

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE
HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO-CONFERENCING ON TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2021
COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Cllr D Wesson Chairman
Cllr K Wood Vice-Chairman

Cllr J Bull
Cllr P Handley (from Item 13)
Cllr N Leverton (ex-officio)
Cllr L Little

Apologies: Cllr M Crossland

In Attendance: Cllr S Baylis
Several members of the public

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Teresa Whitford - Admin

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2020, previously circulated to the Committee, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

9 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

Linda Moore wished to raise two matters. Firstly, she had concerns whether the new Pavilion proposed for the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground was in breach of the wishes of Mr Carter that the Recreation Ground should be left as a green area for the people of Carterton. She said the building was excessive for one football pitch and wondered why it included a community hall when there were already 13 halls in the town. She asked whether Sports England had been informed of the repositioning of the football pitch, which would be dangerously close to the Pavilion and Playground. She said that the two Councillors who are on the Lowlands Planning Committee should declare an interest and abstain from voting.

Secondly, she asked what the cost of the Tree Planting Project would be and whether the long term effect of the tree routes on roads and pavements had been considered.

10 ALVESCOT ROAD RECREATION GROUND – PAVILION PROJECT

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the project. The Planning Application had been submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council. It would be published on their website in due course, at which time members of the public would have an opportunity to comment on the application prior to a decision being made.

Cllr Little explained that the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground is managed by the Council as a charity. Whilst there had been a public consultation, she still had concerns about taking away green space for children to play and she would be reluctant to see another Pavilion built there. Some time ago she had suggested installing a water jet feature near to the Playground and she would bring this to a future meeting for consideration.

Cllr Bull said that the new Pavilion was intended to replace the existing building. Members of the public that had spoken to her had been pleased that there would be toilet facilities provided in the new building. Whilst there are other toilets in the town centre, they are not accessible for those with disabilities.

11 TREE PLANTING PROJECT

The Town Clerk had circulated a report to the Committee outlining work on the project to date and setting out details for the next phase. The project would look at planting up to 100 trees along the four main arterial roads leading from the town centre crossroads.

Officers had worked with John W Platts, Chartered Landscape Architect, and Oxfordshire County Council to identify sites for planting the first phase of approximately 33 trees along Brize Norton Road from the crossroads to the Iron Bridge. The trees would be planted by the Council's contractor, McCracken & Son, at a cost of between £43,000 and £48,000. McCrackens would maintain the trees for the first four years, with the County Council taking them over from the fifth year.

Teresa Whitford said that John Platts and Oxfordshire County Council had commended the Town Council for its work on this project, saying it was innovative and forward thinking. The planting would go some way to replacing the Ash trees being lost to disease, would help with flooding issues and be good for wildlife. The trees that have been chosen have a small canopy with proper route management systems underground to prevent damage to pavements and verges.

Cllr Baylis asked why the cost was so high and wondered if trees could be planted at one end of the Recreation Ground to form a small wooded area, as had been done in Witney. The Clerk said that there would be opportunities for other projects such as this in the future. Teresa Whitford explained that the trees are more expensive as they are well-established rather than saplings. Previous experience has shown that saplings are difficult to grow – out of a recent group of 30 saplings only three had survived. The new trees would provide an instant improvement to the vista on the approach to the town centre.

A vote was taken and the Committee RESOLVED to recommend to full Council that the first phase of planting along Brize Norton Road should go ahead.

12 LETTER FROM CARTERTON TREFOIL GUILD

A letter had been received from Carterton Trefoil Guild, who would like to plant a small Sensory Garden in the town. They sought advice from the Council on the best location for this, ideally in a sunny spot near to a bench.

Cllr Wesson suggested this could be on Alvescot Road Recreation Ground.

Cllr Bull said this had been discussed at the Environment & Climate Working Group recently and it was felt that it would be best sited in the town centre so that it can be experienced by the most people.

Cllr Baylis commented on the need for more seating on the Recreation Ground and had been approached by a parent about fencing in the Playground to prevent children running into the car park. Cllr Bull said that seating has been included in the design of the new Pavilion. The Clerk suggested Cllr Baylis email him regarding the possibility of fencing.

Cllr Wood and Cllr Bull would discuss some ideas for the project with the Trefoil Guild. Cllr Wood said that the Council should embrace their offer and support them in any way possible.

13 WORK FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

(a) Queen Mother's Garden. The Yew trees behind the Rose bed are blocking sunlight to the roses, which is affecting their growth. Work is required to raise the crown height over the roadside footpath to three metres, raise the height of the lower branches over the Rose bed to 3.5 metres and to reduce the over-extending branches around the Rose bed to 3.5 metres. The cost would be £350 plus VAT.

It was noted that the trees blocking the light were located in the neighbouring garden and the occupants were unable to take on this work themselves.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the work should go ahead as detailed above.

(b) Town Hall Lighting. The Council's Environmental & Climate Working Group supported changes to Council premises to improve efficiency and help the environment. The Council had recently approved the replacement of the Emergency Lighting in the Town Hall with LED lighting. The Committee were asked to consider the replacement the remainder of the lighting in the building with energy efficient LED. Azura had quoted £5,500 for this work. Further estimates would be sought prior to this going to Council for approval.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the current lighting be replaced with LED lighting.

14 PROJECTS UPDATE

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the following projects:

(a) CCTV. The CCTV provision in the town has been unsatisfactory for a number of years. It had been suggested that the Council purchase some cameras of its own. The Clerk would research this and bring a report to a future meeting. Cllr Handley said he was not aware of any prosecutions resulting from CCTV footage in Carterton and he queried whether it was worth spending any more money on it. Cllr Bull said CCTV would be valuable in play areas where vandalism takes place. Cllr Little wondered how much had been spent over the years in replacing vandalised items, balanced against the cost of successfully prosecuting any offenders.

The Clerk clarified that CCTV is a deterrent providing reassurance to the public. There are four cameras in Carterton, whereas Witney has around 61, yet both Councils are charged the same amount of money. This issue has been raised with WODC several times. There is a project being undertaken by WODC who are working with Thames Valley Police on a long-term solution to the system in West Oxfordshire, but in the meantime the Council could install its own cameras that could be linked to the existing system.

(b) Black Bourton Cemetery. A survey of the Cemetery has been carried out. There are 426 gravestones, only one of which is wobbly. This will be addressed. There is also one area where the grave has sunken over time and the gravediggers would be contacted to attend to this.

(c) Town Hall Refurbishment. The Kitchen is almost complete, the only remaining work being some minor decoration and installation of shutters. A report will come before Council in due course for this work. Cllr Bull said herself and the Mayor had been to look at the new Kitchen and wanted to say how nice it looked. It would be of much benefit to all users in the future.

The Meeting ended at 7.50 pm.

Chairman