

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

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

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

Apologies: Cllr C Cook, Cllr P Handley

In attendance: Cllr N Field-Johnson (County Councillor) – until Item 175  
Members of the public

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk  
Katie Zasada

169 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

170 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

171 MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 16 February 2021, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Cllr Little asked that her vote against be recorded.

172 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

173 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

Jamie Goodwin, resident of Scholars Acre, spoke on the request to purchase Amenity land at Scholars Acre. He said that according to WODC's document dated 2013-2019 the land was not actually Amenity land, but an area of natural green space. He expressed his and other residents' concerns about the sale of this land and the lack of information on what was being discussed and planned for this area.

Jo Rushton, resident of Scholars Acre, also raised concerns about the sale of this Amenity land, in particular regarding increased traffic if the area was to be developed.

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

#### 174 PROPOSED PURCHASE OF AMENITY LAND – SCHOLARS ACRE

The Town Clerk suggested that this item, originally to be discussed in Closed Session at the end of this meeting, be brought up the Agenda and discussed in the public session, provided that no names or financial information was disclosed.

An application had been received for the Council to enter into an Option Agreement to purchase land at the rear of Scholars Acre. In accordance with Council policy with regard to the purchase of Council-owned land, Cllr Leverton, Cllr James, Cllr Bull and Cllr Crossland had visited the site at Scholars Acre to assess the proposal. Cllr James, as Chair of the Planning Committee, delivered a report to Council.

He stated that the site is an area of land at the end of the cul-de-sac adjacent to a single-track lane leading to farmland behind the land in question. The application relates to a potential access road to allow further development of the area. The sub-committee had discussed the matter thoroughly. The land was well-used by residents and an access road would therefore be potentially unsafe. The access road would result in the loss of parking space and an increase in traffic should the area be developed as a result. The sub-committee concluded that Council should not support the sale of the land.

A vote was taken and Council RESOLVED that the land should not be sold.

#### 175 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Cllr Field-Johnson – Burford and North Carterton. Cllr Field-Johnson reported that barriers had been placed at the flooded underpass on Upavon Way, but had no further news on the installation of the new pumping equipment.

Sophisticated testing equipment had been installed to monitor the condition of the water in the River Windrush.

There had been an 80% reduction in the number of HGVs through Burford. This had not led to an increase in lorries going through surrounding villages, which were instead using the A40 and A34. The detour for vehicles is around eight miles and would add about 15 minutes to the journey.

The Carterton spur road onto the A40 to the west was again on the County's agenda and he hoped that this would be completed in the next two to three years.

Cllr Bull expressed her thanks to Cllr Field-Johnson for his help with a grant to provide equipment for children on the special needs register at Carterton Primary School.

Cllr Field-Johnson asked the Clerk for an update on the new Carterton bus service due to start this Spring. The Clerk said the Carterton Connector service had been launched on 2 March 2021 and appeared to be operating well. Cllr Baylis said she was pleased to be able to help the community get the bus service they deserved and was grateful to the Council and to Cllr Field-Johnson for their support.

The Chairman thanked the Cllr Field-Johnson for his report.

Cllr Bull - Carterton North West, Inclusion Champion and member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She stated that she and Cllr Leverton had been assisting the CCA Food Bank and were pleased to see the good work they were doing. Most of her time had been spent on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which focussed on the Covid recovery and how hospitals would return to providing their normal services post-Covid.

Cllr Crossland – Carterton North West. Cllr Crossland stated she had been very busy over the last month with various building-related issues. A lot of complaints had been received from residents regarding the Linden Gardens development. These included pollution of the water course from a source on the building site, inconsiderate parking by the builders, damage to the road edges on Kilkenny Lane and problems being experienced by the Allotment holders. The Town Clerk, Cllr Wood and herself had met with the Project Manager to raise these concerns. There was also a serious error made with the removal of a row of Conifer trees that ran down the side of the property. The planning permission stated that the trees should be removed as part of an estate programme over the course of several years, with every third or fourth tree removed each year and replaced with a tree of more suitable size, but instead the whole row of trees were removed at once. This had been referred to the Planning Authority and she would keep the Council informed of any developments.

The planning application for 72 houses off Swinbrook Road was discussed at District and strong representations were made to ensure Thames Water met their obligations regarding water pressure and sewage. The application had been passed with stringent conditions for protecting these houses. She appreciated the work done by Cllr Baylis relating to the new bus service as the distance to the town centre from this new development could be difficult for some to manage.

Cllr Leverton - Carterton South and Armed Forces Champion. Cllr Leverton had visited the Allotments where there had been an issue with trees on the boundary with Linden Gardens.

As Armed Forces Champion, he had attended the SERFCA AGM, where one of the guest speakers gave a talk about the latest figures regarding the financial benefits of being a Cadet. The return on investment for being a Cadet was huge in that it increases mental resilience, less involvement in petty crime, earn income and pay more tax and he encouraged further support for them in the future.

A planning application had been approved for flats on Milestone Road. Whilst he personally had not supported the application, he was content that the outcome was the right one. The Planning Enforcement Officers had been working hard to ensure conditions are being met despite the Covid restrictions. He expressed his personal thanks, and those of the Town Council, to the staff at WODC who had consistently delivered a professional service throughout the challenging times, often being moved between different areas as need demanded.

Cllr McBride – Carterton North East and Vice-Chairman of the WODC Environmental Committee. Cllr McBride said that he had been working with Cllr Field-Johnson to make the Upavon Way underpass secure during the recent flooding. He had also been working with officers at the District Council looking at the inadequacy of dog waste bins in busy areas with a view to replacing them with larger ones. Dog waste can now be placed in general waste bins.

Cllr Mead – Carterton South, Leader of WODC. Cllr Mead asked that Council support the National Day of Reflection on Tuesday 23 March 2021, which marked one year since the first Lockdown. Towns and Parishes are requested to lower their flags to half mast in respect for everyone lost to the Covid pandemic. Many Councillors would be making videos to thank those who had stuck to the rules and done their bit over this challenging year – including the NHS,

key workers and the Town Hall Staff who had kept the Council running. Climate Action Day is on 23 April 2021 and a member of the Town Council would be attending an event for the whole of West Oxfordshire's towns and parishes to work together to meet climate change goals.

Across the County there are three asymptomatic testing centres – Wantage, Banbury and Oxford. A fourth venue will be opening at Brownes Hall in Carterton on Friday 26 March 2021. The centre will provide testing facilities for teachers, key workers, carers, small businesses and anyone that needs to have a test but does not have symptoms.

#### 177 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had been invited to give an interview to Forces Radio at RAF Brize Norton about the new Carterton bus service, during which he encouraged the public to use the service and thanked the service providers and Cllr Baylis for her hard work on the project. It was a reminder that during all the trials and tribulations of Covid, the Council were still delivering a good service to the public. He had officially handed over the keys to the bus driver. The Council should be proud to have supported this initiative. It is a big investment, not just financially, but in the people of Carterton.

He said that the Payments List this evening showed a number of payments to Amazon, which were due to an Easter project for local schools led by himself and Cllr Hatton.

He reminded all Councillors that Standing Order 27, relating to Media and Press, is specific in its form and clearly states that "All requests shall be processed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor or their Deputy". Councillors should know that if they are asked for an interview this should be directed to the Town Clerk or to the Mayor. If Councillors use their Cllr title, then the public would assume it was a Council statement and he asked that Councillors ensure they comply with the regulations.

He said that emails were being sent to members of the Town Hall Staff that should be going directly to the Clerk who would then distribute them to Staff members as appropriate. He asked that, unless Councillors were in a current dialogue regarding a specific project, that emails are directly to the Clerk in the first instance.

He then read out the following statement:

'Council should be aware that following direction from the Judge, District Judge Wakeham, I can confirm the following: The monies returned to Council by Cllr Little will be redistributed to the following local good causes. Carterton Family Centre will receive £165 and Carterton Day Centre will receive £150. Cllr Little and I agreed both the recipients and the amounts. As per the judgement, "It can be made clear that this is a charitable donation made on behalf of the current Mayor. Payment will be made in the near future by Bank Transfer. This will be the only statement made and it will appear in the Minutes verbatim as a public record"'.

#### 178 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk said that the Annual Town Meeting is due to be held in early May this year. A number of other towns in West Oxfordshire are postponing the Meeting until the end of the month and he had asked the Chairman and Deputy Mayor for their views on how we should proceed. Currently the situation is unsure as to whether members of the public would be able to attend in person. Cllr Mead confirmed that current legislation states that the Annual Meeting does have to take place in May but it is hoped that this could change at a national level.

It will be the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and it would be beneficial for a small working group of Councillors to work on how this can be celebrated as a town. This will be a major

event for the country as a whole, hopefully one we can all enjoy in each other's company rather than by Zoom. Cllr Crossland suggested working with the Carterton Celebrates organisers so that any events can complement each other.

An Audit by the Health & Safety Executive had taken place regarding our Covid policy, practices and staff behaviour and, in the words of the Auditor, we are a 'shining example' in the way that we work. The Clerk said that he was pleased that the staff have worked very hard to ensure that the policy is adhered to.

#### 179 REVIEW OF HIRE CHARGES AND FEES 2021-2022

The hire charges and fees for the current financial year were circulated to Council with the Agenda. The charges and fees relate to hire of the Town Hall, Alvescot Road Recreation Ground, Carterton Market and Black Bourton Cemetery. Officers recommended that the fees remain unchanged for the forthcoming financial year.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that the hire charges and fees remain unchanged for the financial year 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

#### 180 WORKS FOR AUTHORISATION

(a) Fire Shutter in Town Hall Kitchen. The existing shutter is difficult to operate and does not meet current fire regulation standards. Three quotes had been received to replace it with an electrical shutter wired up to the Fire Alarm system. One of the quotes was verbal only and of the other two the Clerk recommended Shutter Spec Security at a cost of £2,495 plus VAT.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that Shutter Spec Security install the new shutter as detailed above.

(b) Alvescot Road Recreation Ground Play Area. Repair is required to the safety surface beneath the two-seat Swings at a cost of £823.24. A discussion took place, which included whether improvements to CCTV was required and whether the current safety surface should be replaced with another type of surface that is cheaper to maintain.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the repair of the safety surface. An alternative safety surface would be discussed at a future meeting.

#### 181 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Bank Reconciliation Statement to 28 February 2021, set out at Annex A, was Noted.

#### 182 RECEIPTS

Receipts to 28 February 2021, previously circulated, were Noted.

#### 183 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

#### 184 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

185 MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Confidential item.

186 PURCHASE OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND

Confidential item.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

20 April 2021

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Town Mayor