



Carnforth Town Council

Minutes of meeting held on 17th May 2023 at 7:00pm at Carnforth Council Offices

Present: Councillors Grisenthwaite (Town Mayor); Hanna; Laurence; Jones; Parker; Richmond and Roe

In attendance: Bob Bailey, Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Office and County Councillor Phillippa Williamson and one resident

23047 Apologies: Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Gardner, Turner and Smith.

23048 Declaration on interests and dispensations: Councillor Roe declared an interest as a trustee of the Carnforth Station Trust on any discussions relating to the Carnforth Fringe as one of the proposed venues is the Furness Hall at Carnforth Station. As a member of the Salvation Army, Councillor Jones declared an interest on any relevant discussions relating to them.

23049 Urgent Business: There were no urgent matters of business not covered in the agenda.

23050 Minutes: It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Carnforth Town Council held on 15th March 2023 be approved.**

23051 Adjournment for public discussion and information only updates:

1) Public Discussion: A representative from Carnforth Cricket Club provided an update on the project to install cricket nets at the club and the crowdfunding arrangements being made to help with funding the project. Councillors were informed that the Cricket Club intend to make an application for financial support through the community benefit fund in due course. Councillors asked several questions about the project.

ACTION: Any application received to be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee for recommendation to Carnforth Town Council in due course.

2) Councillor updates / matters: The Town Mayor reported on Carnforth Town Council's the 'tremendous achievement' in bringing the Carnforth Big Coronation Weekend celebrations to the town, including a live screening of the Coronation on 6th May; the excellent Big Coronation Lunch on 7th May and the Coronation Big Help Out on 8th May. The Big Coronation Lunch and Big Help out had been well attended and received very positive comments from residents, businesses and visitors.

The Town Mayor acknowledged the collaboration and help of both Lancaster City and Lancashire County Council and community groups and thanked Councillors, staff and volunteers for their efforts over the whole weekend.

Councillors supported the Town Mayors comments and recognised that over the last few years the Town Council had built a positive reputation for delivering events in the town.



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As this was the first meeting of the new Council following local elections, Councillors generally raised matters that as representatives of the Carnforth and Crag Bank Communities they would like the Town Council to consider in the coming year, such as:

- Tackling potholes;
- On-street and residents parking;
- Protecting nature and the environment;
- Ongoing delivery of the Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan

- 3) **Reports of Ward & County Councillors:** County Councillor Phillippa Williamson reported on the launch of the Lancashire Artist of the Year and Lancashire Choir of the Year in recent weeks. She also commented on available funding for community projects from County Councillors and for culture or sports projects through Crowd Fund Lancashire where Lancashire County Council could pledge up to £20k towards projects as well as help raise funds through crowdfunding.

There was also a brief update on engineering works to be undertaken by Lancashire County Council and the Canal and Rivers Trust.

There followed some questions on the funding arrangements.

- 4) **Reports from outside bodies:** Councillor Parker reported on recent meetings of Carnforth Chamber of Trade and Carnforth & District Twinning Association.

Chamber of Trade are running an Arts and Craft Exhibition on 12th August.

The Twinning Association visit to Sailly sur la Lys is going ahead between 24th and 29th August.

Councillor Jones provided an update on the Carnforth Carnival on 1st July at Carnforth High School. Unlike previous years, there will be no parade this year. Carnforth Town Council have been invited to the event, which will be opened by the Town Mayor.

ACTION: Carnforth Town Council to set up a gazebo at the Carnforth Carnival.

It was then **RESOLVED that reports of County, Ward and Town Councillors and Outside Bodies be noted**

23052 2022/23 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) & Final Accounts:

The Town Clerk presented a report setting out the statutory requirement to complete an annual review of their governance arrangements and submit and publish an annual statement, including the approved accounts, known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The deadline for submission of the AGAR is 30th June 2023.



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Links to the draft AGAR and all the supporting documentation as at 31st March 2023 were appended to the report. These included:

- 1) Internal Auditor's report for the year ended 31st March 2023;
- 2) Accounting Systems Reports: Bank Reconciliation; Annual Return; Reserves; Explanation of Variances between year ended 31st March 2022 and 2023
- 3) Annual Governance & Accountability Return incorporating Annual Governance Statement (Section1) and Accounting Statements for 2022/2023

It was reported that the approved AGAR must be published following approval, providing a public right of inspection period of 30 working days. The proposed timetable for the Council to meet the reporting requirements and statutory deadlines was as follows.

Completion of the annual review, internal audit and approval of the accounts	17/05/23 Annual Meeting
Public rights of inspection period	19/06/23 to 28/07/23 (inclusive)

The draft AGAR contains the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23 (essentially a checklist of the internal control standards) which is supported by a detailed report by the competent and independent Internal Auditor appointed by the Town Council.

The Internal Auditor had once again given a highly positive response to each of the 14 internal control standards set out in the statement and congratulated the Town Council on its high standards of governance and financial management during another challenging year and whilst taking on further operational responsibilities.

The Internal Auditor concluded that the '*Council has established all the elements necessary to provide a sound system of internal control, and these have operated effectively to provide assurance as to the accuracy of the accounts*'.

The Town Clerk reported that reserves at the end of the financial year were £59.6k including £8.2k held in earmarked reserves. This represents a reduction of circa £29k on the level of balances at 31/03/2022, the result of unanticipated levels of spending caused by sudden and increasing inflationary pressures during the year. These inflationary pressures posed a significant financial challenge over the past 12 months and the Internal Auditor commented that it was to the Council's credit that the ongoing risks were recognised and addressed in setting the 2023/24 budget and precept.



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The Town Clerk advised that continuing inflation will inevitably place further pressure on the Council's finances and its reserves making it increasingly important for effective financial monitoring and clarity about spending priorities and appropriate levels of general reserve.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillors and the Town Clerk for their management of the Council finances and governance during 2022/2023 whilst supporting the view that the Council must ensure that general reserves remain sufficient to cover any such unforeseen risks and costs.

After some general comments, it was then **RESOLVED that:**

- 1) **The Internal Auditor's report is accepted and recommendation noted and acted upon by the Finance & Governance Committee.**
- 2) **That Section 1 of the AGAR – the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 is approved.**
- 3) **That Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2022/23 is approved.**
- 4) **That the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts is set as Monday 19th June to Friday 28th July 2023 inclusive**

23053 Insurance: The Town Clerk reported that the Council's insurance is due for renewal. Councillors were reminded that the Council had entered into a five year agreement with Zurich Insurance PLC of which 2023/2024 will be year two.

The Town Clerk advised that he had checked the details of the Council's insurance cover, including public liability and assets cover and found it be satisfactory for the Town Council's needs following an extensive review by Finance & Governance Committee prior to 2022/2023. There being no questions, it was **RESOLVED that renewal for 2023/2024 be approved.**

23054 Planning applications & statutory consultations: Councillors considered the following planning applications and road traffic orders:

Application No:	Description
23/00424/CU	Change of use of ground floor shop/takeaway to residential flat – 114 Kellet Road Carnforth LA5 9LS
23/00475/FUL	Erection of a single story side extension and construction of external steps – Elpha House, Netherbeck, Carnforth LA6 1AA

It was **RESOLVED that that Planning Applications be supported in principle.**



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23055 Planning Authority Decisions: Councillors considered the up-to-date position on decisions of the planning authority (Lancaster City Council) on planning applications previously considered. Two long-standing planning applications are awaiting a decision and three, supported in principle by the Town Council had been permitted.

It was then **RESOLVED that the update on the planning authority's decisions be noted.**

23056 Property & Environment Committee: There was nothing to report as the May meeting of the committee was not quorate.

23057 Finance & Governance Committee: There was nothing to report as the May meeting of this committee was cancelled.

23058 Payments for Authorisation: Councillors considered the payments awaiting authorisation and there being no questions it was **RESOLVED that payments as set out be authorised**

23059 Town Development & Planning Committee: Councillor Parker reported on the recommendations and actions arising from the meeting of the Town Development & Planning Committee held on 15th May 2023, including:

- 1) **Carnforth Big Coronation Weekend:** It was reported that the events over the weekend of the King's Coronation had been highly successful, especially the Coronation Big Lunch that was well attended and received excellent feedback.
- 2) **Planning Applications:** Recommendations were made to 'Support in Principle' Planning Applications 23/00424/CU and 23/00475/FUL.
- 3) **Carnforth Fringe:** Councillor Laurence reported on progress being made on the arrangements for the Carnforth Fringe with further updates expected soon including a draft programme of entertainers performing over the period 14th – 16th July.
After some discussion it was **RESOLVED that a Working Group be established specifically for this event led by Councillors Laurence and Smith and involving representatives from the Carnforth Chamber of Trade as required.**
- 4) **War Memorial Gardens – Centenary:** Nothing further to report but a meeting of the working group is planned in the coming weeks
- 5) **Great Big Green Week (GBGW):** The GBGW is the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. GBGW will be held between 10th and 18th June. Town Development & Planning Committee resolved to run a 'Carnforth Green Day' on Saturday 17th June from 10am to 1pm at Crag Bank Village Hall along with a Big Clean Up (date to be confirmed).



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The Town Clerk and Administrative Officer will also signpost local business and schools to the online resources available to support activities aimed at tackling climate change and protecting our environment.

- 6) **Public Highways and Open Spaces:** Concerns were raised about the danger presented by the junctions at North Road and New Street and Lancaster Road

ACTION: Concerns to be reported to where drivers often do not see the traffic signals or try to join the traffic in the A6 before the lights change

It was then **RESOLVED that the report, actions and recommendations of the Town Development and Planning Committee be noted and approved**

23060 Annual Town Assembly: The Town Clerk reported that all arrangements had been made for the Annual Town Assembly on 1st June 2023.

23061 Correspondence: Nothing reported.

23062 Items for next Agenda: Councillor Jones requested that a revised Order of Seniority of Councillors be presented at the next meeting.

23063 Date and time of next meeting: The next meeting of the 'ordinary' Town Council will be held on Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 6:30pm.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Bowler".

Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Chair:

Date: 15th June 2023