

30 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND MEETINGS ACT Request: 2023-48

Thank you for your email of 3 August 2023 to the Carterton District Council (CDC) requesting the following information:

"...the frequency and dB levels of the clock tower I find (with agreement) the chiming unreasonable and excessive. I'm curious if anyone has ever raised a complaint?"

Q1 Has any resident ever complained about the frequency, dB level/volume or need for the clock tower chiming?

Q2 Why is it necessary to chime every 15mins from 07:00am to Midnight 7 days a week in the 21st century? Who decides if this is acceptable and who has the decision rights to change it? What is the process for the community to petition its change?

We recognise and respect the cultural significance of the tower itself, but the frequency and dB level of the chiming is having a serious impact on our day to day lives, and quite frankly unsustainable. Anyone with small children will know how difficult it is when they have interrupted sleep, or lack of it. With more and more gentrification and development in the immediate Balingier plc area, the frequency and dB levels of the chiming is relevant and something which should be disclosed to both developers and future investors.

Q3 Has an acoustic engineer ever been commissioned to measure of the dB at the height of the bedrooms in the recently developed townhouses on Balingier plc?

Q4 If not, then how can we request the dB level assessment be undertaken to ensure it does not breach RMA or international noise pollution standards?

As a new resident to the area and a rate payer, it would be helpful for the council to verify independently the dB measurements at the time of the bell chimes. Even with 2x glazed windows closed, curtains drawn, it is uncomfortably loud.

The RMA refers to after hour noise management for businesses, so I assume it applies to council-controlled noise also - like how railway crossings are managed.

Q5 Are CDC (Carterton District Council) willing to reduce the current dB level of the chimes? If not, why not and what is the process to challenge this decision?

Q6 Are CDC (Carterton District Council) willing to reduce the frequency of the chiming's? If not, why not and what is the process to challenge this decision?

Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act 1987 (the Act).

My response to your request is in the number order below.

1. *Has any resident ever complained about the frequency, dB level/volume or need for the clock tower chiming?*

No, we have not received any complaints about the frequency or volume of the clock tower chiming.

2. *Why is it necessary to chime every 15mins from 07:00am to Midnight 7 days a week in the 21st century?*

The original clock was opened in 1907 this was damaged from the 1942 earthquake and rebuilt in 1962. The chime has remained every 15 minutes since.

a) *Who decides if this is acceptable and who has the decision rights to change it?*

The clock tower is an iconic timepiece for Carterton, and with no complaints previously received about the chime frequency or volume of the clock no decision has been made about changing it. As a publicly owned asset, Carterton District Council makes decisions about the town clock.

b) *What is the process for the community to petition its change?*

Community can petition at any time. Council does not have a set process for how the community choose to petition. If the Community would like to come to Council meeting to voice their concerns, they can request to speak at a council meeting. The next meeting is on the 13th of September. If you would like to take up this option, please email demservices@cdc.govt.nz

3. *Has an acoustic engineer ever been commissioned to measure of the dB at the height of the bedrooms in the recently developed townhouses on Balinger plc?*

No, as the townhouses on Balinger Pl are erected in a commercial zone and the noise levels in the commercial zone are significantly higher than those of the residential zone. The district plan is available online and Chapter 6 contains the relevant db levels. The commercial noise limits are measured at a residential boundary and the difficulty with measuring an activity such as the clock tower is that the measurement of 45dBA L10 uses a measurement averaged over 10 minutes.

**28 Holloway Street, Carterton, Wairarapa | PO Box 9, Carterton, 5743 |
lgoima@cdc.govt.nz | 06 379 4030 | www.cdc.govt.nz**

LGOIMA ID: 2023-48

4. If not, then how can we request the dB level assessment be undertaken to ensure it does not breach RMA or international noise pollution standards?

Based on this being the first time it is raised as a concern, and the cost involved to undertake an independent assessment, this is not something we propose to undertake in the foreseeable future. You may wish to discuss this with Elected Members through the Council meeting process mentioned above.

5. Are CDC (Carterton District Council) willing to reduce the current dB level of the chimes? If not, why not and what is the process to challenge this decision?

Please see the answer below.

6. Are CDC (Carterton District Council) willing to reduce the frequency of the chiming's? If not, why not and what is the process to challenge this decision?

In response to questions 5 and 6, the clock chimes have not previously been considered an issue. As specified in our response to questions 2 above, the Council have received no complaints before now, therefore we have had no need to consider making changes. If there is sufficient and consistent demand from community for changes to the clock chimes, then a proposal would need to go through a formal Council process to make changes.

Please note, the Council now proactively publishes LGOIMA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Geoff Hamilton
Chief Executive
Carterton District Council