

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 2ND JUNE 2015
COMMENCING AT 7.45 PM

Present: Cllr M Brennan - Chairman
Cllr Mrs N Miah - Vice Chairman

Cllr Mrs D V Bulley Cllr M McBride - ex officio
Cllr R Crapper Cllr D Melvin
Cllr Mrs C Delaney Cllr Mrs C Wilson
Cllr Mrs L Little

Apologies: Cllr R Brooks
Cllr Mrs J Smith

Officer: Teresa Whitford

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr M Brennan was elected Chairman for the forthcoming year.

2 ELECTION OF VICE- CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs N Miah was elected Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 April 2015, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5 CARTERTON MARKET

Cllr McBride raised concerns on three of the items the market traders wanted added to the new Agreement. These were:

- i) Clause for rent reviews based on footfall – Cllr McBride could not think of a suitable system that could be employed to accurately monitor fluctuations in footfall so felt this item was untenable
- ii) That the Manager and Assistant Manager take a proportion of the rent collected for petrol – Cllr McBride felt it would be more suitable to agree a set amount for petrol.
- iii) The Council must recognise the rules of the National Farmers Union – Cllr McBride suggested the Council obtain a copy of the NFU Rules for the Committee to see.

After much discussion the Committee voted to omit these three items from the Agreement. They will however propose an amount of £5 per week to the Market Managers for petrol

expenses and try to obtain a copy of the National Farmers Union regulations to ensure there is no conflict of interests.

Cllr Mrs Little stressed to the Committee that the market is not thriving in its new position and felt it prudent to implement the previously agreed 3 month rent free period immediately to help growth. Cllr Mrs Miah agreed but wished to point out it is ultimately the market's own responsibility to increase their business. Cllr Crapper felt more attention could be drawn to the market with the use of large permanent signs advertising its location on major routes into the town.

6 SEATING AROUND CARTERTON

Although the report had initially only highlighted 6 benches for replacement, the overall feeling of the Committee was that all seating should be inspected and replaced where necessary. The Officer was tasked with producing a list of all our seats and their locations for the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that the alternative material suggested in the report was a viable option due to its comparable cost effectiveness against wood and APPROVED the purchase of six new benches plus one extra for Willow Meadows, for the locations highlighted in the report. They concurred that the style of the new benches should be individually chosen for their suitability at each location and this would be left to the Officer to decide.

The Officer was also tasked with investigating if discounts were available if larger quantities of seats were purchased.

7 PARQUET FLOORING FOR THE TOWN HALL

The Committee all agreed the parquet floor was in a poor state and a total refurbishment was needed.

It was RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL that Oxfordshire Wood Flooring be asked to update the floor at a cost of £1,150 + VAT, and the Committee agreed on the Bona Naturale finish which lightens the floor in colour, which is a more natural finish.

Cllr Mrs Bulley wanted it noted that once the floor was repaired, the cleaner/caretaker should be made aware that it must not be cleaned with water. Only the products supplied by Oxfordshire Wood Flooring should be used.

Cllr Brennan asked the Officer to investigate possible solutions to stop the tables and chairs from damaging the floor.

8 CARTER'S WALK – THE SCULPTURES

Cllr Mrs Little informed the Committee that she had attended a meeting earlier in the day with Heather McCulloch from WODC to discuss the sculptures, as since their installation they have attracted seemingly more criticism than praise. Notes of this meeting are attached at Annex A.

Cllr Mrs Miah firmly believes the criticism is because residents are under the impression that they were paid for by the tax payer. She felt publicising the fact they were purchased through funding would ease the situation.

Cllr Mrs Little relayed examples of complaints that she had received or heard around the town and Cllr McBride told the Committee he had undertaken a small unofficial poll of the younger

generation to satisfy himself it was not only older residents that found them unpleasant to look at. He concluded that the youth did not like them either.

There was discussion on how and why such controversial pieces were chosen in the first place but it did not help with the current situation. Cllr McBride suggested that before talk of moving them was entered into, perhaps it would be prudent to wait until the refurbishment of Carters Walk was complete. It may improve the overall appearance and quell further complaints. Cllr Mrs Little added that they could not be moved at this time anyway as they had not yet been adopted from WODC.

9 BALDWIN MEWS

The Officer informed the Committee that she had investigated the previous attempt by the Council in 2013 to have Baldwin Mews adopted by Oxfordshire County Council Highways. The last correspondence was a letter asking OCC to come and inspect Baldwin Mews for its suitability to be adopted. The Officer had contacted OCC to ask if they had any further information as to how this matter was left and was told that an email was sent on 17th January 2013 stating:

“Classic Development will need to confirm in writing to the County Council that they would like to offer the site for adoption. We will not consult or carry out any site inspections until this time.”

The Officer also informed the Committee that there was a strong possibility that County Council Highways would never adopt Baldwin Mews due to the road construction of bricks as opposed to tarmac or concrete.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that, as the Town Council is still responsible for the two buildings at the end of Baldwin Mews (Squash Club and Scout Hall) and therefore has an obligation to the users of these facilities, the matter should be left in abeyance at the present time.

The Meeting finished at 9.00pm

Chairman

7 July 2015

Notes of the Meeting to discuss Carters Walk, held on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 at 11.30am at the Town Hall

Present

Lynn Little, Heather McCulloch, Teresa Whitford

Declarations of Interest

None

Heather gave a brief explanation on the history of the Carters Walk development plan.

WODC had £20,000 left from the North East Development 106 money for Public Art. They approached Carterton Town Council who expressed their wishes to use it in the town centre. The Town Team took on the project and had the idea to develop an identity for Carters Walk. A working group which consisted of all the traders along the alley and three local residents (to ensure they were consulted at every step) was also set up. So the Town Council, the Town Team and the Working Group all did their best at the time with the knowledge they had to improve the look of the alley.

It was agreed that due to unforeseen circumstances the project has not yet been completed but this should happen within the next 3 months and will go a long way in softening the stronger public views of the area.

Lynn expressed concerns from members of the public regarding Health and Safety issues. There had been concerns that some of the edges on the statues were sharp and could cut passers by and that the foot on the Mr Carter statue was too prominent and caused a trip hazard. Heather assured Lynn that Health and Safety had been considered throughout the process including a risk assessment. Every part of the sculptures was looked at closely and smoothed down but clearly if there have been sharp edges found then we should investigate and take advice from Godfrey Phillips. There are no official reported accidents at this time involving these structures. The artist (Godfrey Philips) also visits Carters Walk every month to check them both over and reports back to the Town Council if he finds any problems.

Lynn had also received a bad reviews from a shop owner who felt the sculptures were one of a number of issues affecting business in the town. He believed that the sculptures were detrimental to his trade because they were 'blocking' the footfall. Heather informed Lynn that very strict measurements set by OCC Highways department were adhered to and that there is the legal requirement of space all round the sculptures for access.

Heather highlighted that most projects will receive a certain amount of negative views, such is human behaviour, and this artwork is a particularly bold statement which will have the "Marmite" effect. Heather said that traders in Carters Walk itself are not reporting any issues of accidents or that the structures have had a negative impact on business. They do however receive very mixed views from the public. She feels the situation can be dealt with in a proactive manner to assure all concerned of a positive outcome. She will arrange a meeting as soon as possible with Godfrey, Lynn, Teresa and herself to go along and thoroughly look at the statues and discuss options.