



Carnforth Town Council

Minutes of meeting held on 15th May 2024 at 6:30pm at Carnforth Council Offices

Present: Councillors Jones (Town Mayor); Downes; Grisenthwaite; Gardner; Hanna; Richmond and Roe;

In attendance: Bob Bailey, Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (TC&RFO);
Ward Councillor Jackson Stubbs and two members of the public

24063 Apologies: Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Hanna; Laurence; Parker and Smith

24064 Declaration of interests and dispensations: Declarations of interest relating to connections with local organisations were made and accepted.

24065 Urgent Business: The following matters of urgent business were considered:

- 1) Casual vacancy:** The TC&RFO reported that following formal publication of the Notice of Casual Vacancy for the Crag Bank Ward, the deadline for 10 or more residents to call an election had now passed. Councillors were informed that the vacancy could now be filled by co-option.

ACTION: TC&RFO given authority to make arrangements for co-option

- 2) Crag Bank Village Hall:** Councillor Grisenthwaite reported that as previously agreed Councillors had recently attended Crag Bank Village Hall to consider the options put forward by the appointed architects. The options propose alterations to the building, including a general overhaul of the interior; areas where improvements could be made to optimise the use of the building for the activities and audiences it currently attracts, and; alterations which may increase alternative audiences.

Following the site visit and detailed consideration of the options it was reported that 'Option 1' is the preferred option. It was reported that the budget cost estimate of this option (excluding VAT) is £1.043M.

There followed a discussion on the preferred option and actions being followed up relating to funding the scheme.

It was then **RESOLVED that Option 1 as set out in the architects options appraisal report be taken forward by a working group to be established as soon as practicable.**



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- 3) **Exempt Agenda Item:** Councillor Roe requested that a matter be discussed at the end of the meeting as an exempt item.

The TC&RFO advised that the general nature of the matter needed to be made known so that Councillors could determine whether the request was in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and/or the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Councillor Roe subsequently withdrew the request.

24066 Minutes: Subject to a minor amendment, it was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Carnforth Town Council held on 17th April 2024 be approved.**

24067 Adjournment for public discussion and information only updates.

- 1) **Public Discussion:** No representations were made.
- 2) **Town Mayor & Councillor updates / matters:** Councillor Grisenthwaite reported on matters he had dealt with in the last month including attendance at his final official event as Town Mayor, at the annual summer concert of the Lancaster and District Male Voice Choir at Leighton Hall on 12th May.
There were no further matters of information or updates from Councillors.
- 3) **Reports of County & Ward Councillors:** There were no reports from County and Ward Councillors for this meeting. The Town Mayor, congratulated Ward Councillor Stubbs on his recent election to the Carnforth & Millhead Ward.
- 4) **Reports from outside bodies:** There were no reports of outside bodies.

It was then **RESOLVED that information only updates and reports be noted.**

24068 2023 / 2024 Year End Reports: The Town Mayor invited the TC&RFO to report on the following financial and statutory reports for the year ending 31st March 2024:

- 1) **Internal Auditor's Report:** The TC&RFO was delighted to report that the appointed Internal Auditor has concluded that all objectives set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been met in full.

The Internal Auditors report provides assurance that the Council's financial management and governance arrangements and systems of internal are sound, compliant with statutory requirements and represent good value for money and the safeguarding of Council assets.



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The Internal Auditor made two recommendations, supported by the Finance & Governance Committee, relating to the timing of the annual review of scale of charges and the ongoing need to ensure that Reserves are annually reviewed, risk assessed and maintained at a sufficient level in line with best practice;

- 2) **'Unaudited AGAR' – including Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements for 2023 / 2024:** The TC&RFO presented the 2023/2024 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with the required statutory documentation in support of the AGAR as at 31st March 2024.
Supporting documentation included the Statement of Accounts; year-end Bank Reconciliation; Explanation of Variances between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024; Reserves / Balances and detailed analysis of receipts and payments for the year. Councillors were reminded that local councils are statutorily required to approve the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements contained within the AGAR.
Councillors were advised that the deadline for submission of the AGAR to be submitted to the Government appointed external auditors is 1st July 2024 and that subject to their review, the AGAR will be referred to as being formally 'Audited';
- 3) **Exercise of public rights:** Councillors were advised that, subject to approval by Carnforth Town Council, the AGAR, together with supporting documents, must be published providing a public right of inspection period of 30 working days.
The TC&RFO proposed a timetable for the Council to meet the reporting requirements and statutory deadline.
- 4) **Risk Log:** The TC&RFO presented the updated Risk Log for the financial year 2024/2025 taking account of a range of risks; associated controls/mitigations already in place and actions needed to eliminate or reduce the impact of the risks.
- 5) **Asset Register:** The TC&RFO then presented the asset register for the year ending 31st March 2024 setting out the status, procurement date, location, and value of each asset. The register provides assurance of the continued existence of Council's property and assets that now total over £601k.



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The TC&RFO then made the following recommendations:

- (1) That the Internal Auditor's report is accepted in full and recommendations noted and acted upon;**
- (2) That Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 – be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and TC&RFO;**
- (3) That Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – Accounting Statements 2023/2024 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and TC&RFO in his statutory role as Responsible Financial Officer;**
- (4) That the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and supporting documents be submitted to the External Auditors before the deadline of 1st July 2024;**
- (5) That the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts be set as Monday 3 June to Friday 12 July 2024 (inclusive);**
- (6) That the Risk Log and Asset Register as presented be approved.**

After questions and comments, the TC&RFO was congratulated and thanked for his work in supporting the Town Council meet its statutory responsibilities, it was then **RESOLVED that all recommendations be approved.**

24069 Financial Regulations: The TC&RFO presented revised Financial Regulations based on the new model published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that had been considered by the Finance & Governance Committee and previously circulated.

The TC&RFO outlined the most significant changes to the previous version being largely in relation to procurement and electronic governance.

Councillors were asked to note that a revised Model Standing Orders is expected to be published by NALC in the coming weeks.

After some comments, it was **RESOLVED that the revised Financial Regulations be adopted in full and that a review of Standing Orders be deferred until such time as the NALC Model Standing Orders are published.**



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24070 Insurance Renewal: The TC&RFO reported that the Town Council's insurance cover was due for renewal.

Councillors were advised that, save for a small increase in the value of the Council's assets sufficient cover is provided for all indemnities. 2024 / 2025 will be the final year of the current arrangements with the appointed insurers, Zurich Municipal Limited.

After some comments it was **RESOLVED that the Insurance renewal be approved for the coming year, with the Council's insurance cover from 2025 / 2026 being subject to a formal tendering process.**

24071 Planning applications & statutory consultations: Councillors considered the following planning applications and road traffic orders:

Application No:	Description
24/00470/FUL	Erection of a building to cover manure storage area - Hare Tarn Farm , Netherbeck, Carnforth LA6 1AA
Traffic Regulation Orders:	
There were no Traffic Regulation Orders to consider	

It was **RESOLVED that the planning application be supports in principle.**

24072 Planning Authority Decisions & Enforcement: To receive an update on planning authority decisions on previously considered applications

Councillors considered the up-to-date position on decisions of the planning authority (Lancaster City Council) on planning applications previously deliberated by Town Councillors.

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

24073 Property & Environment Committee: Councillor Richmond reported on the recommendations, updates and actions arising from the meeting of the Property & Environment Committee held on 7th May 2024, including:

- 1) A **resolution** that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Carnforth Town Council be recommended to approve the purchase of a Portable PA system and relevant accessories, and that further consideration be given to options to rent the system to other users for a charge to be determined;

ACTION: TC&RFO to make necessary arrangements to purchase a Portable PA System



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- 2) Outcome from a positive and well-supported first annual meeting with Carnforth (Highfield) Allotment holders;
- 3) Recent successful use of cleaning contractors as part of the new agreement to provide cover when needed at both at Crag Bank Village Hall and Carnforth Civic Hall;
- 4) Arrangements for the 'visit' to Crag Bank Village Hall to consider the options appraisal/feasibility study of the building;
- 5) Environmental and public realm matters and actions in the last month. Specifically, arrangements, subject to Council's approval, with Booth's Ltd and Lancaster City Council that Carnforth Town Council take on responsibility for general grounds maintenance of Ashtrees Way and Alexandra Park respectively;

RESOLVED: That Carnforth Town Council formally takes on responsibility for general grounds maintenance of Ashtrees Way and Alexandra Park

- 6) Proposal that work be carried out to refurbish benches in the War Memorial Garden as a 'community event';

ACTION: Outdoor Maintenance Officer & TC&RFO to make necessary arrangements

- 7) A request that Carnforth Town Council funds the replacement of parts needed for the defibrillator at Gummers Howe Community Centre;

ACTION: Councillor Hannah to raise possible funding with Lancaster City Council

- 8) Details of the district-wide weed spraying program to be undertaken by Morecambe Town Council in 2024/2025.

After comments and observations, it was **RESOLVED that the report, resolutions, and actions of the Property & Environment Committee be noted and approved.**

24074 Finance & Governance Committee: Councillor Jones Grisenthwaite reported on the recommendations, updates and actions arising from the meeting of the Town Development & Planning Committee held on 9th May 2024, including:

- 1) A visit to Crag Bank Village Hall to consider the three options arising from the recent feasibility study. Six Councillors attended to consider in detail each of the proposed options and the associated costs.

RESOLVED that Carnforth Town Council approves 'Option 1' as the preferred solution;



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- 2) Appointment of an experienced consultant to advise and support Carnforth Town Council in securing suitable funding opportunities and making formal bids;
- 3) **Recommendation** that working groups, as discussed, by Carnforth Town Council be formally established and terms of reference agreed;
- 4) **Recommendation** that Carnforth Town Council approves all payments;
- 5) Bank Reconciliation and Summary report for month ending 30th April 2024;
- 6) Internal Audit Report 2023/2024 and delegation to the TC&RFO to make arrangements to implement the auditors recommendations;
- 7) **Recommendation** that Carnforth Town Council adopts the revised Financial Regulations in full and that a review of the Council's Standing Orders be deferred until later in the year;
- 8) **Recommendation** that the Council's responsibilities in relation to the Annual Governance Statement be noted and that the Finance & Governance Committee carries out a full detailed review of the system of internal control during the Municipal year;
- 9) Review of quotations received from three potential energy suppliers and a **recommendation that Carnforth Town Council approves the provision of energy at Council buildings from Yu Energy**

24075 **Payments for Authorisation:** Councillors considered the list of payments awaiting authorisation.

After some comments it was **RESOLVED that payments as set out be authorised in full.**

24076 **Town Development & Planning Committee:** Councillor Grisenthwaite reported on the recommendations, updates and actions arising from the meeting of the Town Development & Planning Committee held on 13th May 2024, including:

- 1) Report from the Chamber of Trade on its revised approach and collaboration with Carnforth Town Council on a range of issues;
- 2) **Recommendations** to full Council on planning applications and traffic regulation orders received at the time of the meeting;
- 3) Updates on planned events, including Carnforth Fringe; D-Day 80 commemorations War Memorial Centenary and Christmas Lights switch on in collaboration with Carnforth Chamber of Trade



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ACTION: Project Mandates are required for the War Memorial Centenary and Christmas lights switch-on projects

- 4) A suggestion that Carnforth Town Council runs Halloween-themed competitions such as best decorated property and/or pumpkin carving.

ACTION: Ideas to be developed by the Committee and a project mandate produced

- 5) Update on discussions regarding road traffic matters and concerns at the New Street Crossing and Market Street Lights.

ACTION: Include an article in the Carnforth Express on matters that have been raised by residents and reported to the local authorities

After some comments and observations, it was **RESOLVED that the report, actions and recommendations of the Town Development & Planning Committee be noted and approved.**

- 24077 Annual Town Assembly:** The TC&RFO provided an update on the arrangements for the Annual Town Assembly to be held at Carnforth Free Methodist Community Centre on 23rd May 2024. The TC&RFO also presented the draft Carnforth Town Council Annual Report for 2023/2024.

After some comments it was **RESOLVED that the arrangements for the Annual Town Assembly be noted and the Annual Report for 2023/2024 approved.**

- 24078 Correspondence:** Councillors considered correspondence received in the last month.

- 24079 Items for next Agenda:** Council to consider for approval the composition of agreed working groups and terms of reference if available.

- 24080 Date and time of next meeting:** The next meeting of the 'ordinary' Town Council will be held on **Wednesday 19th June 2024 at 6:30pm.** The meeting closed at 8:15pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. B. B.", with a horizontal line underneath.

Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer