

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021
COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Cllr M McBride Chair
Cllr K Wood Vice-Chair

Cllr J Bull
Cllr P Handley (ex-officio)
Cllr L Little
Cllr D Wesson

In attendance: Cllr K Baldwin

Apologies: Cllr R Crapper

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Teresa Whitford - Admin

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bull and Cllr Wood declared an interest in Item 19, Sensory Garden Project, as they had been helping the Trefoil Guild with this.

Cllr Little stated that she was recording the meeting. She expressed her sincere thanks to Teresa Whitford, who has always been a loyal, efficient and hardworking Officer and it would be sad to see her go when she retires at the end of November.

11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2021, previously Approved by full Council at its meeting on 27 July 2021, were approved as a true record, subject to one amendment. Item 1, Election of Chairman, should read 'Nominations were received from Cllr Wesson and Cllr McBride' rather than 'Cllr Little and Cllr McBride'.

The Minutes would be amended accordingly.

12 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

There were no members of the public present.

13 ADOPTION OF UNREGISTERED LAND

The Committee were asked to consider whether Council should adopt the following unregistered land:

(a) Brownes Lane. Historical letters had been circulated to the Committee showing that ownership of Brownes Lane has never been exactly determined. To safeguard the Council, Brownes Hall Committee and residents, it would be prudent to attempt to officially adopt the lane. It was noted that the Brownes Hall Committee were in favour of the Town Council adopting the lane.

The Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council seek to adopt Brownes Lane.

(b) Footpath from Burford Road to Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed that this pathway is not maintained by them and state that their Countryside Access map does not show it as a Public Right of Way. The Council have received numerous complaints relating to this pathway over the years. There is a large pothole at the Burford Road end that neither Lloyds Pharmacy nor Costa Coffee can rectify as it falls outside their boundaries. Paul Chaston Commercial Property Ltd, the company that maintain the Tower Centre area, have sometimes attended to the hedge that runs along the pathway as an act of goodwill, but it is not on their contract. The Committee were asked whether Council should consider officially adopting the pathway, which would allow the path and hedge to be regularly maintained.

It was noted that the surface of the car park area to the front of the shops was in a dreadful state and Cllr Handley suggested that Council look at attending to this as well. This would be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council seek to adopt the pathway.

(c) Small pockets of land in Richens Drive, Edgeworth Drive and Lavender Place. These pockets of amenity land were never handed over by the developers, who are now in liquidation. In 2010, the Town Clerk (Janet Eustace) had tried to adopt these areas, but Land Registry would not allow it at the time as proof of ownership could not be supplied. As 11 years have now passed and Council have proof of maintenance of these areas, the Council may wish to try to officially adopt them once again.

Cllr Little said that Council should ensure that builders are held to account for any future developments to avoid this problem going forward.

The Committee RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council seek to adopt the above pieces of land.

14 WORK FOR AUTHORISATION

Bark for Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. The Playground Inspector had marked the topping up of the bark safety surface at the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground as urgent. It was last replenished in February 2020 and was overdue for topping up. He recommended 12 bulk bags are used to ensure a minimum depth was reached. The cost would be £2,740 plus VAT.

There was a discussion as to whether a more cost-effective safety surface could be considered. It was noted that all similar surfaces were expensive, but this could be looked at again at a future meeting.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the bark is topped up.

15 TOWN CENTRE PROPOSAL

Cllr Baldwin had put together a proposal for improvements to the Town Centre and his report had been circulated with the Agenda. He had observed that the town centre is being used as a through road rather than traffic using the ring road and this leads to traffic backing up in the town centre. This results in poor air quality and traffic noise for shoppers and those sitting outside the cafes and restaurants.

His report set out two possible options:

(a) Divert traffic coming into the town centre along Alvescot Road via a new road through the Market Square to allow pedestrianisation of Alvescot Road from the traffic lights to the

entrance to the Library. The War Memorial would need to be protected or moved to another location. The Car Park could benefit from some reorganisation to accommodate more parking spaces as part of this scheme. This option could be delivered in two phases, firstly to temporarily divert traffic through the Market Square for a trial period during which the project is reversible, mitigating unforeseen issues before going ahead with the full pedestrianisation.

(b) Pedestrianisation without cutting through the Market Square, by forcing traffic to use the ring road. This would increase traffic around the ring road and lead to potential overuse of town centre car parks.

Both options would lead to a healthier environment for those using the town centre shops and cafes/restaurants. The Thursday Market would move to the pedestrianised area, providing a more natural footfall than the current location.

Cllr Little said that a lot of work was done on the regeneration of the town centre as part of the Masterplan, which had not been taken forward. The Market Square was funded from S106 money from the development of Morrisons supermarket. Teresa Whitford said that around 10-12 years ago Catherine Chater, Carterton Fast Forward Project Manager, had worked extensively on regenerating the town centre that included pedestrianisation and the use of shared spaces, but again this had not been taken forward.

Cllr Handley said this was a good scheme but highlighted that the County Council had already earmarked £600K for alterations to the crossroads to improve traffic flow.

The Committee agreed that a more detailed investigation of work previously undertaken by the council would be carried out and this matter brought back to a future meeting.

16 FOOTWAY/CYCLEWAY PROPOSAL

Cllr Baldwin presented a report, previously circulated, with a view to encouraging bicycle use in the town, in particular the pathway between Arkell Avenue and Alvescot Road Recreation Ground, which is currently for pedestrians only. He proposed removing the No Cycling signs to allow cycling along this pathway. Installing a bike chicane would slow cyclists down to keep pedestrians safe.

It was noted that the path may not be wide enough for shared use with pedestrians, cyclists, pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc. The Clerk would contact OCC Highways for advice on how this path could be improved for the safety of all users.

17 HOME CLOSE PATHWAY

Cllr Baldwin presented a report, previously circulated, highlighting an unofficial pathway that had been used extensively by residents for over 20 years for access between Home Close, Richens Drive and the adjacent RAF housing. It consists of a gap in the fence and 8-10m of grass that becomes slippery in wet weather and presents a hazard for those with pushchairs and the elderly. The alternative route would add around 300-400m distance.

The Committee were asked to consider whether Council should cover the grassed area with a safer surface, which could be in the form of tarmac or safety matting of the type used in playgrounds. Amey Defence Services would need to be consulted as it is MOD land.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council take this forward.

18 THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

This is a tree planting initiative created to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, which invites people from across the UK to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'. Everyone from individuals to Scout/Guiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and businesses will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees from October 2021, when the tree planting season begins, through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022. This will create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the nation, which will benefit future generations.

From October, photographs of trees that are planted can be uploaded onto the QGC map and an official plaque can be purchased to mark the occasion. Councils have a valuable role to play in this by supporting schools, community groups etc and coordinating activity to ensure a good spread of new trees.

The Town Council are already involved in a Tree Planting Scheme to plant trees along the four main roads leading from the town centre. The first phase, to plant 33 trees along Brize Norton Road, is due to commence in October. The cost of the project is £37,500.

A local resident has donated eleven trees to the Town Council (7 x Horse Chestnuts and 4 x Oaks), currently between 12" and 24" high. All the schools were contacted and Gateway, St John's and St Joseph's primary schools would like one tree each, which will need to be properly planted and protected to ensure survival and a quote for this has been sought from the tree surgeon. The Town Council have pockets of land around the town for the remaining eight trees. An approximate cost would be £600 plus VAT, which includes ground preparation, planting, protection with stakes/mesh and mulch around the base.

Cllr Handley suggested asking local businesses to sponsor a tree.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council include these tree planting projects as part of The Queen's Green Canopy.

19 SENSORY GARDEN PROJECT

Carterton Trefoil Guild have been in discussion with Cllr Bull and Cllr Wood regarding construction of a sensory garden on the grassed area adjacent to the Market Square. The Guild has submitted a Grant application for £5,000 to the Town Council a while ago and Council had asked for more detailed costings. The project would improve the appearance of the Market Square area and provide a focal point for the local community. The Committee was asked to recommend that Council approves this project.

A project plan has been agreed, consisting of a bench, flowers, shrubs etc. The garden would be maintained by the Town Warden and UBICO. A maximum cost of £1,500 has been set aside, which includes installation of a bench, preparation of the ground for planting and purchase of plants and shrubs. Maintenance of the garden would cost a maximum of £200 per annum. Final costs would be available for the October Council meeting. Teresa Whitford said that Emma Phillips from WODC had a pot of money to award for regeneration projects as part of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, and she has put the Trefoil Guild in touch with her.

The Trefoil Guild had approached local shops for donations of plants etc and have someone who will make raised planters for them. Cllr Wesson suggested using the bench that had originally been presented to Blenheim Court by the Gala Committee, which had been removed as part of the redevelopment being undertaken currently.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Council approves this project.

20 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 item follows.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

21 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Confidential item.

The Meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

1st February 2022

Chairman