

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING
ON TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020
COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

Present: Cllr N Leverton - Vice-Chairman

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

Apologies: Cllr C Cook, Cllr L Little, Cllr M Mead

In attendance: Several members of the public

Officers: Ron Spurs – Town Clerk
Katie Zasada

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Crapper – Item 60, Carterton Educational Trust (Trust member)
Cllr Hatton – Item 60, Carterton Educational Trust (Trust member)
Cllr James – Item 61, May Day Fair Sponsorship (family involvement in event)
Cllr Wood – Item 64, Payments relating to Allotments (allotment holder)

49 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2020, previously circulated to Members, were approved as a true record and signed by the Vice-Chairman. No meeting was held in August.

50 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 21 July 2020, which were Noted. No meeting was held in August.

51 URGENCY COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Urgency Committee held on 30 July 2020, which had been convened to determine what action should be taken by the Town Council to recover the sum of £18,921.71 from Cllr Little following notification from her solicitor that she was unable to pay the outstanding amount and to consider whether it was appropriate to issue a press release.

After considering the options, the Committee opted to serve a notice on Cllr Little requesting payment or the Council would consider instigating bankruptcy proceedings. No press release would be issued in the immediate future. The Minutes were Noted.

52 AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities and Economic Regeneration Committee held on 1 September 2020, which were Noted.

53 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

Sue James, organiser of the May Day Fair, explained the background to her letter to the Council to be considered later in this meeting.

Kayleigh James, co-organiser of the May Day Fair, spoke about the letter asking what the Council would like to do about the sponsorship money given to organise the event. Should the Council decide to carry the amount over this would help greatly towards organising next year's event.

54 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Cllr Handley said he was grateful to the Town Council for allowing him a leave of absence while his wife was unwell. He has however continued to work from home during this time. He had secured grants for nearly £8,000 for the Family Centre, £6,000 for the Football Club to purchase goalposts and funding for fencing materials at the Allotments following vandalism. He had also obtained funding for five white gates for surrounding villages.

Last Friday he had accompanied the new Cabinet Member for Highways, Liam Walker, to look at the unsatisfactory condition of the road surface in Lawton Avenue and Arkell Avenue, together with plans for two extra roads to be created off the crossroads. The County's budget had been reduced by another £15 million and he hoped this would not hold up projects such as the crossroads scheme.

Plans for the new Fire Station were progressing to the design phase now that requirements for the Ambulance and Police had been finalised. A large proportion of County Council staff were still working from home, which has made site meetings difficult. He would continue to follow this up.

Discussions had taken place to reduce the speed limit between Carterton and Shilton to 20mph, but the Police could not enforce it. It had therefore been decided to extend the 30mph speed limit from Carterton to the brow of the hill and 40mph through the Dip. This would be monitored and reviewed at a future time.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Cllr Handley for his report.

55 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had asked Cllr Leverton to report an announcement on her behalf as she was not able to attend the meeting herself. She wanted to express her thanks to the Staff and Cllr Wesson who had assisted in commemorating VJ Day.

56 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that a letter of thanks had been received from the Allotments Society for the funding and support given by the Council. He had visited the Kilkenny Road allotments, together with Teresa Whitford, and met with the site manager of the new housing development adjacent to the Allotments. The trees and hedgerow on the site had been removed as part of the development, but it had been confirmed that a 2m high fence would be installed along the boundary.

57 TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS – SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2020

The Town Clerk had circulated a report with plans for the proposed Council events due to take place between September and December 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the ability of local authorities to deliver annual community events and Carterton was no exception. Council were asked to consider and approve outline plans for Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Lights Switch On/Lantern Procession, which are important events for the town.

(a) Remembrance Sunday. This falls on 8 November this year. It usually attracts between 3-4,000 people. It is essential that the event takes account of the Covid-19 restrictions whilst maintaining the dignity and format of previous years. It is not currently anticipated that there would be a formal church service. There would be no parade from the Church to the Market Square nor any road closures. Each year between 30-35 wreaths are laid at the War Memorial by representatives of the service organisations and local groups. It is suggested that this continue but limiting the number to 20. Crosses would be laid by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The situation would be kept under review and arrangements adjusted to adhere to any further government guidelines.

(b) Christmas Lights Switch On and Lantern Parade. This marks the start of the Christmas period and usually attracts several thousand people over the course of the event. The Lantern Parade attracted 200 or so entries last year. In the current climate it would be negligent to hold a large public event like this. Christmas Trees would be installed in the Market Square and Marigold Square as per last year. It is recommended that the Lights are switched on by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at 6.00pm on Friday 27 November 2020. There would be no stalls, funfair or road closures and the public would be asked not to attend.

A meeting of the Events Working Group would be held on 17 September 2020 to discuss this further and then brought to the next Town Council meeting for approval.

58 WORKS FOR AUTHORISATION

(a) Edgeworth Drive. Maintenance work for 18 trees, at a cost of £1,175 plus VAT.

(b) The Maples Playground. New nest swing and frame required to replace broken one, at a cost of £5,304 plus VAT. The cost includes removal of existing frame, supply and installation of new frame and swing.

(c) ARRG Playground. Top-up bark was required beneath the play equipment, which was authorised by Council in July 2020. On completion, the playground inspector was not satisfied the depth met legal requirements and a further ten bags are required, at a cost of £1,080 plus VAT.

(d) ARRG Playground. Repairs to wet pour safety surface, at a cost of £693.76 plus VAT.

(e) Heather Close. Maintenance work to four trees to the rear of 36 Heather Close, at a cost of £800 plus VAT.

(f) Richens Drive. Reduction by 2.5m to height and spread of Field Maple to the front of 17-19 Richens Drive, at a cost of £300 plus VAT.

(g) Arlington Close. Repairs to wall, including purchase of replacement bricks and repointing, at a cost of £620.

(i) Trefoil Way Playground. Essential repair work, at a cost of £1,519.54 plus VAT.

(j) Traffic light area at junction of Upavon Way/Burford Road. Following representation from a Council member, officers inspected the tree growth immediately west of the traffic lights at the Upavon Way/Burford Road junction. Two quotes were obtained, one to generally tidy up the area at a cost of £1,200 and the other to remove all the growth just north of the traffic lights at a cost of £2,500. All costs are subject to VAT at 20%.

Cllr Handley said there was originally a covenant on the land that the hedge should be maintained by the housing association, although the Land Registry shows the current responsibility to be OCC.

Cllr Crossland said that the hedge is on a major road through the town and the Council has a responsibility to keep the town looking as attractive as possible. She proposed that it is tidied up in the short term whilst looking into a longer term solution for the future. This was agreed.

(k) Tower Square - Planting of Crocuses project. Witney Rotary Club, who had previously planted crocuses in Tower Square as part of a worldwide initiative, would like to do so again. The Club would tidy up the border facing Alvescot Road and plant and maintain the crocuses, at a cost of £400 plus VAT.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the above works.

59 ARRAG PAVILION

The Clerk circulated a report detailing the pre-application advice given to the Council by West Oxfordshire District Council for the replacement of the Pavilion on Alvescot Road Recreation Ground.

The design for the building had been produced by Leys Longden Architects and after approval by Council was submitted to WODC for pre-application advice. The Planning Officer had expressed support for the project but suggested some amendments regarding its scale and siting. It was suggested that it is set further away from the southern boundary and reduced in height. The separate store should be omitted and accommodated within the main building. Council was asked to consider appointing Leys Longden to amend the plans in accordance with this advice.

The majority of Councillors felt that the location of the building should remain unchanged.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that revised plans be drawn up. The location of the proposed building should remain unchanged.

60 GRANT APPLICATION – CARTERTON EDUCATIONAL TRUST

An application for a grant of £5,000 had been received from Carterton Educational Trust for a project in conjunction with local schools to purchase school uniforms for families struggling financially due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was a lengthy discussion, which included concerns that it could set a precedent, on how the Trust would decide which families to support and whether the amount requested was rather high. Cllr Crossland said that the Trust had originally been set up to provide small grants to individuals with a specific need and felt that it was outside the remit of the Council to provide funding for school uniforms. This was echoed by several other Councillors.

Cllr Hatton explained that applications to the Trust for uniforms would be considered carefully by their committee to ensure the funding was used for families who really needed it and this would be done in collaboration with the schools.

The Clerk suggested the grant be given on a drawdown basis, that the money was ringfenced for this particular purpose and should be used within the next financial year. It was proposed that a Grant of £1,500 be given on a drawdown basis and a vote was taken.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE a Grant of £1,500 on a drawdown basis as detailed above. Cllr McBride abstained.

61 MAY DAY FAIR SPONSORSHIP

A letter had been received from the organisers of the May Day Fair. The event had been cancelled this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Council were asked to consider whether the funding provided by the Council towards the cost of running the event should be refunded in full, refunded minus costs already incurred or should be rolled over to next year's event.

Council RESOLVED to APPROVE that the sponsorship should be rolled over to next year's event. Cllr James abstained.

62 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Bank Reconciliation Statements to 31 July and 31 August 2020, set out at Annex A, were noted.

63 INCOME RECEIVED

Income Received during July and August 2020, previously circulated, was noted.

64 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts for August and September, set out at Annex B, be Noted and APPROVED for payment respectively.

65 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

66 NATIONAL SALARY AWARD FOR 2020-2021

Confidential item.

67 URGENCY COMMITTEE

Confidential item.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Councillors for a good meeting and invited them to commemorate those who had given their lives in service of their country in the Battle of Britain.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

20 October 2020

Town Mayor