

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

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Chambers, 14 Church Lane, Chatteris, on Tuesday 12th November 2024

Present: V Joyce (Chairman), L Ashley, A Hay, A Jones (formerly Charrier), S Selman and S Unwin..

L37 24/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr M Siggee.

L38 24/25 Any Matters Arising from the Last Meeting of Group

L31) Defibrillator: The Clerk confirmed she had ordered the defibrillator for the old telephone kiosk and Mrs Rosemarie Croucher had kindly agreed to be the guardian of the defibrillator on the understanding that the Council paid to replace pads, etc.

Cllr Selman said all the defibrillators were being shown on a map in the new town guide and this had shown the lack of a defibrillator at Wenny and Furrowfields. Cllr Unwin was approaching someone who lived at Wenny to see if they would have a defibrillator on their home and it was hoped that when FDC arranged for an electrical connection at Furrowfields Recreation Ground (to help with Festival costs) there would be the opportunity to site another defibrillator there.

L39 24/25 Little Acre Fen Pocket Park & Old Railway Line Updates

The Clerk said the contractors were continuing to cut the park as the grass and weeds were still growing. They had also identified the need to replace two of the benches along the Old Railway Line Footpath as they were rotting. The Clerk would check with the Financial Officer that there were funds available to pay for the benches and members were in agreement that they should be replaced.

Plans for an unveiling ceremony for the new memorial plaques next to former councillors Florence Newell and Rosemary Stimson's trees were discussed. It was agreed to invite both families, serving councillors and former councillors to the ceremony on a Saturday morning, along with Mr Carl Flippance who had engraved the stones. The agreed date was the 23rd November at 10.30am. Cllr Selman offered to make a flask of mulled wine for the occasion and Cllr Unwin was asked to make a speech as she had worked most closely with both councillors. The Mayor would also say a few words. It was agreed to ask the press to cover the occasion or ask a local photographer to record the event.

L40 24/25 Remote Attendance at Meetings and Proxy Voting Consultation

The Council had been asked to reply to a Government consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings, including town and parish council meetings.

Members went through the questions posed in the consultation and agreed the following:

- 1) In general they did not agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities power to allow remote attendance at formal meetings.
- 2) They did, however, agree that members should only be able to attend council meetings remotely in exceptional circumstances, such as those who were medically unable to attend, or for reasons of local or national emergencies.
- 3) Those present did not believe they would seek to attend council meetings remotely and thought that less than 10% of the Council would be likely to seek to attend council meetings remotely over the course of a year.
- 4) On what limitations there should be on the number of meetings councils should be able to hold remotely, members agreed that councils should only have the flexibility to change a meeting from in-person to on-line, or vice versa, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances.
- 5) Members were asked to tick a number of statements about why remote attendance should or should not be considered.
On should be considered they only ticked the statement:
Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance.
On should not be considered they ticked:
 - i) Councillors should be physically present at all formal meetings
 - ii) It could lead to a significant number of councillors habitually attending remotely and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of councils.
 - iii) It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings.
- 6) They felt that remote attendance would neither benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics.

On the Proxy voting question, members agreed they did not consider it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting and could think of no circumstances in which proxy voting would be appropriate as members were encouraged to make decisions after listening to both sides of an argument.

All answers to be ratified by the full council before submission.

L41 24/25 Section 106 Shopping List

Members were given a copy of the existing Section 106 shopping list and were asked if they wished to amend the list.

It was agreed the new list (a guide for developers and those creating the new reservoir) should be:

A footpath from the North Cambs Training Centre along the A141 Fenland Way to link up with the existing footpath to Tesco's and the underpass.

A cycleway between Chatteris and Sutton.

An outdoor gym for adults either located on a new development or at Hunters Close.

The provision of more football facilities in the town.

More CCTV cameras - covering all footpath/cycleway approaches to the reservoir, at Furrowfields Recreation Ground and at the Pocket Park.

New interpretation boards in the town.

A solar-powered, ornamental water feature.

More benches in the town, in particular a suitable bench for the land at the Old Auction Yard.

The new list to be ratified by the full Council.

Cllr Unwin was concerned by the reports of how much the football club was being charged to use the All Weather Pitches. She pointed out the Town Council and the Football Foundation paid for the facility and the aim was to provide an affordable facility for the town, particularly the youths. She said youth teams from Chatteris should be paying less than others. Cllr Joyce said the pitches were in continual use at weekends and evenings and the school used them during the day. It was agreed the Clerk should write to the school and enquire about the pricing structure for town clubs and point out the Council's original contribution. She said the school had agreed to replace the pitches when needed and had to build a replacement levy into the fees.

L42 24/25 Any Other Business

Victoria Cross: Cllr Unwin said a large Victoria Cross had been acquired by a member of the Harrison family and was now in the museum.

VE Day: The Clerk asked if members wished to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day on the 8th May 2025 by lighting the beacon. Members agreed it would be a good idea and asked Cllr Joyce if he was willing to light the beacon again. They also agreed to enquire if the Royal British Legion had any plans to mark the occasion and Cllr Unwin said the Community Choir might be prepared to sing at the lighting ceremony.

George Clare Surgery: Cllr Joyce reported that he had that day attempted to get a doctors' appointment for his grandson and had rung only to receive the message that all appointments for the next 9 days were booked. However, when he attended the surgery in person he was given an appointment for the following day.

Cllr Joyce was keen for the issue to be raised at the next meeting of the Patients Participation group or for a follow-up meeting with the surgery representatives to see how the new booking system was going.

Cllr Unwin said she was willing to attend the meetings as another representative of the Council but was still waiting for a copy of the constitution and the date of the next meeting. The Clerk said she would contact the surgery.

L43 24/25 Date of Next Meeting

Either the 14th or 21st January 2025. It was agreed to invite Mr Stephen Buttriss from the North Cambs Training Centre to attend the meeting and speak about the centre.