

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING
ON TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021
COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

Present: Cllr N Leverton – Chairman
Cllr J Bull - Vice-Chairman

Cllr S Baylis Cllr L Little
Cllr C Cook Cllr M McBride
Cllr R Crapper Cllr M Mead
Cllr M Crossland Cllr J Sangster
Cllr P Handley Cllr D Wesson
Cllr C James Cllr K Wood

Apologies: Cllr E Hatton

In attendance: Cllr N Field-Johnson (County Councillor)
Members of the public

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Katie Zasada

142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wood - Item Payments relating to Allotments (Committee Member and allotment holder).

143 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2021, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

144 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 January 2021, which were Noted.

145 AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities and Economic Regeneration Committee held on 7 February 2021. The Committee recommended the following items for approval:

- (a) Tree Planting Project - the first phase of the project to plant approximately 33 trees along Brize Norton Road from the crossroads to the Iron Bridge.
- (b) Queen Mother's Garden - maintenance work to the trees surrounding the Rose Bed.
- (c) Town Hall Lighting - replace the current lighting in the building with LED lighting.

A vote was taken and Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the above items in the Minutes. Cllr Baylis and Cllr Little abstained.

146 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

A large number of members of the public attended the meeting. The Chairman informed the members of the public that a maximum of five people would be able to speak for three minutes each on items on the Agenda. He declared an emergency Motion, seconded by Cllr Bull, that members of the public not abiding by these rules would be removed from the meeting. A vote was taken with the majority in favour and the Motion was carried.

Linda Moore wished to comment on two items. Firstly, she congratulated Cllr Baylis on her hard work on the new Carterton Community Bus Service, which is a great achievement of much benefit to the town. Secondly, she found that the cost of the tree planting project was very high and asked what other quotes had been obtained for this work and who would be responsible for replacing the trees if they were damaged or vandalised.

Harry Watts wished to speak on an item that was not on the Agenda and was therefore removed from the meeting.

Sue James wished to speak about Carterton Celebrates Week 2021, which would run from Saturday 17 July until Sunday 25 July. A successful week had been held last year despite the Covid restrictions, which included a community litterpick, mobile police station drop-in, local business market, virtual princess storytime, car boot sale, eight charity driveway sales, virtual workouts, 22 local business offers, shop window displays, town treasure trail and a display of childrens' artwork celebrating the town. Fantastic publicity had been received in the Witney Gazette and Oxford Mail promoting Carterton in a very positive light. A week-long programme of events and activities would be planned for this year showcasing everything Carterton has to offer. They would initially look at planning events that could go ahead with Covid restrictions in place, followed by events that could take place as restrictions were lifted. She had been disappointed not to receive feedback from the Town Council following last year's Carterton Celebrates Week and hoped that Councillors would attend and support as many events as they could this year. She invited members of the Council and the public to join their Committee, who could be contacted by email at cartertoncelebrates@gmail.com and they looked forward to organising another successful Week.

Debra Courtenay-Crane, Managing Director of Carterton Gymnastics Club CIC (Community Interest Company) spoke on Item 154. The Vault is due to open, Covid permitting, at its new venue on West Oxfordshire Retail Business Park on 22 March 2021. They had received a huge amount of support from the local community, volunteers and local businesses. She was extremely proud to be awarded a British Empire Medal this year for her community work in Carterton and wished to continue to support the community at The Vault. She would install a Bell at The Vault that could be rung by members of the public to mark an achievement they had made and hoped the Council would support this venture.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their contributions.

147 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

(a) Cllr Field-Johnson – Burford and North Carterton. Cllr Field-Johnson's report had been circulated to Councillors prior to this meeting, which focussed on the County Council's Budget for the financial year 2021/2022, which had been agreed on 9 February 2021.

An increase of 1.99% in basic Council Tax would fund Adult Social Care, together with a further 1% agreed nationally, making a total of 2.99%.

Central government had provided an extra £72m to the County Council during 2020/2021, which had helped to support residents, businesses, schools etc during the pandemic. OCC had

invested £1.4 billion in infrastructure to provide housing across the county. Over the coming decade OCC is investing £260m in schools, £617m in major infrastructure projects, £338m in highway improvements, £70 in property improvements, £9m in vehicle and equipment replacements with a focus of being Carbon Neutral by 2030.

A total of £1m long term funding would be invested to expand youth services in Oxfordshire, with an additional £500,000 to develop sustainable approaches and tackle the impact on young people during the pandemic.

An extra £400,000 is proposed for highway maintenance focussing on vegetation and drainage clearance and supporting a trial being run by Parish Councils into introducing 20mph speed schemes.

Progress had been made on resolving the flooding problems with the underpass at Upavon Way, with new pumping equipment being awaited. Cllr McBride had reported to him last week that the safety barriers had gone and he hoped that they would be back in place this week. He continues to work on getting this sorted out with some urgency.

He had given a further donation to Carterton Community Centre, as well as the two Food Banks in the town to provide food during the Covid crisis. The number of Covid cases were coming down in the county and the vaccination programme was well underway. He hoped that by Autumn some level of normality would have returned. He expressed his thanks to all those who had volunteered, particularly the local group at the Community Centre and those helping with the vaccine programme.

Cllr Little expressed her thanks for his support to the Carterton Community Food Bank

(b) Cllr Handley – South and West Carterton. Cllr Handley had given £2,600 to the Family Centre, but they still need further funding for internal works. Due to the Covid situation, they had used money originally intended for internal works to finish equipping an outdoor area so that the Centre could open sooner.

The County Council continue with road maintenance and more money had recently come from the government to fill potholes.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillors for their reports.

148 ADJOURNMENT FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Cllr Bull - Carterton North West, Inclusion Champion and member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She expressed her thanks to Cllr Field-Johnson for his swift action with funding for a small sensory area for children on the autistic spectrum at Carterton Primary School. She also expressed her thanks to Debra Courtenay-Crane for inviting her to look around the new Carterton Gymnastics Club and advise on fitting out changing spaces for those with disabilities. Cllr Bull said she would be happy to help any other organisations requiring similar advice.

Cllr Crossland – Carterton North West. Cllr Crossland had no matters to raise at this time.

Cllr Leverton - Carterton South and Armed Forces Champion. Cllr Leverton said that Planning meetings were continuing as normal. The Planning Development Committee had sat recently to decide on the Salt Cross development at Eynsham. He said it was exciting to see how we will be delivering tomorrow's houses today. He encouraged everyone to use the Fix My Street website to report any issues. He had recently used it to report a signpost that was pointing the wrong way and it was fixed within three days. He had attended several Zoom meetings

regarding improvements to the Armed Forces Covenant. This had gone through its second reading in Parliament and would bring greater equality to veterans.

Cllr McBride – Carterton North East and Vice-Chairman of the WODC Environmental Committee. Cllr McBride said that the Environmental Committee had been concerned about the recent flooding and were looking into what could be done for the future. Following on from Cllr Field-Johnson’s report, he had visited the flooded underpass on a regular basis and had noticed that members of the County Council had been on a site visit last week, so he hoped this would be resolved soon.

Cllr Mead – Carterton South, Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure and Leader of WODC. The District Council had been working very hard on the Budget, which would be presented at the Cabinet Meeting tomorrow. Work continued on the Covid Recovery Plan. Whilst West Oxfordshire has the lowest case numbers in the county, the numbers have plateaued, and she stressed the importance of keeping up efforts to reduce the numbers further.

149 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that due to the Covid situation the annual St George’s Day Dinner would not take place this year.

Cllr Bull and himself had been on a walkabout with 10 year old Jayden Garthwaite, who had noticed how the children at his school were suffering with their mental health and wanted to raise money for Mental Health charities by walking 100km in a month. His aim was to raise £500, but to date he had raised more than £2,000, which is a fantastic achievement. The Mayor expressed his thanks to Councillors and Staff who had donated to his cause.

The Covid vaccination programme would be in full swing at Carterton Health Centre next week with sessions every day for five days for those in the under 65 age group and those with pre-existing conditions.

The Mayor’s Chain of Office would be sent off for repair and maintenance shortly.

He was pleased to see the Carterton Community Bus Service starting soon and expressed his thanks to Cllr Baylis for pushing this forward. An official launch ceremony would be arranged in due course. Further details at Item 153 below.

150 TOWN CLERK’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk had no announcements to make at this time.

151 CARTERTON CELEBRATES WEEK 2021

Council noted the comments by Sue James earlier in the meeting by Sue James who, together with their organising committee, hope to deliver a week of events and activities in July this year. The Chairman urged Councillors to fully support the initiative.

152 SCHOOLS ART PROJECT

Cllr Hatton would be organising an Easter Art Project for schools, with craft materials being supplied for children to make an Easter Card. The schools were very positive about this idea, which the Mayor would support from his Mayor’s Allowance.

153 CARTERTON COMMUNITY BUS SERVICE

Confirmation had been received from West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) that the new town bus service would commence on 2 March 2021. The service would run on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from the Bus Stop outside Asda. There would be two routes, 345 serving the north of the town and 355 serving the south.

154 GRANT APPLICATION – CARTERTON GYMNASTICS CLUB CIC

A Grant application had been received from Carterton Gymnastics Club CIC requesting £10,000 for specialised equipment to ensure access to sport for those with visible and hidden disabilities. The Club has been run for many years from the Sports Hall at Carterton Community College, but with a waiting list of over 500 young people and adults, each waiting up to four years for a place, they had been working hard over the last three years to move to new premises. The new facility, called ‘The Vault’, is located at Unit 10/11 on West Oxfordshire Retail Business Park and could accommodate up to 1,000 members. The planned opening date is 24 March 2021.

The Grant would be used to purchase and install a hoist system, changing bench with paper roll dispenser, privacy screens, grab rails and emergency toilet call system.

Council was pleased to support this initiative and RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £10,000 to The Vault.

155 TREE PLANTING PROJECT

The Amenities and Economic Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2021 recommended to Council that the first phase of the Tree Planting Project should go ahead. Approximately 33 established trees would be planted along Brize Norton Road from the town centre crossroads to the Iron Bridge at a cost of between £43,000 to £48,000. The trees would be planted in the Autumn 2021 and would include a root management system to prevent damage to verges and pavements, together with a tree maintenance plan.

Cllr Little asked whether funding had been sought from other sources. The Clerk said that as the trees would not be planted until October this would give some time to look at other possible funding options. Cllr McBride said the project supports WODC’s climate emergency and he wondered whether the schools would like to be involved as part of their work on climate change.

Cllr Handley suggested approaching organisations such as the Rotary Club to donate a tree in memory of someone.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that this phase of the project go ahead.

156 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Internal Audit Report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

The Report was Noted.

157 WORKS FOR AUTHORISATION

(a) Queen Mother’s Garden. Tree work is required to Yew trees bordering the Rose Bed on Upavon Way, which are blocking light to the Roses causing them to grow at an angle. The work required is to raise the crown height over the footpath to 3m and raise the lower branches

bordering the Rose Bed to 3.5m, including the over-extended branches to the side. These works would cost £350 plus VAT.

(b) Alderley Close. The Tree Surgeon has inspected a mature Ash tree on amenity land behind 14-16 Alderley Close, which without intervention is likely to be problematic considering its proximity to the properties. There is deadwood and evidence of branch failure throughout the crown and it is recommended that the tree is pollarded at a cost of £900 plus VAT.

(c) Alderley Close. Whilst inspecting the above Ash tree, the Tree Surgeon found an ivy-clad Hawthorn growing beneath the Ash tree and recommended removal at a cost of £200 plus VAT.

(d) Queens Road. The Tree Surgeon has inspected a Pedunculate Oak tree growing adjacent 134, 144 and 145 Queens Road, which had become too large for its location and recommended that the tree is restricted and contained. The work required is to remove the lower branches, raise the crown height to 4.5m for vehicle access, reduce the height by approximately 2m and prune the remaining branches in symmetry, removing any deadwood throughout the crown. The cost would be £450 plus VAT.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the works as detailed above.

158 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Bank Reconciliation Statement to 31 January 2021, set out at Annex A, was Noted.

159 RECEIPTS

Receipts to 31 January 2021, previously circulated, were Noted.

160 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts for February 2021, set out at Annex B, be APPROVED for payment. Cllr Little abstained.

161 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting.

Confidential items follow.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

162 MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Confidential item.

163 PAVILION PROJECT – APPOINTMENT OF LEYS LONGDEN

Confidential item.

164 LAND AT SCHOLARS ACRE

Confidential item.

165 COUNCIL DIRECT DEBITS

Confidential item.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

16 March 2021

Town Mayor