

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2019
COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Cllr D Melvin Chairman
Cllr D Wesson Vice-Chairman

Cllr J Bull
Cllr M Crossland
Cllr P Handley
Cllr N Leverton (ex officio)
Cllr L Little
Cllr M Mead (ex officio)
Cllr K Wood

Apologies: Cllr E Hatton

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Teresa Whitford - Admin

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting held on 28 May 2019, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

16 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

There were no members of the public present.

17 TOWN GATES

A request had been received from Brize Norton Parish Council for Carterton to consider relocating the Town Gates located on Monahan Way, as they have identified S106 money from the development of the new Brize Meadow estate for new entrance gates to their parish. The Carterton gates were originally approved by the Town Council on 19 January 2016. No objections were received from Oxfordshire County Council or Brize Norton Parish Council at the time.

Monahan Way itself and the verge on the Brize Meadow side of the road are in Brize Norton parish. It was noted that Carterton Town Council has maintained the roundabouts and bus stops along this road for a number of years. Entrance gates are purely cosmetic and carry no legal authority marking the entrance to a particular parish.

Various suggestions were presented to Council for consideration and after a lengthy discussion, the Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council that the Carterton gates remain in their current location and that a boundary review should be undertaken.

18 ARR G PAVILION

A public consultation was held between 15 and 26 July, with large displays at both the Town Hall and Carterton Community Centre, to ascertain the views of residents on the future of the Pavilion on Alvescot Road Recreation Ground.

Based on the responses received, the majority view was to rebuild the Pavilion nearer to the car park (to the rear of the Library), to include an outside seating area, storage facilities, a better kitchen and public toilets. The majority wanted a café and for the building to be of stone construction. This consultation followed the one held in February 2019, where the majority also favoured replacing the building.

A vote was taken, and the Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council that the existing building should be replaced with a new Pavilion located to the rear of the Library. Cllr Crossland abstained from voting.

19 TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT

In the 2019/2020 Budget, Council set aside the sum of £30,000 to refurbish the Town Hall. The building was last decorated in 2013 and wear and tear has since taken its toll. There are also concerns about security for staff and hirers. A draft plan and list of possible improvements had been previously circulated to Councillors.

Cllr Bull said that the disabled toilet does not meet current standards. Cllr Little said the kitchen was not fit for purpose but expressed caution with spending public money. Cllr Handley said it was important to address security issues and ensure the public are made aware of the reasons for upgrading the facilities. The Clerk explained that the proposed open plan reception area would include provision of a secure room for staff, alarms and CCTV to address security concerns. Cllr Wood suggested getting feedback from groups that use the building.

The Committee felt that further discussion would be needed before a decision could be reached and would have a tour of the building at the conclusion of this meeting.

20 ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

The first meeting of the Environment Climate Working Group (ECWG) would take place on Tuesday 10 September 2019 at 6.45pm. The draft agenda had been circulated to the Committee. The group would discuss some initial ideas, such as electric vehicle charging points, solar panels and tree-planting along the four roads leading off the Crossroads in the town centre.

It was noted that Carterton Town Council are leading the way in reducing the use of paper, by sending agenda via email rather than using the postal system, and viewing the papers on iPads during meetings.

21 QUINQUENNIAL REPORT UPDATE

All Council buildings were surveyed in 2017 and the Quinquennial Report was drawn up detailing a plan of maintenance works to be carried out over a five-year period. Teresa Whitford said that the first phase, which consisted of the most urgent work, had been carried out. Work on the second phase is ongoing, but due to the smaller nature of the work, problems had been experienced in sourcing contractors willing to take on work at the Squash Club and Scout Hall. However, a contractor had now been found and purchase orders issued.

22 CEMETERY UPDATE

A report had been circulated to the Committee giving an update on the current capacity of the Cemetery at Black Bourton. The graves section consists of five rows of graves, three of which are used, with the fourth row nearly full, leaving only one more row for burials. The last three spaces at the end of each row are unconsecrated and remain unused at present. Should these spaces remain empty they could be consecrated and used for new burials, providing another 15 spaces. Whilst it is difficult to predict a timescale for the graves section to be full, it is estimated at around 18-24 months.

There is rather more capacity in the ashes section, with two new rows of plots recently laid, providing 70 plots with space for further rows to be added as these are used.

Work continues to source a suitable piece of land to provide a new Cemetery.

23 ARLINGTON CLOSE

A report had been circulated to the Committee detailing an ongoing issue with maintenance of the grass verge in Arlington Close for which the Town Council is responsible. A sum of money had been commuted to the Council from Morrill Homes Ltd in 1998 to take over maintenance and ownership of the land. It has been maintained by the Council for 20 years, but the Title Deeds were never transferred. This would be followed up.

Residents have approached the Town Council regarding the condition of the verge and its lack of maintenance. This has arisen due to residents of house numbers 5, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 storing their bins on this land, which is opposite their properties. The Council has written to the residents of the properties on five separate occasions requesting that the bins are removed but they have not complied.

Legal advice has been sought from West Oxfordshire District Council and, as the Town Council should be in possession of the Title Deeds, permission is now sought to write a final letter to the residents asking for removal of the bins from Council land by a deadline in order to carry out the overdue maintenance of the verge. A draft of the letter had been circulated to the Committee for approval.

The Clerk said that he and Teresa Whitford would do a site visit to speak to the residents in person, to be followed by a formal request to WODC to enforce the removal of the bins. These actions were supported by the Committee.

24 WORKS UPDATE

(a) War Memorial. A purchase order has been issued for the replacement of the grass with a gravel/resin material.

(b) Black Bourton Road. Council had approved the proposal for improvements to the verge outside The Beehive. The Clerk said he had written to the brewery twice and contacted Oxfordshire County Council. Responses were awaited before this is taken forward.

(c) BMX Track. Money had been set aside in the Budget to reinstate the BMX Track and some initial ideas had been put forward by two companies. Estimates varied from £1,200 to £27,000. Cllr Crossland had reservations about reinstating it as she remembered the problems experienced when it was originally installed. Older children had adapted it to make it harder, which led to it being unsuitable for the younger children it was intended for and posed health and safety concerns. It was suggested that getting the children and their families involved in

the process had worked well for the new Skate Park and could be the best way forward for the BMX Track. The site is in a remote part of the town and the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour is greater. CCTV and good lighting could be considered.

25 WORKS FOR APPROVAL

The Council's contractor, Azura Networks Ltd, had carried out electrical condition testing at the Town Hall, Tremain Vets, Scout Hall and the Community Centre. Follow up had been recommended at a cost of £763 plus VAT. A copy of their quotation for the work was tabled.

The Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council proceed with the electrical works as per the quotation.

26 WORKS PROPOSALS

Cllr Melvin raised the issue of working together with the shops and businesses to encourage people into the town centre, perhaps with the formation of a liaison group.

Cllr Handley said the Council should work on creating good working relationships with the shops and businesses. He encouraged the Council to have a Masterplan in place and also to look into improved banking services. The Clerk said he had made initial enquiries about the possibility of having an ATM machine at the Town Hall.

Cllr Mead said she was encouraged by the increase in people using the town centre. The new Italian restaurant, G&T's bar and Siege of Orleans were all very busy in the evenings. Some shops had unfortunately had to close but others were coming along to fill them. Cllr Crossland said the nature of the high street has changed, with more people shopping online. The businesses that are thriving are salons (hairdressers/nail bars) and social activities (cafes and restaurants) and they should be encouraged as they are bringing life to the town.

Cllr Wood said that the Carterton Carnival was a really good event that brought people into the town centre. Cllr Mead said that the recent music event organised by the pubs/bars had also proved successful in this respect. Cllr Melvin suggested encouraging more use of the Market Square. The Clerk advised caution in getting involved in organising events outside of the Council's remit.

The Clerk said that the Town Council had been instrumental in attracting recent new shops into the town centre. The Shake Shop and Lynwood Café were proving very popular.

The Meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

Chairman