

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL
ON TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

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

Cllr K Baldwin (from Item 67) Cllr L Little (to Item 79)
Cllr S Baylis (to Item 76) Cllr M McBride
Cllr R Crapper Cllr M Mead
Cllr M Crossland Cllr L Sanders
Cllr P Handley Cllr J Sangster
Cllr F Harold Cllr D Wesson
Cllr C James Cllr K Wood

Apologies: None

In attendance: Cllr N Field-Johnson (County Councillor) – until Item 71
Members of the public x 16

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Leverton Item 76 – Grant application for Carterton Gymnastic Club
(family member works at the Club).
Cllr Mead Item 66 - The Siege of Orleans (Leader of WODC).
Cllr Sanders Item 79 - Accounts for Payment (Allotments Secretary)
Cllr Wood Item 79 - Accounts for Payment (Allotments Committee member)

66 CORRESPONDENCE

This item was moved up the Agenda to be considered nearer the start of the meeting.

The following correspondence had been received:

(a) The Siege of Orleans – Lester Giles (co-owner of The Giles Centre). Mr Giles had written in support of The Siege public house using the pavement in Carter’s Walk for tables and chairs during the evenings. WODC had given The Siege notice to cease using the area, which appeared to go against Government policy. He had attached copies of letters from WODC and Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Clerk explained that, whilst the Council understood that this was a difficult issue for both The Siege and those who live and work in the vicinity, this was a Licencing matter and not in the remit of the Town Council. Cllr Little asked if the Council could write to WODC in support of The Siege as a local business and the Chairman said that we would need all the facts before the Council could take a view one way or the other.

Ten members of the public had attended with an interest in this item. The Clerk would let them have details of who to contact to take the matter further and they left the meeting at this point.

(b) Bridle Track from Kilkenny Lane to Shilton – Rotary Club of Witney. The Rotary Club would like to undertake a project to improve the bridle track to make it accessible to all.

The path would provide a 2.5-3.0m wide consolidated hardcore surface suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

The Chairman explained that the bridle track was in Shilton Parish and does not fall under the remit of this Council. Cllr Handley expressed his concern that the path should be wide enough for all users, especially horse riders, to pass safely.

(c) Amenity Land – 60 Heather Close. When the boundary fence to the rear of this property needed replacement, the owners discovered an overgrown area that had not been maintained for many years and decided to move the fence into alignment with the properties either side, therefore improving the tidiness of this area. They were unaware that this land belonged to the Town Council. They ask whether the Council would consider allowing them to sign an Indemnity stating that if the property was sold the fence would be returned to its original position before advertising it for sale.

Several Councillors remembered that the Council used to have a policy stating that it would not sell any of its land, but in more recent times any such requests have been referred to a small working group to look at in detail before reporting back to Council for a decision.

A vote was taken and Council RESOLVED to refer this request to the working party.

(d) Cemetery – Black Bourton Parish Council. A letter had been received from the Chairman of Black Bourton Parish Council raising concerns that space at the graveyard at St Mary's Church is rapidly running out and with the increase in Carterton's population the space available for burials is unsustainable. They urged the Council to seek the creation of a new Cemetery to take the pressure of their graveyard and ensure adequate provision for the future.

Cllr Little said that a lot of work had been carried out on this several years ago, with trial digs being undertaken at various sites around Carterton, none of which had been found to be suitable for a Cemetery. She said this should be a priority for the Council to take forward. Cllr Crossland said that every piece of land that had become available in the parish since then had proved unsuitable. When large housing developments come before WODC Planning, one of the conditions is land for a cemetery, but again the problem has been finding land suitable for burials. The Clerk said that land within the parish boundary is either too stony or too low in the water table to support a cemetery.

The Clerk agreed to research the work previously done by the Council on this project.

67 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 27 July 2021, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Cllr Handley and Cllr Little abstained.

Cllr Handley raised an issue relating to elections and did not believe the protocol had been followed correctly. Under Item 55 of the last minutes (Bullying and Harassment Policy), he said it correctly stated that he had left the meeting after this item, but he was disappointed that he had received a letter from the Chairman barring him from coming into the Town Hall. He believed this was unwarranted and handed out copies of the letter to all those present.

68 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 27 July 2021, which was Noted.

69 URGENCY COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2021

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Urgency Committee held on 23 August 2021. As the full Town Council does not meet in August, the Urgency Committee was convened to approve the following:

- (a) Accounts for Payment for August 2021.
- (b) Amenities work, as follows:
 - Market Square. Maintenance and repair of the rising bollards at a cost of £1,360 plus VAT.
 - Tree to the rear of 47 Heather Close that overhangs the resident's boundary with a concern about falling branches.
 - Large Sycamore tree overhanging a property at Kings Court that is dropping dead wood onto the mobile home. The tree has a Tree Protection Order and WODC have been contacted for permission to carry out maintenance.
 - Reduce overhanging branches of trees on Alvescot Road Recreation Ground that border the rear of 12 Pinecroft following a concern raised by the resident.
 - The Laurel screen on the western boundary of Alvescot Road Recreation Ground has started to affect the growth of the row of trees planted in front of it. The hedge needs to be severely pruned to preserve the integrity of the trees.
 - Community Centre Car Park. Top up hardcore surface of the car park at a cost of £480 plus VAT.
- (c) BT Broadband Contract Renewal – approval for signature of the contract.
- (d) Thames Valley Police Contract – approval for signature of the contract for the PCSO funded by the Council.

The Committee had Approved the above items. The Minutes were Noted.

70 URGENCY COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Urgency Committee held on 13 September 2021. The meeting was convened to approve the monthly payment to HMRC and Oxfordshire County Council Pension Scheme, at a cost of £2,724.94 and £2,523.36 respectively.

The Minutes were Noted.

71 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

Several members of the public spoke on Item 75, Town Council Events Update, regarding this year's Annual Town Meeting. One member of the public said he believed the Local Government Act 1972 stated that the meeting should be held annually. The Clerk explained that this related to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, but it is not a statutory requirement to hold an Annual Town Meeting. Cllr Bull said that the meeting is usually held between May and July, but with the ongoing Covid-19 situation it had not been possible to set a date.

Linda Moore said that the Minutes of the Urgency Committee held on 5 July 2021 were not on the Town Council website. She also asked whether the Annual Financial Statement was available yet and if she could have a copy of the Statement from the previous year. The Clerk said this year's Financial Statement was expected towards the end of October and last year's Statement was available for the public to see.

72 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

(a) Cllr Field-Johnson – Burford and North Carterton

Cllr Field-Johnson said that he continued to receive complaints from members of the public about the flooded underpass on Upavon Way. This problem had been ongoing for the last two years, during which time it had been drained twice, but filled up again. New pumps and electricity supply were awaited and was assured at the beginning of September that the work would be done within the next 60 days. He has escalated this matter and would follow it up once again.

He continued to work on getting traffic lights or a pull-in lane at the entrance to Cotswold Wildlife Park to address traffic congestion issues on the A361. OCC were now looking into this and a meeting would take place shortly to look at this issue.

For the first time in about four years all the grits between Carterton and Minister Lovell have been cleared and drained.

The condition of the River Windrush is still poor, with sewage still being deposited into the river. He will continue to work to get this situation addressed.

(b) Cllr Leverton – South and West Carterton, Armed Forces Champion

Cllr Leverton had been invited to Gateway Primary School to witness the opening of the new Bright Start Pre-School building.

He had attended several parish meetings, where there had been some issues with the Twenty's Plenty campaign and sewage issues in Langford and Alvescot. Hopefully, news of some improvements to local bus services, especially to surrounding villages, was expected in October.

He attended a Military Champions meeting at County Hall. The Military Covenant would be going through Parliament for its final reading shortly.

He attended a meeting of the Transport Strategy Advisory Group, where discussions included stopping new infrastructure being built and allowing only one parking space per house with a view to reducing car ownership.

He had been invited by Major General Eastman to celebrate and commemorate the Fijians serving today and those who had lost their lives serving in the British Army. Himself and his wife Sue had been fortunate to be included on the VIP guest list and had a wonderful day, that concluded with a very inspirational speech by a young man who had lost both legs in Afghanistan four years ago and represented Great Britain in the Paralympics.

Cllr Handley urged both County Councillors to press for Upavon Way to be resurfaced. Cllr Leverton would look into whether Cotsway Housing Association were going to attend to the road adjacent to their development at the former Osprey site.

73 ADJOURNMENT FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

(a) Cllr Bull - Carterton North West, Inclusion Champion and member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Bull said there is a lack of Dentist provision in Oxfordshire, which has been particularly an issue in Carterton recently due to the Broadshires practice moving venues and then ceasing

its NHS services. This appears to be a widespread national problem. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee were now looking at this and it was back on the Healthwatch agenda as well.

(b) Cllr Crossland – Carterton North West

Cllr Crossland had been working hard on Planning matters and under Development Control one of the issues this month was whether the Old Mill at Kingham should be converted into a 32-bedroom luxury spa hotel or five detached houses and this matter is ongoing.

She had been involved with the Economic and Social Scrutiny and Oversight Committee, where the REEMA North site was mentioned and hopefully progress would be made in the near future.

(c) Cllr Leverton - Carterton South and Armed Forces Champion

In his role as Armed Forces Champion, he had helped two people this week who were being made homeless. Cllr Little said there is a lot of help available but directing people to the right path is not always easy. Cllr Leverton would look at the possibility of co-ordinating services via the annual meeting that used to take place at Dalton Barracks.

(d) Cllr McBride – Carterton North East, Chairman of WODC and Vice-Chairman of the WODC Environmental Committee.

As Chairman of the District Council, he had attended six civic events representing West Oxfordshire and the wider community. The next full Council meeting would take place in October.

(e) Cllr Mead – Carterton South, Leader of WODC

Cllr Mead said that WODC had committed to taking in Afghan families as part of the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. The families would be housed in private rental accommodation rather than social housing and this would be paid for by central government.

WODC are also supporting The Queen’s Green Canopy scheme for her Platinum Jubilee next year. The District Council has committed to planting a small Orchard at Kilkenny Lane Country Park and this would begin in October.

Covid-19 vaccines were still being rolled out and it was interesting to note that just over 90% of those in hospital with the virus were unvaccinated. Schools were in the process of sending out letters to get the 11-15 year olds vaccinated. The Government’s winter plan is for (a) to carry on with the vaccination programme as we are, (b) if the NHS comes under pressure there would be vaccine-only environments, mandatory face coverings and people would be encouraged to work from home. She would encourage all residents to remain vigilant over the winter months.

Michael Gove has taken over the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and he will not be looking at the Planning White Paper for the foreseeable future. The MHCLG has now changed its name to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The District Council have also not had their Audit paperwork back, so it would appear that Council auditors in general are experiencing a backlog.

Cllr Little said that the Blesson Kallimel, Chairman of Carterton Community Foodbank, had met with Robert Courts regarding evacuating 1,000 Christians from Kabul. The Foodbank, at

its new location at Carterton Methodist Church, would be supporting refugees from Afghanistan resettling in West Oxfordshire. She also volunteers two days a week for the Covid Vaccination Programme, where they are licenced for 16-17 year olds and have applied for the over 50s booster licence.

Cllr Handley asked about the Local Plan. Cllr Mead said that the Local Plan Review would start in October and would be completed in 2023.

The Chairman thanked the District Councillors for their reports.

74 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Sanders as a newly elected Town Councillor for Gateway Ward.

He was sad to report that Margaret Tinner, who was Deputy Town Clerk for 26 years, had recently passed away. He expressed his thanks to Stella Catt, who had found a picture of Margaret in the Town Hall Archives, shaking hands with the Mayor, Cllr Brian Crossland, on the occasion of her 25 years' service in 2005. It was also sad to report that Roger Battley who looks after the Town Archives had recently lost his wife Kath. A short silence was held in memory of those who had passed away.

The annual Battle of Britain Service would be held at St John's Church on Sunday 26 September 2021. Councillors and civic guests from surrounding parishes would meet at the Town Hall beforehand to process across to the Church.

The Deputy Mayor and himself had an informal meeting with representatives from local villages. The biggest concern they had was bus services and they would liaise with the bus companies to take this forward.

The RAF Brize Norton Military Wives Choir are now meeting in the Town Hall and he wished them every success.

At the start of September, he had attended a Briefing at Upper Heyford regarding the Veterans Hub that is being set up at the WI Hall in Carterton. Upper Heyford has a large Veterans Hub and were able to give some helpful advice.

On 4 September, himself and his wife Sue were invited by the Base Commander as VIP guests at BrizeFest, which was a great family event.

On 8 September, along with Cllr Crossland and Cllr McBride, he had attended the 'An Evening at Dorchester Abbey', which is an annual event to celebrate Local Government in Oxfordshire.

On 9 September, he attended a meeting with the Base Commander at RAF Brize Norton, together with four other Chairs to discuss recent events on the base, particularly relating to Afghanistan.

On 20 September, himself and the Deputy Mayor had a positive and constructive meeting at Carterton Community College to re-connect after Covid and he will be attending their Open Evening on 30 September at 4.30-7.30pm, to which all Councillors are also invited. In the afternoon of the same day, he had been invited to RAF Fairford's Civic Leaders Tour.

Finally, he expressed his thanks to his wife, Sue, for her support with his civic duties.

75 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS UPDATE

The Carterton Carnival had taken place on Saturday 28 August and he asked Cllr Bull to give an update. She said the weather had been good and the event went very well. A few final payments were still expected, but the Carnival raised around £1,000. She would report back to Council once accurate figures were available. Cllr Little asked how this compared to last year and sought assurance of support for Carterton Celebrates also. Cllr Bull said that the Council had awarded a Grant of £3,500 for last year's Carnival and it made a loss of around £500. It was hoped that the Carnival would become self-sustaining as it progressed over the years. She agreed with Cllr Little that Carterton Celebrates should be supported in the same way.

The Clerk reported on forthcoming events. Remembrance Sunday this year would take place on 14 November and it was hoped to provide a full event as in previous years. An Event Plan had been prepared and meetings had taken place with key participants. Cllr Little said she was honoured to be one of the 50 members chosen to represent SSAFA at the Cenotaph this year, so another member would lay a wreath at Carterton.

The Christmas Lights Switch-On would be held on Friday 3 December and, again, a full event was being planned, with a Lantern Parade, Street Fair and Switch-On.

76 GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Carterton Gymnastic Club. The Club sought a Grant of £5,000 to install commercial grade, non-slip flooring in the reception, café area and the corridor leading to the toilets. The current surface becomes slippery when wet and is hard to disinfect and clean adequately. The Chairman had declared an interest in this item and left the room whilst this was discussed.

It was noted that the Council had awarded them a Grant of £10,000 in 2019 to purchase equipment. Council would prefer that the Club sought to raise some of the money from other sources, such as a Grant from Sports England or local fundraising. It was proposed that Council award 50% of the amount.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £2,500, to be held by Council until the remainder had been raised by the Club.

(b) Edith Moorhouse Primary School. The school sought a Grant of £2,450 to provide phonics books and resources for Reception and Year 1 children. This is part of a school-wide project to create a passion for reading, raise standards and enrich their curriculum, at a total cost of £7,659.

It was noted that the school had raised a lot of the money themselves, but Council felt that if this Grant was awarded it would set a precedent for the other schools. Council did not therefore feel able to award the Grant, but instead would be pleased to offer advice on other ways they could get help with reading resources, for example Carterton Educational Trust or perhaps by approaching other schools in the area with a view to resource sharing.

Council RESOLVED to REFUSE the Grant, but Cllr Leverton and Cllr Bull would arrange to meet with the school to give advice.

77 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Financial Statements to 31 August 2021, set out at Annex A, was Noted.

78 RECEIPTS

Receipts to 30 September 2021, previously circulated, were Noted.

79 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Accounts for September 2021, previously Approved for payment at the meeting of the Urgency Committee held on 23 August 2021 and set out at Annex B, were Noted.

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts for October 2021, set out at Annex C, be APPROVED for payment. Cllr Handley and Cllr Little abstained.

80 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

81 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Confidential item.

The meeting ended 8.50 pm

19 October 2021

Town Mayor