

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING
ON TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021
COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

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

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

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

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Katie Zasada

187 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The Chairman was granted a Motion for permission to remove from the meeting any person that disrupts the meeting.

188 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2021, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Cllr Little and Cllr Handley abstained.

Cllr Little commended the Mayor for his honesty in the Mayor's Announcements. She stated that she would be recording this meeting and that she would speak to the press if she felt it benefited Carterton.

189 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 16 March 2021, which were Noted.

190 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

The Clerk clarified that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, members of the public were permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the Agenda.

Linda Moore spoke on Item 196, Annual Town Meeting. She requested that the meeting be deferred until after 21 June 2021, once Lockdown restrictions were eased, so that members of the public could attend in person.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public for her contribution.

191 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

(a) Cllr Handley – South and West Carterton. Cllr Handley reported that Officers, Planners and Surveyors from the County continued to work despite offices being closed. A large Survey would take place during the second Bank Holiday in May to look at the junction at Cotswold Wildlife Park and also how it impacts on the roads to Burford and Lechlade, with a view to altering the junction to improve traffic flow.

Over £17,000 would be spent on repainting the road markings from Burford to Filkins and survey work for double white lines from Filkins to Lechlade, together with a review of the junction at Filkins to improve safety due to traffic flow being too fast. Should Cllr Handley be re-elected at the forthcoming County Council Elections, he would continue to work on junction improvements and repairing road surfaces.

He had been involved in trying to get the bus service to Swindon reinstated, but the problem has been that it passes through three Counties - Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Currently only Oxfordshire had agreed to support it financially, with the other two counties' responses still awaited.

Cllr Little expressed her thanks to Cllr Handley for his hard work that has made a real difference to Carterton and the surrounding parishes. She also thanked both him and Cllr Field-Johnson for their support for the Carterton Community Foodbank.

(b) Cllr Field-Johnson – Burford and North Carterton. Cllr Field-Johnson's report for April had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, which mainly focussed on pollution in Oxfordshire rivers.

It had not been possible to carry out the planned survey work at the Cotswold Wildlife Park as no traffic had been going into it while the Park was closed during the Lockdown. Numerous objections had been raised from Burford, Bradwell Village and Lechlade about the traffic problems there and this review would be a key priority once the Park reopened.

Work to repair the pumping equipment at the flooded Underpass on Upavon Way was expected to be carried out in May or June 2021.

He had used his Priority Fund to support local charities and foodbanks and had put £5,000 towards the new Carterton Connector bus service. Should he be re-elected in May, he would continue to support Carterton in any way possible.

The Chairman thanked the County Councillors for their reports.

192 ADJOURNMENT FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Cllr Bull - Carterton North West, Inclusion Champion and member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Bull continued to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings, which mainly focussed on Covid recovery. She expressed her thanks to Jayden, the young lad that herself and the Mayor had supported with his walk to raise £1,000 for mental health charities, as he had now raised over £3,000. He is a credit to the young people of the town.

Cllr Crossland – Carterton North West. Cllr Crossland had attended the Finance and Management Scrutiny Committee. With regard to Planning, the service was experiencing a backlog due staff shortages, partly due to sickness and partly staff being taken off their normal duties to support Covid initiatives, and she urged patience with outstanding applications. The Planning Appeal had been turned down for 50 Richens Drive, which related to an extension that had been built larger than was permitted, resulting in the extension having to be reduced in

size. A Planning Appeal for two houses in Lawton Avenue had also gone to Appeal after being refused permission and this also had been turned down.

She had been supporting residents with concerns about the parking situation at the Country Park and the District were doing their best to resolve it, but she pointed out that the area is within the parish of Brize Norton and Shilton and concerns should therefore be raised with Cllr Postan.

Cllr Leverton - Carterton South and Armed Forces Champion. Cllr Leverton also commented on the backlog in the Planning system. As Armed Forces Champion, he looked forward to reconnecting with the Cadets and having a good turnout at Armistice this year. Himself and the Clerk had been talking to a military charity that would like to have more representation in Carterton to support veterans.

Cllr McBride – Carterton North East and Vice-Chairman of the WODC Environmental Committee. Cllr McBride had attended meetings of the Audit and General Purposes Committee and the Environmental Committee. The Environmental Committee had discussed in-cab technology for Refuse and Recycling vehicles that would improve efficiency in rescheduling issues such as missed collections.

Cllr Mead – Carterton South, Leader of WODC. Cllr Mead reported that legislation on Remote Meetings would expire on 6 May 2021 and a decision would take place tomorrow regarding the way forward. She congratulated anyone involved in the Test Centre at Brownes Hall, who were testing 60-70 people per day with no appointments necessary. It is suggested that everyone working with the public should be tested twice a week. The District Council had reopened its Town Centre Shop in Witney and all Customer Service areas and she wondered whether the Town Hall would be opening its Reception to the public.

193 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

As discussed at the last Council meeting, Cllr Leverton confirmed that he had made donations to Carterton Family Centre and Carterton Day Centre, as agreed with Cllr Little. Both charities had expressed their thanks to the Council.

Along with the Deputy Lieutenant, Brian Crossland, he was proud to deliver a Reading at a Service at St John's Church to commemorate the life of HRH Prince Philip, which was a fitting tribute and he expressed his thanks to all involved.

This being the last meeting of the Council year and he expressed his thanks to all the Councillors in what has been a difficult year, but despite this we have ensured that the town has moved forward. He particularly thanked Cllr Hatton and Gill Carver for organising the recent schools project. He also wished to thank the public who had stepped up to help out during Covid. He expressed his thanks to Katie Zasada for her hard work as Mayor's Secretary, and to all the Town Hall Staff for keeping Council services running. The Town Warden, Alex Fleming and himself had raised the Union Flag, which had been at half-mast during the period of national mourning for HRH Prince Philip. He expressed his thanks to Alex for his help with this important duty.

Cllr Cliff Cook had resigned as Town Councillor for Upavon Ward due to work commitments. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cliff, particularly for his work on environmental matters within the town and wished him all the best in his new job. A letter of thanks would be sent to him on behalf of the Council.

194 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The biggest issue facing the Council over the last year has been the coronavirus pandemic. Plans were put in place early to either cancel or reshape our annual events. Remembrance Sunday was held in a scaled down format that ran very well.

The Council has plans in place should any member of the Royal Family or central government die. On the death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, these plans were implemented immediately. The town flags were lowered to half-mast and a notification displayed at the Town Hall. The Clerk expressed his thanks to Alex Fleming and Cllr Leverton for raising the flag again on Sunday morning.

195 CARTERTON CELEBRATES 2021

Cllr Bull had attended a Carterton Celebrates Committee, organised by Sue and Kayleigh James, who are putting together a week of activities and events for this year's Carterton Celebrates to take place on 17-24 July 2021.

The week would begin with a Business Market on Saturday 17 July in the Market Square and assistance from Councillors is sought to help with refreshments. The Town Hall would be hosting a Children's Pottery Workshop at the same time. The Committee also asked whether the Council would like to run a Surgery/Meet your Councillor session. Other events taking place would be a Treasure Trail, Photo Competition, Schools Competitions, Window Displays, Flower Club Displays and much more. The Community Centre Café would be open each day for organisations wishing to run a Coffee Morning to raise money for their charity.

Cllr Field-Johnson said this would be a great opportunity to meet with residents once more and would be pleased to help in any way he could, including running a Surgery. There were also expressions of interest from Carterton Community Foodbank to run a Lunch Club, SSAFA, Carterton Heritage and Carterton Educational Trust.

196 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

As the law stands, the Annual Town Meeting has to take place in May, but new legislation is expected to be released shortly and the Clerk would update Councillors on this in due course.

197 GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Carterton Primary School. The School seek a Grant of £1,000 to provide outdoor learning equipment for their Year 1 classroom, particularly for children with sensory and communication difficulties associated with the return to school after home schooling during Covid. The School's PTA are in full support of this request.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £1,000 to Carterton Primary School for the purpose of providing the outdoor area as requested. The Clerk would contact the other schools in the town to make them aware that they can apply for a Grant in the same way.

(b) Oxford Parent-Infant Project (OXPIP). OXPIP seek a Grant of £2,000 to provide weekly sessions for one year to support new parents with anxiety/depression and other mental health problems. The Council had previously supported OXPIP with a Grant of £2,000 per year on a draw-down basis between 2016-2019. The total cost for one year is £14,772.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £2,000 to OXPIP on a draw-down basis as in previous years.

(c) Carterton and Brize Community Assistance Group Foodbank (CCA). The CCA was set up to support residents from Carterton and the surrounding area who were struggling financially to feed their family during the coronavirus pandemic. The CCA Foodbank provides between 150-200 parcels per week, with one parcel supplying food for one person for 3-4 days, and the need is ongoing. Now that the Covid restrictions are easing, the CCA Foodbank need to vacate their temporary location and move to a more permanent site. A Grant of £6,000 is sought to enable them to pay the annual rental as they have no income source.

Cllr Little had concerns that the CCA Foodbank had not been aware that Carterton Community Foodbank was already in existence, which had not been afforded the same support. The Chairman reminded Cllr Little that, whilst he understood her concerns, the Agenda item was to discuss the application from CCA Foodbank. Cllr Little persisted and was removed from the meeting. Cllr Handley also expressed concerns that there were two Foodbanks in Carterton.

A vote was taken and Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £6,000 to the CCA Foodbank.

198 WORKS FOR AUTHORISATION

(a) Tree work at Willow Meadows. Following an inspection by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), tree work was recommended to improve wildlife habitat, bank erosions and flooding issues. The work would need to be carried out over several years due to budget constraints. A quote had been obtained for the first part of the work, to remove partially collapsed Willow trees and low hanging branches over the brook and to reduce the weight of subsiding branches of two Poplar trees overhanging the footpath. The total cost of these works would be £3,930 inclusive of VAT.

This was the start of a project to improve the meadows. The footpath was narrowing due to encroaching growth along the edges and this would be attended to. Any work would be undertaken with caution due to the rare Orchids that grow there. The Clerk was looking at improving access for mobility scooters.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the tree works as detailed above.

(b) Allandale Centre fencing. The play area to the rear of the Allandale is not secure due to the deteriorating fencing and gate. The Allandale's contractor had quoted £1,050 to replace this with 7m close board fencing and a 2m double gate. The Council's contractor had quoted £1,145 plus VAT.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that the work is undertaken by the Council's contractor, McCracken & Son, at a cost of £1,145 plus VAT.

(c) Trefoil Playground. The two baby cradle swings need replacing due to broken centre straps that secure the child in the seat, at a cost of £497.30 plus VAT.

It was unclear whether the damage was normal wear and tear or vandalism. Council agreed that vandalism should be monitored at all the town's playgrounds and work undertaken to prevent it, looking at CCTV, posters and the design of playground equipment. Cllr Baylis commended the work of Got2B for their work with youngsters.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the replacement of the cradle swings. The Clerk would undertake a project to look at ways to reduce vandalism in the town's playgrounds.

199 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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

200 RECEIPTS

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

201 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts for April 2021, set out at Annex B, be APPROVED for payment.

202 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

203 MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Confidential item.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

25 May 2021

Town Mayor