

# CARLTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting held at Saint Andrews Church, Main Street, Carlton at 1930 hrs on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**Present:** S G Tupling (Chairman), J D Finch, I Sarson, W R Sharp (Councillors), R Windley (Rural Housing Enabler), 14 members of the public, C J Peat (Clerk).

## **1. Apologies for absence from Councillors**

It was resolved that an apology from Cllr Boston be accepted.

## **2. Personal or prejudicial declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda**

Cllr Sharp declared interests in respect of items 10b and 10e.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

It was resolved that the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **4. Reports from members of other public authorities**

### **a) Leicestershire Constabulary**

PBO M Chapman had reported that there had been no reported crime in Carlton during September and October.

## **5. Carlton Affordable Housing Project: Progress report and open public discussion**

The Clerk reported that a meeting had been held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October to discuss an anonymous letter sent to the HCA. The meeting had been attended by J Preston (HCA), S Smith and V Bunting (H&BBC), E Smithard and C Hewitt (NCHA), Cllrs I Sarson, W Sharp and S Tupling, and the Clerk. T Preston had confirmed HCA support for the Carlton Affordable Housing Project (CAHP).

A full planning application (12/00889/FUL), submitted to H&BBC by NCHA, had been validated on 29<sup>th</sup> October. The PC had been notified that the public consultation period would end on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Notice of this application had been posted on the parish noticeboard and on the PC's website. An article about the CAHP, including extracts from the submitted plans, had been published in the November issue of Carlton News.

On 4<sup>th</sup> November Mr N Axelrad had written to the Clerk to state that "The Parish Council Chairman should resign as a Parish Councillor forthwith as he has specifically advised the Parish Councillors to deceive the parishioners regarding the financial position of the Parish Council." The Clerk had replied that this allegation was without foundation since the New Homes Bonus Funding referred to had been published in PC minutes (p.1409/6a), and was by no means certain. Mr N Axelrad had also requested information about the budget for the landscaping scheme, and this had been provided on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

A letter from E W Goold to the PC was considered, and a reply **was agreed**. A letter from D Tredinnick MP to the PC was considered, and a reply **was agreed**.

The meeting was opened for public discussion. Mr Axelrad reiterated his complaint about the Chairman. The Chairman apologised for referring to the objectors as rebels, affirmed that the PC had nothing to hide, stated that he had no intention of resigning, and explained that the PC had taken the view that the prospective NHB funding was not guaranteed and that public discussion of it would be likely to cloud the issue.

Mr N Axelrad reported that a Parish Meeting had been held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November and attended by 48 parishioners. The meeting had voted 46:2 against the CAHP as proposed by the PC, and had demanded a Parish Poll on this question.

Mr N Axelrad complained that the PC's website did not mention the activities of the Action Group, and that the Affordable Housing page did not mention that there was opposition to the CAHP. The Clerk pointed out that the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October had been included on the website, and that he had been reluctant to change the text relating to the CAHP because he thought that doing so would be likely to lead to further allegations that the original text had been misleading and that it had been changed. **It was agreed** that the Affordable Housing page of the C's website would be revised to include mention of the Action Group, and details of the Parish Poll when these were available.

In the course of this discussion Mr Axelrad stated that the Parish Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October had shown that 61% of parishioners were opposed to the CAHP. This was challenged by a member of the public who pointed out that the Parish Meeting in question had been called by the Action Group and would have attracted those opposed to the CAHP. It was not legitimate to extrapolate from the vote at this meeting to the Parish as a whole.

Mr Axelrad complained that the statements of public involvement and consultation submitted as part of the planning application were incomplete and did not mention the Action Group and objections to the CAHP. Mr Axelrad was advised that the planning application had been prepared during the summer and submitted by NCHA: the PC had no control over this material.

A parishioner objected to the CAHP plans on the grounds that two lengths of hedgerow would be destroyed, and open countryside would be lost. The Clerk replied that the ecological survey had identified the hedges in question as of low value, and that they would be replaced by new hedges with a good mix of native species. The Diamond Jubilee Orchard would be developed incrementally by volunteers, and would include plantings, wildlife habitats and hibernation sites in addition to the minimum requirements shown on the submitted landscaping plan. The hedge along the eastern site boundary was right next to Nailstone Road on a blind bend, and the PC took the view that moving it back was justified on highway safety grounds alone.

Another parishioner expressed concern at the cost of the Diamond Jubilee Orchard, and the ongoing costs of site management. The PC took the view that the creation of the Diamond Jubilee Orchard would provide a much-needed area of attractive public open space at the eastern end of the village, and that the ongoing management costs would be in line with those of the village greens, the churchyard and cemetery and Little Lane, and commensurate with the public benefit. It was also noted that the orchard would be wholly owned by the PC and would serve as a buffer and barrier between the built-up area and open countryside. Two parishioners who lived near to the site said how welcome the proposed orchard would be, that an area of open space was needed at the eastern end of the village, and that they strongly supported the proposal.

A parishioner noted that proposed housing developments at Sedgemere and along Station Road in Market Bosworth would include affordable homes, and asked why homes were needed in Carlton as well. The PC advised that the CAHP was intended to help meet local housing needs in the parishes of Carlton and Shackerstone, not those of Market Bosworth. The affordable homes on the new housing estates would be council housing, and would therefore be subject to the right to buy. This meant that these homes would eventually be sold on to tenants, and then on to the open market. In contrast, the affordable homes on the CAHP site would never be sold and would be available to local people in perpetuity. It was also noted that Market Bosworth PC had recognised this problem, and was carrying out a Housing Needs Survey.

## **6. Report 2012-19: Final report of the Carlton Parish Plan Group**

The Carlton Parish Plan Group had completed the Carlton Parish Plan 2011 and submitted a final report. **It was noted** that thanks to grants, help in kind, and funds left over from the 2011 Parish Appraisal, the real cost of the project to the PC had been £31.93. Actual total expenditure on the Project had been £272.62. The CPPG had estimated the total value of volunteer time to the project to be £1,285.

**It was resolved** that each member of the Group be sent a personal letter of thanks from the Chairman, that the CPPG be dissolved, and that the Earmarked Fund set up to finance the project be closed.

## **7. Planning matters**

### **a) Planning applications submitted and determined**

**12/00560/FUL Erection of two dwellings (Amended scheme), The Croft, Shackerstone Walk.** Approved.

**12/00645/HOU Extension and alteration to dwelling, 87B Main St.** Approved.

**12/00827/HOU Erection of a detached garage and alterations to front of dwelling, 10 Main St.** PC had no objection.

**12/00833/CONDIT Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 08/00815/FUL to provide a wider private drive to Plot 10 (4 Orton Close).** PC had no objection.

**12/00857/HOU Removal of part of boundary wall and extension to hard surface area, 85 Main St.** PC had no objection.

### **b) Application 12/00889/FUL**

Draft comments had been copied to Councillors before the meeting, and a final response **was agreed**. The PC supports the proposal on the grounds that it will deliver 11 affordable homes in perpetuity for people with a local connection; meet identified local housing needs; provide homes on a major bus route and within walking and easy cycling distance of the Key Rural Centre of Market Bosworth; help local people who are less fortunate; strengthen the community and help to keep the village of Carlton alive; provide a very attractive gateway development on the NE edge of Carlton; provide a new public open space, pedestrian link and green buffer zone at the edge of built development; deliver highway improvements to Nailstone Road; not affect existing residents. The PC also noted that the design reflected local vernacular architecture; the layout would minimise the impact of the development on open countryside; and requested that the application be

determined without delay. The PC also reported that it was supporting the project through the purchase of land, development of the Carlton Diamond Jubilee Orchard, and creation of a new pedestrian link between Barton and Nailstone Roads.

## **8. Correspondence**

**Freedom of Information Request.** Mr N Axelrad had submitted a request for copies of all emails between Parish Councillors and between Parish Councillors and the Clerk for the six months before 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

**First Contact - LRALC.** **It was resolved** that the PC offer to take part in this trial project in which the PC would forward details of any vulnerable people (with their consent) for assessment.

**Community Payback Initiative.** Serco, HMP Lowdham Grange offered to carry out community works using people who had been sentenced to a community service award under the direction of the probation service. **It was resolved** that this offer not be taken up.

**Police & Crime Commissioner elections** would take place on 15<sup>th</sup> November. The parish polling station would be in the church.

**Footpath S69** diversion order at Bosworth Mill had been confirmed.

**It was resolved** that a list of digital communications and reports received be copied to each Councillor, and that copies be forwarded on request.

**It was resolved** that additional written documentation be circulated.

## **9. Financial matters**

### **a) Clerk's salary and expenses**

The Clerk presented his expenses book for examination, and **it was resolved** that the Clerk be paid £367.36 comprising £225.00 salary, £30 contribution towards broadband subscription and £112.36 approved expenses.

### **b) Clerk's attendance on training course**

**It was resolved** that the Clerk be authorised to attend an LRALC Training Course on Data Protection and Freedom of Information at Anstey on 28<sup>th</sup> November at a cost of £35 plus mileage.

### **c) Disposal of obsolete office equipment**

The Clerk reported that the computer and flat screen bought by the PC in 2005 had become unreliable during 2011, and had been stored and replaced by a new personal computer. There was not room in the Clerk's workroom for two computers as well as the A3 printer scanner belonging to the PC, and the Clerk was happy to continue to use his personal computer for PC business. However, the old computer and screen were still listed on the PC's inventory. **It was resolved** that the old computer and screen be disposed of, and removed from the inventory.

## **10. Donations, event support and budgets of community groups**

### **a) Market Bosworth Community First Responder Scheme**

The PC had donated £100 to this local scheme each year since 2006 (p.1239/11a refers), and had received annual reports of activities and expenditure.

**It was resolved** that a donation of £120 be made to the MBCFR Scheme under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that this expenditure was in the interests of the inhabitants of the area and that the benefit would be commensurate with the expenditure incurred.

#### **b) Carlton Horticultural Show**

Cllr Sharp left the meeting while this item was discussed. **It was noted** that the second Carlton Horticultural Show had been even more successful than the first. **It was resolved** that a grant of £35 be made to the organisers of the 2013 Carlton Horticultural Show under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that this expenditure was in the interests of the inhabitants of the area and that the benefit would be commensurate with the expenditure incurred.

#### **c) Village Christmas tree**

The PC receives a grant of £50 each year from H&BBC towards the cost of Christmas celebrations, which is used to subsidise the village Christmas tree. The 2012 switch-on event would be organised by The Friends of St Andrews Church, and the erection of the tree was being organised by Mr M C Lockwood. **It was resolved** that the cost of the village Christmas tree be reimbursed up to a limit of £100 on receipt of an invoice addressed to the PC.

#### **d) Carlton News**

**It was resolved** that the production costs of Carlton News for the 2013-14 financial year be reimbursed from the Parish Amenities Fund up to a limit of £180.00 pa under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that this expenditure was in the interests of the inhabitants of the area and that the benefit would be commensurate with the expenditure incurred.

#### **e) Carlton Footpath Group**

Cllr Sharp left the meeting while this item was discussed. The current balance of the Parish Paths Partnership Fund was £103.61, and **it was resolved** that the CFG be authorised to draw up to £50 through the Clerk for routine footpath maintenance and minor improvement works. **It was resolved** that the annual grants of £17.50 due to the PC for mowing public footpath S69 through the churchyard and cemetery, and £17.60 for mowing public footpath S75 through Little Lane be charged to the PPP Fund. **It was resolved** that a grant of £3.20 for the mowing of public footpath S69 through land at the rear of 34 Main St be paid to the landowner and charged to the PPP Fund.

#### **f) Keep Carlton Tidy Group**

**It was noted** that the current balance of the KCTG Fund was £159.53, and **it was resolved** that the KCTG be authorised to draw up to £20 through the Clerk for litter picking equipment and consumables.

### **11. Membership of societies**

**It was resolved** that membership of the Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks, and the Leicestershire Playing Fields Association be renewed for a further year, and that the subscription to the Local Council Review be continued for a further year, at an estimated total cost of £215.00.

**12. Report 2012-20: Annual review of risk management**

**It was resolved** that Report 2012-20 be adopted. **It was resolved** that the PC's Emergency Plan be reviewed.

**13. Report 2012-21: Annual review of internal financial control**

**It was resolved** that this report be adopted, but that it not be posted on the website because it contained sensitive information.

**14. Grounds maintenance contracts****a) Saint Andrews Churchyard and Parish Cemetery for calendar years 2013-15**

The Clerk reported that twelve contractors had been invited to quote, and five had responded, as listed below:

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Contractor A	1700.00	1700.00	1700.00
Contractor B	1600.00	1600.00	1600.00
Contractor C	1588.00	1588.00	1588.00
Contractor D	1460.00	1460.00	1460.00
Contractor E	985.00	994.00	1015.00

**It was resolved** that the mowing contract for St Andrews Church and the Parish Cemetery be awarded to Contractor E (David Sansom).

**b) Carlton Greens and Little Lane for calendar years 2013-15**

The Clerk reported that twelve contractors had been invited to quote, and five had responded, as listed below:

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Contractor B	1060.00	1060.00	1060.00
Contractor D	860.00	860.00	860.00
Contractor A	640.00	640.00	640.00
Contractor C	558.00	558.00	558.00
Contractor E	359.00	364.00	370.00

**It was resolved** that the mowing contract for Carlton Greens and Little Lane be awarded to Contractor E (David Sansom).

**c) Layering of part of Cemetery hedge**

The Clerk reported that six contractors had been invited to quote, and three had responded as tabulated below:

Contractor F	350.00
Contractor B	327.00
Contractor G	110.00

**It was resolved** that the contract for laying the eastern part of the Cemetery hedge be awarded to Contractor G (Rob Thompson).

**15. Salaries, fees and charges****a) Clerk's salary and expenses**

The Clerk left the building while this item was discussed.

**It was resolved** that for the 2013-14 financial year the Clerk's salary remain at £900.00 pa paid quarterly in arrears; that an allowance of £10 pcm be paid quarterly in arrears to cover the PCs share of a broadband subscription (to include all emails and telephone calls); that a car mileage allowance of £0.50/mile be paid for the use of the Clerk's private car on approved official business outside the Parish; that computer printed papers be reimbursed at £0.10/page; and that other approved expenses be reimbursed at cost.

**b) Cemetery fees and regulations**

**It was resolved** that the Cemetery Plan (p.1125), Cemetery Regulations (p.1126), and Cemetery Fees (p.1127) remain as adopted on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007 (p.1121/6 refers).

**c) Peppercorn rental agreement**

**It was resolved** that the agreement signed on 22nd June 1996 be allowed to stand for a further year (p.473/2a refers).

**16. Deregistration from PAYE**

The Clerk reported that he had registered the PC for PAYE in April 2011 (p.1359/12 refers) on the basis of an advice note from HMRC, but had since discovered that the PC did not need to register for PAYE. Nil returns had been submitted since 2011, but the HMRC personal computer programme had now ceased to work and would require time and money to fix. A shift to real-time PAYE returns in April 2013 would also create an additional administrative burden.

**It was resolved** that the Clerk apply to HMRC to de-register from PAYE.

**17. Draft financial estimates for the financial year 2013-2014**

The Clerk reported on changes which affected the way in which the annual precept was set by the PC. The PC would in future need to consider both any *Excessive Council Tax Increase*, and the impact of the budget on Band D Council Tax. The *Excessive Council Tax Increase* trigger would be set by the Secretary of State in the Local Government Finance Report which would be published as a draft in November/December, debated in Parliament, and finalised in late January. Council Tax base figures would be issued by H&BBC on 1<sup>st</sup> December each year. These requirements meant that in future the PC would not be able to finalise the budget or set the precept until January each year.

**It was resolved** that in future the Annual Finance Meeting would be held in January.

**It was noted** that the tightening of regulations meant that the PC might find it more difficult to utilise s106 Developer Contributions in future. However, this funding stream had effectively been replaced by a share of New Homes Bonus Funding forwarded by H&BBC, which was not subject to spending restrictions. The Clerk suggested that New Homes Bonus Funding receipts might be treated as windfalls, identified in the budget as the Carlton New Homes Bonus Fund, and set aside for the purchase of land (for example for the Diamond Jubilee Orchard, an allotment site, and a playing field) or similar capital projects. The Internal Auditor confirmed that the PC was free to allocate this money as it saw fit. **It was agreed that** this suggestion be considered at the next meeting.

A draft budget had been copied to Councillors before the meeting, and **it was resolved** that this serve as the basis for a formal budget to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

### **18. Matters for report and questions and comments from the public**

Mr M C Lockwood **was thanked** for offering to organise the erection and removal of the village Christmas tree on Carlton Green.

A parishioner complained about the speed of traffic on Barton Road, and the lack of enforcement. **It was agreed** that consideration be given to commissioning speed surveys in the village.

A parishioner drew attention to the number of children who played in the street, and asked whether the PC had any firm plans to acquire land for a playing field. The Clerk replied that discussions had been held with local landowners, and the PC had been setting money aside for many years. Play equipment could be financed through s106 developer contributions, but only if the PC could provide a site. The Chairman advised that any suitable parcels of land might be sold by auction, so the PC had to be prepared to act quickly, have ready access to cash, and might have to pay a premium price. Other parishioners present commented on the high quality of the play spaces and land available for recreation in nearby villages. **It was agreed** that the acquisition of land was the first priority.

A parishioner asked whether the organisations involved in the projects put forward for the recent RCC Village Achievement Awards had been invited to the ceremony. The parishioner thought that many people who made voluntary contributions to the community were taken for granted. The Chairman explained that the PC had entered the competition on behalf of the community, that attendance at the presentation had been limited to two places for each entrant, but that the PC fully appreciated the contribution made by volunteers and always tried to acknowledge support and record its thanks in the minutes.

The Police presentation evening had been fully booked, and the PC had not been allocated a place (p.1422/7 refers).

The Diamond Jubilee tree planting had featured in the Autumn issue of Branchline.

The Clerk had attended a meeting of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park Stakeholder Group at LCC on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

NALC (and SLCC) had announced that under the new rules Councillors were very likely to have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any precept decision and would therefore need a formal dispensation to take part in such a decision. A criminal offence might be committed by a Councillor who took part in deciding the precept without a dispensation. The H&BBC Monitoring Officer was preparing guidance on this issue, and the Clerk trusted that the position would have been clarified before the next meeting.

A parishioner expressed strong appreciation of the work of the Parish Council and of the commitment and dedication of individual Councillors.

### **19. Next meeting and calendar of meetings for 2013**

**It was resolved** that the next meeting be held at 1930 hrs on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013 at Saint Andrews Church, Main Street, Carlton.



**It was resolved** that future meetings be held on the following dates: 13<sup>th</sup> Feb, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 8<sup>th</sup> May (Annual Meeting), 12<sup>th</sup> June, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 9<sup>th</sup> October, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014 (Finance Meeting).

The meeting closed at 2115 hrs.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Abbreviations used in these minutes**

CFG	Carlton Footpath Group
CPPG	Carlton Parish Plan Group
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
H&BBC	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
KCTG	Keep Carlton Tidy Group
LCC	Leicestershire County Council
LRALC	Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils
NCHA	Nottingham Community Housing Association
NHB	New Homes Bonus
PAF	Parish Amenities Fund
PAYE	Pay as you earn
PC	Parish Council
RHE	Rural Housing Enabler