

26<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Carlton Resident

Carlton's water treatment plant has been in place for some 25 years and has provided safe drinking water to the residents of the village over that period and continues to do so, thanks to the hard work by the water committee. However, due to the age of the plant and increasingly stringent water regulations, it is coming to the end of its useful life and a way forward urgently needs to be decided by the village.

The Parish Council have become increasingly aware that considerable future expenditure will be needed and have built reserves over the last few years through the council precept to over £40k. Over the last 3 years Culligans (our current plant service company) have made it clear that the plant is becoming obsolete and a substantial overhaul is required. Initial investigations into options and new plants appeared to be restrictive, and thus Andrew Morson was asked to attempt to bring a number of options to the table. His report is included via link on the parish council website [www.parish-council.com/carltontown](http://www.parish-council.com/carltontown)

Due to the position of the water plant and the vagaries of the water supply, despite numerous companies being contacted, only one has given a viable quote for upgrading the system.

The legal position of the Parish regarding the supply of potable drinking water is far from clear. Extensive research and contact with North Yorkshire Council, Parish Council Associations (both local and national), local solicitors and water specialist law firms have drawn little information. It is possible that the Carlton situation could well be a legal test case.

As a result of these investigations the Parish Council has identified the two main options open to the village which are outlined below. All costings are net of VAT since the council is able to reclaim any VAT paid. It is the Parish Council's opinion that option 1 is possible to be facilitated by the existing committee (although it is expected that management plan/new charter is required). However, Option 2 is outside the scope of parish council remit/resources and as such would require some other party to deliver – it is suggested that the existing charter/liabilities and assets would be transferred to this 'party' if deemed acceptable.

**OPTION 1 - Continuation of a private village water supply by the Parish Council**

Replacement and upgrade of the existing plant by Culligans UK.

	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Cost per property*</b>
New plant	£84,984	£841.19
Supply pipe replacement from Melbecks	£5,000	£50
Tapping into new supply	£7,500	£74
UV for Cryptosporidium for each property	£38,683	£383
<b>TOTAL COST OF PLANT REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>£136,167</b>	<b>£1,348.19</b>
<b>(Additional Borehole)</b>	<b>(£40-60k)</b>	<b>(£396-£594)</b>
Approx annual running costs of plant **	£11,500	£113
Approx annual set aside for repairs to mains and plant	£5,000	£50
Approx annual sinking fund contribution ***	£4,000	£40
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST OF PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY</b>	<b>£20,500</b>	<b>£203</b>
<b>Future unknown costs – main replacement, supply diminishment, wage for plant monitoring</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>

\*based on 101 properties. Actual amount of precept actually paid differs between properties depending on their council tax banding

\*\*Including electricity, chlorine dosing, annual service, water abstraction licence, insurance, water analysis, clerks salary - based on current costs but maybe subject to change depending on amount of electricity/chlorine etc used.

\*\*\*based on 25 year life of plant at replacement cost of £100k

The quote from Culligans is for a new system to be installed that treats the existing water supply and complies with up-to-date regulations. It is likely that this plant will still not effectively remove coloured water and even though safe will still in essence be of a similar standard as today.

The Parish Council accepts the need to reduce this aspect of the water supply, and through the kind offer from the Suttill family to access a new water source (close to the plant) this is being investigated. Preliminary tests have indicated that this supply will have reduced colour and will allow for a UV treatment to be used. It has been estimated that it would be possible to tap this supply into a fresh tank so as to both gain a clear test result and also to be able to fully analyse its potential output. The cost of this is estimated to be £7,500. Depending on the results it may then be possible to cease using the less clear supply from Melbecks and if sufficient will reduce the need to use the borehole, thereby reducing electricity consumption. If the supply is not sufficient, it can still be supplemented with additional water from the existing springs in the drier/cleaner months. It has been suggested that UV systems are more effective if they are close to use i.e. inlets to houses, or even on drinking tap. These are relatively cheap and easy to install with an expected cost of under £400 fitted per house.

A further borehole to provide a complete supply of clearer water is also being investigated at a cost of £40k-£60k. A more accurate figure can only be obtained upon payment of a £900 fee to carry out a prognosis report. This will require electricity power and servicing on an ongoing basis. This will also require some form of treatment plant, but it is expected to be lower than the new one quoted. However, as we have seen with our existing borehole, production diminishes over time which will need to be a consideration for the future and its life expectancy.

Consideration to alternative energy sources such as hydro power or wind energy may be given in the future once a final course of action has been decided.

#### PROS

- Cheaper up-front cost for replacing the plant
- Cheaper annual water charge

#### CONS

- Water discolouration - one of the main drawbacks of the private supply is the discolouration of the water during periods of rain. Whilst the water remains safe to drink, the peat in our water source causes this discolouration. A new spring has potentially been identified which appears to provide clearer water, but the clarity of the water will never be guaranteed.
- Water main replacement - the water main running down the village supplying the properties, whilst largely sound at present, will need replacing over time at considerable, but unknown, expense. In the meantime, water main repairs are expensive and either paid by the householder (if not on the main) at a considerable cost or by the council which will deplete financial reserves.
- Continuous monitoring – at present the monitoring of the water quality and safety is carried out daily by volunteers on the water committee. It is an onerous job, although it is to be hoped that it will be less so when up- to-date technology has been installed. There must be consideration that if there is an absence of willing volunteers, that this may need to become a paid role in the future as it has been in the past.
- Sinking fund - consideration must also be given to funding a new plant in future years. Monies will need to be collected accordingly via a sinking fund.

#### OPTION 2 - Complete mains and supply replacement by Yorkshire Water.

The Parish Council is well aware of the benefits of a Yorkshire Water supply, both in the long term and also possibly affecting property values and mortgage applications. However, it is unclear how this is achievable without a majority of the village accepting this measure. Yorkshire Water will replace the main through the village and connect each house with a new pipe and a water meter at their boundary.

The village as whole will be expected to pay for the infrastructure to be installed and then the responsibility of its maintenance and water supply will then be passed to Yorkshire Water. Each resident will pay for their water directly to YW and the village will relinquish all responsibility for the water supply.

	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Cost per property*</b>
Infrastructure installation	£812,163	£8,041
Connection to each property	£75,053	£743
<b>TOTAL COST OF PLANT REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>£887,216</b>	<b>£8,784</b>
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST OF WATER SUPPLY **(approx)</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>£240-£658</b>
<b>Future unknown costs</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>

\*based on 101 properties – costs will alter according to take up

\*\*Depends on number of people in household and individual water usage

## **PROS**

- Village responsibility is relinquished – no monitoring or volunteers required
- Parish Precept reduced by 80%
- Clean, clear water
- No future unknown costs

## **CONS**

- Large capital outlay per house
- More expensive annual water costs possibly 50% more than the existing precept.
- Uncertainty over what are the legal responsibilities of the council to those that refuse this option, ie are we allowed to cut the water off.
- Community unrest/ill feeling – it has been confirmed that if a resident was to apply to Yorkshire Water after the works had been completed and paid for, they could connect to YW for the standard connection charge (£3k)!

The estimate that has been provided by YW is not definitive. However, they have based their estimate on the worst-case scenario. They have verbally stated that should horizontal drilling be used it may be significantly cheaper (possibly saving up to £300k or £2,970 per household). This would also negate the need to dig a trench through the village with pits dug at varying intervals, but it is dependent on the ground conditions. YW cannot finance the project and require that full funds are paid by the council at the time of installation.

For this reason, the present council feel that to commit the parish to such a large and not guaranteed debt is not feasible. Therefore, if the residents of Carlton wish to go down this route it will need to be facilitated by the residents themselves.

## **FUNDING**

Funding for either of these options may be available through grant schemes or the Levelling Up fund. However, this cannot be explored at present since the amounts of money required up front are so different, and applications cannot be made unless there is a definitive amount of money applied for together with a business plan. Therefore, a course of action needs to be decided before any funding can be applied for. If funding applications are successful, then the cost to residents will be reduced accordingly. It is possible that part/ full funding could be secured for either option, although it is likely that the YW option through enforcement may require an admission that the water is unsafe.

## **IF NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED**

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then the Parish Council will inform North Yorkshire Council that an agreement cannot be reached, and the Parish Council has no way to move the situation forward. North Yorkshire Council will then start the enforcement process. Yorkshire Water may be requested by NYC to install a water supply, but it is unclear how this will be financed and the legal ramifications.

This information has been sent to each property in Carlton that uses the current water supply. Where the Clerk has been given alternative addresses or email addresses for holiday cottages or second homes the information will have also been communicated that way. If you are aware that one of your neighbours may not get this information and you have their contact details, please let the Clerk know or ask the property owner to contact the Council.

The full research and costing report is available to view on the parish council website [www.parish-council.com/carlontown](http://www.parish-council.com/carlontown) .

There will be a meeting held at **7pm on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February at Coverdale Memorial Hall** to discuss a way forward. Please try to attend if you can – we will endeavour to set up a zoom call for those unable to attend in person, but if you are not available on the night and have any questions or comments you wish to make, please email the Clerk on [carlontownpc@yahoo.com](mailto:carlontownpc@yahoo.com)

Many thanks

Carlton Town Parish Council