the power for all local authorities to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension of the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations.
- 4) Introduce a new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period.
- 5) Have a role for a national body to deal with appeals.

Members welcomed the plans to introduce powers of suspension and disqualification to back up the Code of Conduct.

The group's answers required ratification by the full council before the Clerk completed and submitted the questionnaire online.

L47 24/25 Annual Town Meeting

Following a suggestion at the full Council meeting that the Council should not bother with an annual town meeting, the Clerk had looked into the legislation covering Annual Parish/Town Meetings.

Under the LGA 1972, every English parish had to hold a parish/town meeting between the 1st March and the 1st June each year. The meeting had to be convened by the Chairman/Mayor of the Parish/Town Council, two councillors or six electors. The legislation gave information on who should chair the meeting, notice and time of the meeting, the quorum, decisions and voting. There was also information on polls and how these had to be demanded no later than the end of the meeting. There was no information on what should be on the agenda for the meeting.

It had been agreed at the full council meeting that the meeting should be as short as possible and should not include a presentation. It was, therefore, agreed that the meeting should be scheduled for an hour should include the report of the year from the Clerk, the financial report from the Financial Officer, reports from Councils, reports from organisations and the opportunity for questions from members of the public. The meeting was scheduled for Friday 25th April 2025 at the King Edward Centre.

L48 24/25 VE Day 80th Anniversary Plans

Cllr Unwin confirmed that the Community Choir was happy to sing at any celebrations to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

The Clerk said events would take place on the 8th May and Councils were being encouraged to mark the milestone by:

Flying a unique flag; ringing the church bells at 6.30pm; announcing a VE Day 80 Proclamation (by the Town Crier?) at 9pm; lighting a beacon at 9.30pm and singing 'I Vow to Thee My Country' and other songs.

Cllr Ashley said she was happy to read the Proclamation and it was hoped Cllr Joyce would agree to light the beacon. Cllr Unwin said the choir could sing either side of the Proclamation. The Clerk had enquired if the RBL had any plans to mark the day but had yet to receive a reply.

L49 24/25 Any Other Business

New Bus Service: Notification had been received of a new on demand bus service which had been launched in the Fens, funded by the Combined Authority. Tiger on Demand was being advertised as a new flexible concept for delivering public transport services. Rather than being restricted to travelling along specific routes at specific times, a journey could be booked to and from anywhere within specific travel zone using virtual bus stops. The Clerk said this meant that passengers could book a journey within Fenland (not including Wisbech and Whittlesey) any time Mondays to Saturdays from 6.30am to 7pm but the bus would not take them outside the zone. It was, however, possible to get to both March and Manea rail stations. The cost was just £2 an adult and £1 for those aged 5 to 16 and Tiger Pass Holders. Concessionary Bus Pass holders could travel for free. Cllr Jones was keen to promote the service and it was agreed to forward the details to Cllr Carney and the North Cambs Training Centre.

Lampposts: Cllr Unwin said she was very worried by news that the County Council was replacing street light bulbs with LED bulbs in a bid to save money. She was worried that this might lead to the heritage streetlights in Chatteris town centre being under threat of replacement again. She pointed out the County Council had tried to replace the streetlights several years ago and there had been a fight to keep them as they were integral to the Christmas Lights and the In Bloom displays. This time she was keen to pre-empt any moves by having a plan of action. She suggested that, if necessary, the Town Council should commission a structural report on the lighting columns and consider taking them over with the help of FDC. She pointed out both Christmas Lights and In Bloom were planning to spend a fortune on updating their equipment to make sure it met safety standards and this would be a waste of money if the lampposts were to disappear. She also pointed out the public would be horrified if the displays disappeared because the lampposts could not be used.

The Clerk said it was imperative to initially establish if the heritage lampposts were under threat and she agreed to write to the County Council's lighting strategic projects manager. She pointed out it could be the case that only bulbs were to be replaced, not the lampposts.

L50 24/25 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th February 2025.