

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL
ON TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2018
COMMENCING AT 7.45 PM

Present: Cllr Mrs L Little - Town Mayor
Cllr N Leverton - Deputy Mayor

Cllr Mrs D Bulley Cllr Mrs M Mead
Cllr Ms J Bull Cllr M McBride
Cllr R Crapper Cllr D Melvin
Cllr Mrs E Hatton Cllr D Wesson
Cllr J Hayes Cllr Mrs C Wilson

Apologies Cllr Miss S Coul, Cllr Mrs C Delaney, Cllr P Scott
Cllr Mrs S Scott-Stovold

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Tan Marchant, Assistant Clerk

In attendance: One member of the press
Mrs Doreen Clarke

195 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Little declared an interest in Item 198, Clerk's Report, concerning the Mayor's Allowance.

196 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 March 2018, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

197 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor read out a letter she had received from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, which thanked the Town Council for supporting their monthly group meetings at the Town Hall over the years, despite which the group had to be discontinued. The group members wished to express their thanks for making them very welcome and being such kind hosts.

The Mayor attended a Fete at Carterton Community College on the morning of 23 March 2018. That afternoon, both she and Cllr Mrs Wilson attended the Carterton Gymnastics Club competitions, where they helped present the Awards.

The Mayor attended a meeting in London with Robert Courts MP on 27 March 2018 and had discussions regarding Carterton. On Thursday 29 March 2018 there was another very successful drop-in Lunch Club at the Town Hall and the Mayor expressed her continued thanks to Blesson Kallimell for sharing the cost with her to provide the free lunch.

On 7 April 2018 she attended the Mayor of Abingdon's charity dinner and she thanked Cllr Mrs Wilson for accompanying her.

The Mayor had a visit from Kara Bint to the Town Hall, where she was able to thank her for baking a wonderful cake to raise money for the Mayor's Charities.

Cllr Mrs Little said she had been asked to make an announcement on behalf of the following Councillors: Cllr Mrs Delaney, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Mrs Wilson, Cllr Mrs Bulley, Cllr Scott, Cllr Mrs Scott-Stovold and Cllr Mrs Little, together with Conservative members Mr & Mrs Brennan. The announcement read as follows:

"As from midday today, we have all resigned from the Conservative party, the branch and WOCA. Letters have been sent to the offices in London, to the Prime Minister and to the MP Robert Courts and various other individuals. The reason we have made this decision is tenfold and is explained fully in our statement letter".

The Mayor then read out the following statement:

"Since Carterton Town Council has engaged solicitors to make a claim against me, they have provided no evidence to substantiate their claim at this moment in time. My solicitor has provided unequivocal evidence that TLVH is an unregistered charity and has asked for Carterton Town Council's solicitor to provide a definitive response as to whether it will issue a claim or not. My solicitor has made Carterton Town Council's solicitor aware that unless Carterton Town Council plan to issue a claim against me for their baseless claim, my solicitor does not intend to correspond further with Carterton Town Council's solicitor as their conduct is considered a waste of both parties' time and expense. It can be noted that we are nearly two months past since the resolution that they have made to issue a claim against me and no real steps forward have been made due to the claim being spurious. I look forward to a swifter conclusion of the matter whereby Carterton Town Council withdraw their claim, which is the most sensible option in the circumstances".

198 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's Report, copies of which had previously been circulated, was received. The Report is attached at Annex 'A'. See below.

199 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

Doreen Clarke, who had been a resident of Carterton for over 50 years, spoke on behalf of herself and many Carterton residents, some of them ex-forces. She said she wished to complain about Cllr Leverton's election leaflet. The Clerk said that the Council were in Purdah and if she wished to complain about the District Council election, she should contact the Monitoring Officer.

200 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Cllr N Field-Johnson and Cllr P J Handley had given their apologies for the meeting.

201 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20 March 2018. These were noted.

202 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Financial Statement to 31 March 2018, set out at Annex B, was noted.

203 INCOME RECEIVED

Income Received during March 2018, previously circulated, was noted.

204 DEBIT CARD TRANSACTIONS

The list of Debit Card transactions for March 2018, previously circulated, was noted.

205 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Accounts for Payment for April 2018 had previously been circulated.

Cllr Mrs Little asked what the payment of £337.20 to Azura Limited related to and the Clerk said it was for an electrical safety certificate for the Allandale Centre. Cllr Mrs Little also asked for an explanation of what a condition survey was at a cost of £1,170 and the Clerk said that part of the Lease process was to have a condition survey carried out by an expert when the building was vacated and before the new tenant moved in. Cllr Mrs Little asked whether three quotes should have been sought because the cost was in excess of £1,000, but the Clerk said there were very few people who could do the survey but he was recommended Marriotts as a prominent Oxford company. He had also checked whether the amount they were charging was appropriate for this work and it was.

A vote was taken, with Cllr Mrs Little abstaining.

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts, set out at Annex C, be APPROVED for payment.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm

15 May 2018

Town Mayor

1. Allandale update – verbal report. **Negotiations were ongoing. A gas and electrical safety check has been carried out and a conditional survey had been completed. The Mayor, as a Trustee of the Family Centre, asked if there was a procedure to inspect the premises at the end of the previous tenancy and would the taxpayer be paying for any electrical/gas repairs. The Clerk said the premises had been vacated and inspected, and some electrical issues were identified and resolved. When the extension of the Lease was permitted by the Town Council, additional rent had been paid and this had been used to ensure the premises were safe for the new tenant.**
2. Pampas Close play area refurbishment. **The playground was officially opened at 2.30pm on Monday 9 April 2018 and was proving popular with families.**
3. Elections on 3 May – reminder re “Purdah”. **Elections for District Councillors would take place on Thursday 3 May 2018. The Clerk reminded Councillors to familiarise themselves with the regulations for Purdah, particularly for candidates not making any political statements in relation to this Council. He advised that they make no statements at all.**
4. Mayor's Allowance Account – correspondence. **The Mayor left the room while this item was discussed. The Clerk gave an update on the current situation. A letter had been received from Mr Ian Talbot, the head of SSAFA in Oxfordshire, stating that SSAFA does not give or receive any funds from the Ted Little Veterans Home. Council had resolved to instruct solicitors to pursue the recovery of £4,835 from Cllr Mrs Little. The response from Cllr Mrs Little's solicitor is that there appears to be no intention to pay. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's previous decision, he would write to the solicitor and say the following: *“The Council has agreed to pursue the claim through the courts if necessary. Your client has never provided any documentary evidence to support her public statements regarding claims from the account, despite being asked to discuss the matter on several occasions by the Clerk. Can Mrs Little please provide the following: evidence from her personal bank account that the cheques relating to civic events were repaid. Mrs Little stated publicly that the money had been repaid; a full statement of account from the Ted Little Veterans Home from its inception to April 2018; evidence identifying the authorised cheque signatories for the account, details of Trustees, charitable objectives and governance arrangements. Can Mrs Little provide evidence of what has been done with the donation made by Cllr Mrs Little to her own organisation?*
In relation to the St George's Day Dinner 2017, Mrs Little has not informed the Council how she intends to pay for her guests who attended the event. I have no option but to write to the non-service guests individually and the Station Commander at RAF Brize Norton regarding service personnel who attended to obtain evidence to support the Council's claim. This will be done shortly. I would prefer to avoid this course of action as I believe it would be embarrassing for Mrs Little and therefore I request that settlement is made for these outstanding guests prior to the date.
*It is minuted from a recent Council meeting that Council requested that Mrs Little hand over all documents relating to the Mayor's Account to the Council which are in her possession. Mrs Little has made public statements admitting that she holds documents relating to the account. These documents are the property of Carterton Town Council and should be returned forthwith”.***
5. Preparation for Annual Town Meeting. **This will take place on Tuesday 8 May 2018 commencing at 7.00pm. An agenda will be published in the local press and on town noticeboards.**

6. Save the Children May Day Fair – Having sponsored this event for £1,000, the organisers have reminded the Council that two free pitches are available for its use on the day. Would any Councillors be free to man a gazebo and promote the Council and its activities, including the distribution of town guides, maps, etc? **A number of Councillors indicated they would be available for this event.**

7. St George’s Day Dinner – verbal report. **The Dinner is scheduled to take place on Friday 5 May 2018 at the Cotswold Gateway Hotel in Burford. The Clerk had a brief conversation with the Chairman this evening and it seems numbers had increased significantly over the last few days. He said he was conscious that this is a civic event and Council needs to have assurance that at what point the event is viable or not viable and need to keep an eye on this as the month goes on.**

8. **Diary Dates:**
Planning Committee 1 May 2018
St George’s Day Dinner 5 May 2018 – Cotswold Gateway Hotel
Annual Town Meeting 8 May 2018 – St John’s Church
Planning & Town Council 15 May 2018

**R Spurs
Town Clerk**