

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

Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 11th May 2021

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

L1 21/22 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

L2 21/22 Election of Chairman

Cllr Smith was nominated to continue as Chairman and after persuasion agreed to hold the position for one further year. She was praised for her work as chairman of the group.

L3 21/22 Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Smith proposed Cllr Charrier as Vice Chairman and this was agreed by all. Cllr Carney suggested Cllrs Smith and Charrier worked alongside one another so Cllr Charrier gained the confidence to take over.

Cllr Gowler offered to join the working group and this was welcomed.

L4 21/22 Speakers Adam Garford and Hayley Wynn on the work of Think Communities

Mr Garford and Ms Wynn were welcomed to the meeting. Mr Garford began by explaining they had been in post with Think Communities since February and were part of a small team of connectors working with community groups in Fenland. The project was funded for a year.

Ms Wynn explained that she was the community connector for Fenland and Mr Garford was her manager.

They explained that in the past the County Council had delivered projects with little consultation with people on the ground and the aim was now to consult with the right people and work with partners, including FDC.

An engagement event had already been held (which Cllr Smith attended) which resulted in an action plan for some key projects and Mr Garford said he was keen to see these delivered. Mr Garford was anxious to work with communities who were keen to drive forward projects and had been impressed when Cllr Smith contacted him shortly after the engagement event.

The 8 area priorities across the county were:

- 1) Covid vaccination take-up and lateral flow testing.
- 2) Support for Carers.

- 3) Support for Older People, particularly those with social rather than medical needs.
- 4) Increasing take up of technology to try and keep people in their own homes.
- 5) Support for children and adolescents.
- 6) Tackling food and fuel poverty.
- 7) Improving social mobility.
- 8) Engaging with communities to identify issues within those communities.

One of the projects being considered under 8) was creating a waymarked trail from Chatteris to Somersham.

Cllr Haggata asked if people within communities were encouraged to deliver projects or whether Think Communities had access to funding to deliver those projects. Mr Garford said the project did not have a physical budget but would help to find key contacts in the community to lead a project and would help with funding applications. There was a need to ensure any project was sustainable.

Following requests from Councillors, Mr Garford and Ms Wynn outlined their work on the first priority, explaining how they identified and targeted groups with low take up rates for the vaccination. Mr Garford offered to circulate the figures for Chatteris.

On point 8) Cllr Smith explained that prior to Covid the Council had organised a meeting and met with representatives of voluntary groups in the town and they appeared to be OK. During Covid people had become more aware and appreciative of open and green spaces in Chatteris and walking had become a part of daily routines so any improvements to walking and cycling routes would be appreciated.

Mr Garford agreed it was a good time for such projects as there were funds available. He had spoken to the County green spaces manager Mr Philip Clarke about continuing the made up surface of the Old Railway Line footpath from Chatteris to Somersham along with making it a waymarked path with information boards. It was suggested a walk could be organised with Somersham Parish Councillors.

Cllr Carney said he had organised such a walk 10 years ago and 20 to 30 people took part. The idea had been to try and form a friends group but that had not happened.

Cllr Smith said the Council had tried to secure funding to extend the made up surface of the footpath as far as Somersham so walkers could access their nature reserve but the application had been unsuccessful and Somersham Parish Council had been against the idea. The Clerk said she had a quotation to extend the path as far as the Pocket Park and the cost was £24,000. The Town Council had money set aside for the project. Mr Garford suggested the Town Council's funds could be used to attract a bigger pot of money and Cllr Smith said the Town Council would appreciate help with this.

Mr Garford said Think Communities had an Outreach Bus which could be used at an event to promote the footpath, etc.

Cllr Haggata suggested Mr Garford and Ms Wynn could approach Somersham Parish Council to try and excite them with idea of extending the footpath and Mr Garford agreed to approach them.

Cllr Haggata also alerted to the visitors to the existence of a sub-group of the Fenland Transport group which was looking at cycling and walking and suggested it would also be useful to approach this group. Mr Garford said he could provide evidence that cycling and walking routes were required.

Ms Wynn said she had been informed by Living Sport that there were pots of money which could be applied for and she asked if running had been considered. She was informed that there were cycling, running and walking groups in Chatteris.

Cllr Smith said the Clerk had attended a meeting organised by Support Fenland, which appeared to have similar aims to Think Communities, and she asked if there was a difference. Mr Garford confirmed there was a difference and said the two groups would soon be meeting. The Clerk said following the Support Fenland meeting she had met with Ms Kerrie Tonks who was setting up a group to co-ordinate youth activities in the town

Cllr Smith stressed it was important for all the groups to talk to one another and more importantly for people in the town to know what was happening. She said help with funding applications would be gratefully received.

(Cllr Benney joined the meeting at this point).

It was agreed to organise a walk along the Old Railway Line and a public engagement event. Mr Garford agreed to contact Somersham Parish Council. In return he asked for contact details of the FDC access group and the walking, running and cycling groups and information on why previous applications to improve the Old Railway Line had failed.

L5 21/22 FDC Update

The following report had been received from Mr Simon Bell:

‘Back to normal for a fully-staffed Tivoli team and despite wet weather in early March the first cuts were all made on time with minimum fuss or disruption. Cemeteries have benefited and the better weather later in the month saw them looking close to their best. Inevitably, in such a crazy past year, there has been almost no rain in April, along with regular overnight frost. As a result, the Tivoli bowser can be seen adding water to some areas that require a bit of a helping hand.

Play areas remain open, despite the Covid restrictions, although closure will take place quickly if circumstances change. Inspections have continued to take place weekly throughout the pandemic. All play areas in the district were inspected by ROSPA in March 2021 (some 900 pieces of equipment) with only one high risk fault identified – resolved same day

Arrangements to install the memorial rock in St Peters Church gardens are in progress with the location determined. Delivery and final installation will take place in May. Other scheduled works

include tree clearance in Meeks Cemetery, boundary protection Birch Close, slab and fence repair Hunters Close, and basket swing replacement Huntingdon Rd play area.

Elsewhere in the town work completed includes:

- St Peters Church – bench refurbishment
- Chatteris LC – perimeter bramble clearance (car park)
- Zip wire in play area (Wenny Rec) – new and relocated
- Hedge clearance Wenny Rec
- New bench Wenny Rec
- New Road perimeter fence clearance
- Planters (3-tier) taken to Doddington Nursery on behalf of CIB
- Grave clearance New Road
- Tree lopping – play area Wenny Rec
- Drains jetted New Road cemetery
- Wenny Rec play area – fence repair
- St Pauls play area – bramble clearance'

L6 21/22 Any Matters Arising from Last Meeting of Group

L68 NHS Day: The Clerk had been contacted by a representative of the Masonic Lodge in Chatteris asking if the Council was planning anything to mark the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day on the 5th July as the Lodge was planning to support the initiative. In view of the email the Clerk asked if members wished to change their minds or stick with the planned low key approach. Members agreed to keep it low key and simply mention how the day would be marked nationally on the Council website and Facebook pages.

L7 21/22 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Update

Cllr Smith updated members on progress at the pocket park – more gravel had been added to the dry pond and work had begun on the wildflower patch. Cllr Carney said there was a trickle of people joining the FLAPP Facebook page and continuing interest in the park. It was suggested the FLAPP Facebook page should be linked to the footpaths page run by Cllr Gowler.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the Clerk said she had received a quotation to extend the made up footpath along the Old Railway Line to the entrance to the Pocket Park and to repair the existing footpath. The quotation was for £24,064 plus VAT. Two further quotes would be needed.

Cllrs Smith and Gowler were keen to see if the representatives of Think Communities could help to gain extra funds to carry out work along the Old Railway Line by using the Council's existing funds as match funding. The Clerk said she hoped the footpath work would be

completed before the winter. It was agreed she should seek the two additional quotes required.

L8 21/22 Sculpture Trail

Cllr Smith said she now realised that several of the sculptures planned to be included in the trail were in need sprucing up which required investment so there were problems with the trail. She was not keen to launch the trail until everything was looking good.

As part of their Britain in Bloom entry Chatteris In Bloom were organising a plant pot men competition and Cllr Gowler suggested the Council should be helping to advertise the contest.

L9 21/22 Caterpillar Trail

Cllrs Smith and Carney reported that the plans to use the caterpillar trail of stones painted during the Covid pandemic for a permanent memorial appeared to have ground to a halt. The organiser was not responding to messages and it looked likely it would not be ready for Britain in Bloom.

L10 21/22 Any Other Business

Training Centre: The Clerk had received an email from the FDC officer working on the planning application for a proposed training centre at Stainless Metalcraft. The officer explained the only technical matters outstanding were the access arrangement and any associated highway improvements likely to be required at the Huntingdon Road roundabout. It was expected a suitable scheme would soon be secured so approval for the plan could be issued. As the scheme was reliant on funding from the CPCA timing of delivery was critical and there would not be time for further consultation on the access and highway details. The Town Council would be notified once a decision had been issued but the officer was seeking confirmation from the Town Council that they had no objections to the plan proceeding without further consultation. Members agreed they had no objections to the proposed course of action but did request consideration be given to the provision of a safe crossing over the A141.

Combined Authority: Following the change of administration at the Combined Authority and the election of a new Mayor, Dr Nik Johnson, it was suggested the Council should write to Dr Johnson welcoming him and mentioning the Growing Fenland project and the Council's aspirations for Chatteris in the hope that schemes in the pipeline would be honoured.

L11 21/22 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15th June 2021.

