

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL
ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015
COMMENCING AT 7.45 PM

Present: Cllr Mrs L Little - Town Mayor
Cllr M McBride - Deputy Mayor

Cllr M Brennan Cllr D Melvin
Cllr R Brooks Cllr Mrs N Miah
Cllr Mrs D V Bulley Cllr P Scott
Cllr Miss S Coul Cllr Mrs S Scott-Stovold
Cllr R Crapper Cllr M Steward
Cllr N Leverton Cllr Mrs C Wilson
Cllr Mrs M Mead

Apologies: Cllr Mrs C Delaney
Cllr P J Handley - Oxfordshire County Council

Officers: Mr Ron Spurs - Town Clerk
Mrs Tan Marchant - Assistant Clerk

In attendance: Cllr N Owen - Oxfordshire County Council
3 members of the public

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Little declared an interest in Cheque Nos 11489 and 11503 and Cllr Mrs Scott-Stovold in Cheque Nos 11488 and 11491.

66 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 September 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

67 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had been invited to the Chamber of Trade breakfast meeting at The Beehive where she had talked to new businesses and discussed Shop Carterton. She had attended a reception at the end of September at RAF Brize Norton, hosted by the Station Commander, to thank all the Repatriation volunteers. That evening she went to the Witney TV studio with Cllr Mrs Scott-Stovold to promote the Shop Carterton event and local businesses. The Mayor said she had attended the Age UK Information Fair at the Town Hall, which included various support organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Lights Up. The Chamber of Trade Shop Carterton event had been very successful and the 'Shop Carterton' bags very popular. Feedback had indicated that the event had increased trade in the town on the day. The Mayor gave her thanks to Cllr Mrs Scott-Stovold and Cllr Steward for their help, to Denise for dealing with refreshments, and to all the Councillors who came to give their support.

The Mayor had hosted a Cheese and Wine Evening at the Town Hall on 7 October to welcome the new Town Clerk, and she had attended a Church Service in Thame. She had been invited

to the BFBS Radio studio to talk about strengthening links within the community. Finally, the Mayor had sadly attended the Repatriation of Flt Lt Scott and Flt Lt Roberts on 20th October.

68 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

The members of the public present did not wish to speak.

69 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE ISSUES

Cllr Owen gave apologies for Cllr Handley, who was at another meeting this evening. He reported that today is the first step of the OCC budget process which will be presented in February next year. There is the possibility that they may withdraw funding for staffing at the Carterton Children's Centre. Cllr Owen assured Council that he and Cllr Handley will do all they can to support the Centre and stop this from happening. He said that the Community Safety Centre is not proceeding and he and Cllr Handley will organise a meeting with the relevant bodies, together with town councillors, to push things along. He had a recent meeting with the RAF and they can possibly offer money to help with local services.

Cllr Mrs Bulley asked if there would be any cuts to the County Music Service. Cllr Owen said it is uncertain at the moment whether the Service will suffer cuts, but did say it would be one of the services under consideration. He said, however, that theatres, museums and youth theatres in general are more likely to be under threat than music. Cllr Owen said that electronic bus signs and similar refinements are likely to go, but it is the core services such as the children, the elderly and day centres which will suffer the most.

Cllr Scott asked if he could chase up with the Highways Officer the state of the roads on the Carterton South Industrial Estate. Cllr Leverton asked if there was a definitive statement about the married quarters at Reema North and Reema Central, and the Mayor responded that the 200 homes at Reema North will commence in January. Reema Central is uncertain.

Cllr Owen was thanked for his report.

70 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk gave a verbal report on various current issues and a written record of these can be found at Annex A. A number of additional queries were raised by Councillors and the Clerk responded that these were all in hand.

71 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 15th September and 6th October 2015, previously circulated, were noted.

72 AMENITIES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on 6th October 2015 had been previously circulated.

Cllr Brennan referred to the comment made by Mr Wesson at the last meeting concerning the bin in Carter's Walk and said that there are plans to replace bins around the town and this could include the provision of two bins in Carter's Walk. In regard to the memorial bench at the cemetery, the Clerk said he had contacted the family but had not yet received a response.

The Minutes of the Amenities Committee were NOTED.

73 EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Events Sub-Committee Meetings held on 9th and 30th September 2015. These were NOTED.

74 EXTERNAL AUDIT

- (a) To receive and approve the Annual Return. Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the Annual Return as presented.
- (b) To receive and approve the Issues Arising Report. The External Auditor had raised four issues in the Issues Arising Report. The Clerk went through the issues in turn and the Assistant Clerk answered Councillors' questions about the Report. Council then RESOLVED to APPROVE the Issues Arising Report and to ensure that the issues therein are addressed in the future.

Cllr Brennan asked that it be minuted that Tan be thanked for all her efforts with the finances over the last ten months or so under difficult circumstances.

75 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Council had received two applications for grant funding under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 from West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau and from Clean Slate. Council questioned when the West Oxfordshire CAB had last received a grant from the Council and the Assistant Clerk said that she would investigate.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a grant of £1,000 to the West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau, conditional on it being 12 months since the last grant had been awarded.

The application from Clean Slate, a charity working in Oxfordshire dealing with male and female victims of abuse, was discussed. The charity will hold sessions at the Broadshires Health Centre in Carterton for an initial period of 6 months with a view to extending the service if successful. Council asked the Clerk to make further enquiries about the charity's activities and long-term plans and a decision was deferred until the next meeting

76 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Financial Statement to 30 September 2015, set out at Annex B, was APPROVED. Detailed Income & Expenditure to 30 September 2015 was also APPROVED. Councillors raised a number of queries which were answered by the Assistant Clerk.

77 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Accounts for Payment for October 2015, set out at Annex C, had previously been circulated. Councillors raised a number of queries in respect of the Masterplan Final Report, an overspend on grass cutting and whether this could be vired from another budget head, and expenditure on the Shop Carterton Day. These were answered by the Mayor and the Assistant Clerk. Council then RESOLVED that the Accounts be APPROVED for payment.

Debit card transactions for September 2015, set out at Annex D, were NOTED.

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

17 November 2015

Town Mayor

- 1 **Procurement Policy** –I have prepared a Draft Procurement Strategy for Council which will initially go to the Amenities Committee for consideration. The report will recommend that instead of having to obtain 3 quotes for each small piece of work, preferred contractors are adopted by Council. The report will not recommend any changes to financial authorisation levels. **Noted.**
- 2 **Staff Appraisals** – A staff appraisal process has been initiated and completed for the financial year ending 31st March 2015. Each member of staff has been set objectives. The Clerk will review Job Descriptions and responsibilities in the near future in consultation with the staff members concerned. **Noted.**
- 3 **Reports for committees** – I have introduced a new format for reports which is slightly more formal than the previous method. A copy of the template will be circulated. The reason for the new format is to ensure that the decision making process, the financial aspects and the risks of each report are fully reported and considered. All requests for reports must go through the Clerk. **Noted.**
- 4 **Town Centre Projects** – You may have seen me wandering around the town with a camera, a note book and Teresa studiously looking at our town centre furniture. The first stage of the improvement plan is to ensure that our contractors fulfil their contractual obligations (I have met with the UBICO manager and reminded him of this) and you will have seen some work being carried out by UBICO in the town centre as a result of Teresa and I chasing them. The second stage of the project is to prepare a fully costed report for Amenities and then for Council which will essentially be a project- scoping document focussing on benches, finger posts, bins, road signs hanging baskets and the Market Square which will be submitted to full Council hopefully in January (depending on quotes etc). This will involve a considerable financial investment. **Noted.**
- 5 **WODC Planning Policy** - I have met with Mr Chris Hargreaves, the Head of Planning Policy at WODC. I fully explained to him the concerns the Council had relating to planning issues, both large and small, in and around Carterton. He agreed to come and discuss those issues with full Council in November. **Noted.**
- 6 **Solar Panels** - Cllr Miss Coul raised the possibility of Council buildings being powered by Solar Panels. I am undertaking some work regarding this and a report will go before Amenities when completed. **Noted.**
- 7 **Town Centre junction** - This week I will be meeting with Odele Payne from OCC Highways to discuss how the town centre crossroads can be improved. **Noted.**