

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 19th July 2022

Present: Cllrs A Charrier (Chairman), L Ashley, J Carney, A Gowler, F Newell and J Smith.

L21 22/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs W Haggata and A Hay sent apologies for absence.

L22 22/23 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of Group

L13) Crime Prevention: The Clerk had sent an enquiry to the planning department at FDC asking for guidance on what measures would be allowed to protect the ATMs in the town.

L15) Entrance Signs: Cllr Carney said if councillors were happy with his suggested response to the Highways Officer he would send it along with some examples of other signs. Members agreed it was a brilliant email and should be sent. Cllr Carney said it was interesting to note that a new sign had gone up at Soham which had 7 symbols (pictograms) displayed including those for WCs and fuel pumps.

L15) Covid Caterpillar: The Clerk reported bedding plants had been planted in a bed at the rear of the Covid caterpillar memorial and bark had been installed around the actual caterpillar to suppress the weeds. It was looking very good.

L23 22/23 FACT Bus Services Update

Cllr Charrier said she had been on the maiden voyage to Cambridge and all had gone well with the bus taking just under an hour to make the journey. Unfortunately 3 people had not turned up so the bus was not full as expected. Bookings had already been taken for the next bus (on the 23rd July) and one in August.

The Clerk said FACT would be launching the free bus service to Tesco's in Chatteris on the 5th August and Cllr Charrier agreed to promote both bus services. She also requested regular updates from FACT on the number of people using the buses.

The Clerk had also left a message for both care homes in Chatteris offering two free trips a year on a FACT bus. She was waiting for the homes to get back to her.

L24 22/23 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk said she had received complaints because the mallow weed had taken over at the Pocket Park and had killed most of the grass. The mallow seemed to love the prolonged dry, hot period which was killing other vegetation. Having discussed the problem with the Council's gardening contractors it had been agreed to kill off the mallow in the autumn and re-seed the area again in the winter.

Cllr Smith pointed out all grass had died off at present but would come back again when it rained. She suggested if the mallow was to be killed a very toxic type of spray would be needed and suggested getting expert advice. She also suggested experimenting with just one part of the park before taking drastic action all over. She reminded members that it had been suggested in the past that the area behind the pumping station could be left in a wilder state and cut less often.

The Clerk said she feared the whip trees which had been donated by the Woodland Trust would be dying through a lack of water due to the dry period but the trees donated by Mr Salmon were surviving as he appeared to be regularly watering them. Cllr Ashley said she had a tree to go in along the Old Railway Line but was advised not to plant it until the autumn.

The Clerk had asked the contractors to make the Park look as good as possible for the In Bloom judging but could do little with the pond which was, like many ponds up and down the country, completely dry.

L25 22/23 Community Safety Event

Fenland Community Safety Partnership had notified the Council that they were organising a community safety event to be held in the Vermuyden Room at the Library on the 4th August from 12 noon and 4pm. The officer responsible had asked if the Town Council would like a table at the event which would be giving advice to residents on a number of community safety issues including: policing, scams, rogue trading, cyber-crime, Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, Domestic Abuse and the Bobby Scheme.

Councillors could not think of a reason to have a table at the event but Cllr Carney said he would alert the fire service to it.

L26 22/23 Combined Authority Transport Questionnaire

Members completed a questionnaire on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Whilst Councillors agreed with many of the objectives they pointed out that Chatteris needed a better, more frequent bus service if the Plan's goal to achieve a reduction in road mileage was to be achieved. Direct links to train stations were also needed as was a better walking and cycling infrastructure.

L27 22/23 Any Other Business

Jubilee: The Council had received thanks for taking part in the nationwide beacon lighting ceremony to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the 2nd June.

Cemetery: The Council had received an email complaining about the state of the old part of the cemetery. The complainant's wife had tried to find her grandmothers grave and was disgusted to find it so overgrown with blackberry thorns and overgrown hedges that she could not find the grave. The couple also found it disrespectful that youngsters were using the area

as a play and picnic area. The email called on the Council to make the cemetery more pleasant for those paying their respects to loved ones. The Clerk had pointed out the cemetery was the responsibility of Fenland District Council but asked for comments.

Councillors agreed with the observations and Cllr Ashley added the area was also used for drug taking and this had been reported to the police.

Cllr Smith said FDC's strategy was to let the older part of the cemetery become ragged at the edges and more wildlife friendly but she agreed it had been left to go riot and it would now be difficult to bring it back. Cllr Ashley said Meeks' cemetery was better cared for.

It was agreed to pass the complaint on to Fenland District Council and to ask them to tidy the area.

L28 22/23 Date of Next Meeting

13th or 20th September 2022, to be agreed with the Financial Officer.