

Caistor Town Council: Economic Development Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Economic Development Committee held on Thursday 18th July 2019, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Caistor.

Present: Cllrs S Critten (in the chair), M Galligan, J Hughes, S Wright.

In attendance: J Hanrahan (Town Clerk).

Apologies: Cllr A Clark.

1. Minutes of last Meeting held on Thursday 30th May 2019 were proposed and seconded by Cllrs S Critten and M Galligan as a true record and were duly approved.

The Chairman circulated his written report on the items on the agenda as basis for discussion.

2. Mill Lane.

After a successful meeting at ACIS in Gainsborough (17/09/19) the funding bid wording has been finalised. Because this round of funding is for the feasibility and site reports plus architectural work to put in for Full Planning in February 2020. It was decided that we should put in the amount of homes that are likely to fit on the land depending on the feasibility and planning consent. The blight would be cleared and look better than it has in recent years and we would have more 'affordable' homes in the town for families. Tenure will be looked at in the feasibility. The C&DCLT are looking at circa £200k for the site clearance. If the site is cleared but only half is used for dwellings then it may be likely that some of the costs may need to be covered from elsewhere. The bid to Homes England will be put in next week. **Members continue to be supportive of the initiative.**

3. 2-4 Market Place

This project is progressing well. C&DCLT have passed the pre bid phase with Heritage Lottery who have now invited a full submission. The timeline is on the website <https://caistorcommunitytrust.org/> if you wish to see how the progress is likely to go forward. This is a bid for interim feasibility site clearance and legal fees. Recent meetings with the Co-op have given reasonable lease options greatly in C&DCLT favour and they are eager to help all they can to make sure the project moves forward. There has been a lot of interest in taking space in the development from small local businesses in the area. The project is anticipated to cost circa £1.5m and will take 3 years to complete with some cash flow issues yet to be resolved. **Members continue to support the initiative especially any car parking element but would need to consider any direct funding proposals in detail.**

4. Market Promotion

Lauri Fox is looking into a monthly Market (last Saturday of Month) in the Market Place. This is when we have several traders attending). Her help is much appreciated. At the same time Rachel Axcell is still looking into a Wednesday evening food market (hopefully monthly but see how the first one goes) on South Street Park. Caistor Lions have offered to help on any events. She already has Council approval in principle, subject to dates and evidence of insurance cover. **Members would ultimately like such markets in the Market Place to boost the trade there.**

5. Business Liaison / Neighbourhood Plan

The Council needs to arrange public meetings as a matter of urgency, in order to better engage with the public and local businesses, in order to discuss the general development of the town but also to discuss their thoughts on the neighbourhood plan. It was considered that turn out at such events will be greatly improved if there is a specific proposal to be considered. **The Town Clerk will liaise with WLDC planners on these events and their content.**

6. Promoting Caistor

- a. **Video:** The chairman is in contact with Sean Atkinson about shooting a promotional video to send to film studios in order to use Caistor as a set for period drama's but he is still awaiting a part for his camera. Danny Ballard has also offered to do produce videos (free) in order to compile a video for use in general tourism / business promotion. This will be used in conjunction with WLDC and their team. He has filmed at the beer festival and this is already available on youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2xBem0BaLg>

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b. Property:

- a. **Former Spar Shop 2 Horsemarket:** Victoria Midgley (GO2 Caistor environmental group) who has been in negotiations regarding the old Spar shop. The owner would be prepared to sell the whole premises (2 Shops and 2 flats). He would give a 5 year lease of the Spar shop for £40k up front and £29k a year lease. Members considered that it may be in the Town's interests if the Town Council purchase the building, as an investment using a Public Works Board loan. This would bring a disused shabby shop back into use enhancing the town's facilities and by renting to the GO2 group would bring employment and also volunteer opportunities. The Go 2 group is investigating becoming a Community Benefit Society giving them a legal entity with all profits being ploughed back to benefit the local community. A rough calculation of the economic benefits was shared with the Committee. The Town Clerk is to express our interest to the owner. **Members were in favour of investing this further and engaging an RICS chartered surveyor to inspect and value the premises as appropriate.**
- b. **Town Hall car park:** The Town Clerk advised that he was awaiting prices for charging and cycle parking points and would report back. The residual paint left in the disabled spaces area should be painted out as it is unsightly. **The Town Clerk would investigate further.**
- c. **Westgate House:** the grant sought for the renovation of Westgate House had been rejected by Lincolnshire Action Zone (LCC). The Town Clerk is in touch with the Agent to try to assist in this prominent building's renovation. Members noted with pleasure that there were several properties in the Town Centre undergoing refurbishment and regeneration. **The Chairman and Town Clerk were encouraged to liaise with landowners to bring schemes forward.**
- d. **Cornhill:** Members were disappointed at the condition of the surface in this location which is used for car parking. Ownership of the land is unclear albeit Lincolnshire County Council claim that they have no interest in the site. **The Town Clerk was asked to investigate ownership further together with the cost of resurfacing.**

7. **Date of next meeting:** 19th September 2019

Meeting closed at 2005 hrs