

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

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers on Tuesday 13th June 2023

Present: Cllrs L Ashley, A Charrier, J Carney, A Gowler, M Siggee, S Selman and S Unwin.

L1 23/24 Apologies for Absence

Cllr A Hay sent apologies as she was representing the Council at the Red Tile Wind Farm Trust meeting.

L2 23/24 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Cllr Ashley proposed Cllr Charrier as Chairman, seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by all.

Cllr Carney proposed Cllr Ashley as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Gowler and agreed by all.

L3 23/24 FACT Bus Services

Mr Gary Christy, Chairman of FACT, and District Councillor Charlie Marks were welcomed to the meeting.

Cllr Carney explained he had invited along Mr Christy and Cllr Marks as the Chatteris North and Manea Councillors (Cllr Gowler, himself and Cllr Marks) had pledged to look into establishing a shuttle bus between Chatteris and Manea railway station and they hoped to get some ideas for the service.

Mr Christy began by giving an update on the existing town council bus services provided by FACT. He said after a slow start the Chatteris runner was doing very well with 7 people using it in August when it launched and 34 people using it in May. Feedback from users was that they would like to go to Aldi as Tesco did not have a toilet. Members explained the difficulty of Tesco's originally giving the Section 106 funding which was paying for the service but it was agreed the bus could drop off and pick up in Bridge Street.

Mr Christy suggested a meeting to re-plan a route as a few of the current pick up points were never used. The garden centre was a popular destination. He suggested the meeting should also consider the future of the services when the money ran out as it might be possible to approach the Combined Authority about keeping the services going, especially if the numbers of passengers could be used as evidence. Mr Christy also explained that FACT was a not for profit organisation and ran similar services in March and Wisbech.

Mr Christy advised members that numbers for the twice monthly service to Cambridge were dropping and it was agreed to promote that service again. Cllr Selman suggested advertising both services at the Festival. Cllr Gowler asked for the rough costs of each of the services.

The dial a ride service also covered Chatteris, Mr Christy told members, and there were 96 active members in Chatteris and 12 active groups. There was also a dial a car service for wheelchair accessible motors and FACT ran day trips.

Mr Christy said FACT now had a mini bus which had been converted into a mobile community hub which visited the villages and could be used at events. He was asked if the bus could attend the Midsummer Festival.

Mr Christy then explained he was a member of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership and had attended a meeting when rail operators were present and the possibility of a link from Chatteris to Manea railway station was discussed. The bus service would need to tie in with the two hourly train services from Manea.

Mr Christy suggested Cross Country Rail, Chatteris Town Council and FACT should discuss the idea as there was the possibility that the Combined Authority would fund and promote the service. He offered to get an idea of the costs of running such a service. Cllr Marks pointed out the trains ran directly to Cambridge and commuters could then change for services to London and Birmingham. Cllr Ashley said there were plans to open a new station at Addenbrookes and this would be ideal for Chatteris residents who worked at the hospital or had appointments there. Cllr Marks said the service would be particularly popular if the congestion charge was introduced.

Cllr Gowler said Chatteris Town Council could run an opinion survey asking if residents would use the bus and what time they would like the service to start and end. Mr Christy said FACT were happy to run the service at dead times as well as busy times and if it became particularly busy it could go over to the commercial sector. Cllr Marks said people from Manea also needed to get to Chatteris to work and to attend college and it was suggested the service could also call at March town centre. Mr Christy agreed to give costings for the two ideas – a journey between Chatteris and Manea and another incorporating March.

Cllr Gowler suggested putting together a draft questionnaire which could go out in late August/early September. The information would be based on the existing train timetable.

It was suggested Manea residents could also be canvassed for their views on a bus service to Chatteris.

Mr Christy and Cllr Marks were thanked for attending the meeting.

L4 23/24 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of Group

The Clerk reported the last meeting of the group had been in March so there were no matters arising.

L5 23/24 Little Acre Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

A resident of Fairway had reminded members that it had been agreed the Leisure Group would discuss his suggestions for the Little Acre Fen Pocket Park. The suggestions were:

- 1) The Friends of the Park be asked to provide the Council with a plan of what the park would look like in, say, 5-years. In this way there will be clarity about the nature of the park and its future development.
- 2) A feasibility study could be carried out to see if it would be possible to buy, hire or borrow an appropriate Grass Cutting Machine and a grass strimmer. If this was found to be cost effective then the grass could be cut more regularly. It could also be cut before bank and school holidays. Also, for instance, if February was a dry month then the grass could be cut to ensure any weeds are kept under control. I would be pleased to assist with the development of the feasibility study.

The Clerk said she would pass the first suggestion to FLAPP but reminded members that the Financial Officer had advised that volunteers would not be insured to cut the grass and the cost of buying equipment would be prohibitive. The Clerk said there was funding for the contractors to cut the area 8 times a year but the first cut had been late due to the very wet spring. They would be carrying out regular cuts in future.

Members pointed out the pocket park had never been intended as a prim and proper area but as a wilder area for visitors to enjoy the countryside.

Cllr Carney reminded councillors that FLAPP members had met with the resident to listen to his concerns and had gone through their plans for the park and explained that the Council paid contractors to carry out the heavy work with FLAPP tree planting, weeding, etc. but the resident had continued to complain to the council.

It was agreed not to carry out a feasibility study.

The Clerk said she had asked the contractor to complete the works to the Old Railway Line Footpath by the end of June.

L6 23/24 Dog Control Order Consultation

Members ran through the consultation questionnaire on extending FDC's Dog Control Public Space Protection Order for a further 3 years.

Members agreed it should be an offence not to pick up dog faeces and not to put a dog on a lead when asked to by an authorised officer and that fines should be issued and prosecutions undertaken for unpaid fines. They also agreed dogs should be banned from being inside gated childrens play areas but they did not agree to them being banned from cemeteries and churchyards where people were still being laid to rest (providing they were on a lead) and they also disagreed that dogs should be on a lead in a closed cemetery. Members were concerned about the level of dogs' faeces on the streets.

L7 23/24 Wellness Sessions for Older Adults

The Clerk had received an email from Fitness Rush stating the company had been commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to provide tailored wellness interventions for older adults over 65 located in isolated areas throughout Fenland from their mobile fitness

facility. The organiser asked for a meeting and the Clerk had written back to remind him that he had already met with the Leisure Working Group. She also pointed out Councillors had given ideas where the facility could be set up in Chatteris and had asked if he had followed up on any of the ideas. She had not received a reply.

L8 23/24 Fenland Culture Round Table

Members had received copies of a report from the Fenland Culture Round Table meeting and a Fenland Culture Action Plan. The Clerk had attended part of the original meeting, as she did not want Chatteris to miss out, and had found it quite interesting but was now sceptical about how the action plan would be delivered. A further meeting was planned but the Clerk was unable to attend as she would be clearing up after Festival.

Cllr Unwin said it would be helpful for the plan to result in the employment of an officer who could help groups' access grants.

L9 23/24 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

L10 23/24 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 18th July 2023.