

**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING FOR CARTERTON  
HELD ON TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2019  
AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH AT 7.00 PM**

Present:	Cllr M McBride - Cllr M Mead	Town Mayor Deputy Mayor
	Cllr J Bull Cllr R Crapper Cllr N Leverton Cllr D Melvin Cllr D Wesson	
Apologies:	Cllr E Hatton	
Officers:	Ron Spurs - Tan Marchant - Stella Catt - Teresa Whitford - Katie Zasada -	Town Clerk Assistant Clerk Admin Officer Admin Officer Admin Officer
In Attendance:	Insp Steve Hookham - Cllr N Field-Johnson - Cllr P Handley - Cllr M Crossland - 15 Members of the public	Thames Valley Police County Councillor County Councillor District Councillor

1 MAYOR'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Mayor welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting. He read his review of the year from the Annual Report, as follows:

“It has been a great privilege to be Mayor and represent Carterton in the wider community throughout Oxfordshire over the last year. With the help of my Deputy, Michele, and other Councillors, we have represented and portrayed the best of Carterton on 78 civic occasions.

The ongoing dispute with the previous Mayor and alleged misappropriation of charity funds has soured the operation of the Council in some respects. However, despite this the Town Council has achieved a number of successes. These include a very successful Fish & Chip Supper at Brownes Hall in September to celebrate Battle of Britain Day, raising over £800 for charity. We had marvellous support from members of the community and the schools on the preparations for Remembrance Day. I went to every primary school with Cllr Hatton to see their poppy making and thank them for their work. Many members of the community got involved in making poppies and anyone who saw the hanging display from the Mayor's balcony cannot fail to have been impressed. All those that contributed in any way should be very proud of themselves.

We then had the annual Christmas Lights switch on, preceded by the children walking from the College with their fantastic lantern creations. This year I chose as Mayor to walk with the children in the procession. Our VIP guest, Robert Courts MP, helped by a local young man, switched on the lights. Over 200 lanterns were in the parade and we estimate over a thousand people enjoyed the evening.

More recently we have improved the areas in front of Costa Coffee and the parade of shops by removing the dead trees and overgrown vegetation. New trees have been planted and the area grassed over. Many positive comments have been received about the improvement.

We are currently consulting with residents concerning the future of the pavilion on the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground and possible replacement with a new building fit for purpose.

I have started an 'outreach programme', inviting members of the community to the Town Hall. The first two groups were pupils and staff from St Joseph's and St John the Evangelist primary schools. The pupils had refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour and then conducted a 'mock council' meeting after they had elected their Mayor and Deputy. I hope to see some of them as young councillors in years to come.

Finally, a major success has been achieved by sound financial management of your money: we have been able to reduce the Town Precept by 26%. This is part of your Council Tax that enables the Town Council to carry out its responsibilities".

## 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 8 May 2018 had been circulated, were confirmed as a true record, and signed by the Mayor.

## 3 POLICING IN CARTERTON – INSPECTOR STEVE HOOKHAM

Insp Hookham, who looks after the Neighbourhood Policing Teams in West Oxfordshire, gave an update on policing in the town. Carterton is covered by the team based at Witney Police Station as well as at the Carterton Police Station. Each team has a Sergeant and Officers as part of a problem-solving team and are supported by PCSOs, of which there are three in Carterton. The PCSOs deliver community visibility and reassurance locally. The problem-solving Officers investigate and prioritise the underlying causes of crime in order to achieve long-term solutions.

Carterton is generally a very safe area. The priorities for West Oxfordshire as a whole are residential burglaries, domestic violence, child drugs exploitation and county drugs lines. There has been a slight increase of 33% in burglaries in Carterton and the surrounding area, which amounts to nine crimes over a twelve-month period. Break-ins to sheds and garages are down by 45% and vehicle crime is down by 52%. Criminal damage has also gone down. Of more concern is an increase of 59% in crimes against a person and an increase of 78% in drug related crime. There has been a reduction in antisocial behaviour.

There has been an issue with burglary from newly built houses, where boilers have been stolen just prior to the house going on the market. The Police are working with the developers to improve security on their sites whilst allowing workmen free access. Often offenders are coming across the border from other policing areas, which involves officers working closely with neighbouring forces. The most effective way to prevent domestic burglary is to ensure windows and doors are secure and not left open in the warmer weather and not leave cars unlocked even for short periods.

With regard to the high increase in drug related offences, it is worth noting that all these offenders have been caught and this highlights the amount of work the Police teams are doing to disrupt the county drugs lines. It is time-consuming work to investigate and track down the offenders and bring them to justice. This is particularly prevalent in young males in the 14-17 age group being recruited to run the drugs and his team are working with the schools to target this most vulnerable age group. This often links in with a rise in crimes against a person and there are elements of safeguarding and modern slavery involved as well. Parents are often

totally unaware of their children's involvement in drugs and the Team are working to target parents as part of their work with schools, as well as with Social Services to target the most vulnerable families.

Cllr Handley asked why the Police do not take action when untaxed/uninsured vehicles are reported to them and Insp Hookham said this can be dealt with by the DVLA allowing the Police to tackle other priorities. The Police would act if a vehicle was causing an obstruction. He also raised a concern that the 101 non-emergency phone number takes a long time to be answered and Insp Hookham said that this was currently being looked into.

Cllr Crossland said it is much more difficult than it was a few years ago when she was Town Mayor to get in touch with the Police and wondered if advertising could be increased or whether Councillors could have more direct access to the Police. Insp Hookham said the Teams have recently been restructured and new posters would soon be available detailing local team members. Individual phone numbers will not be on the poster, but there would be the direct email address for the local Team. Cllr McBride said that the Town Council was looking to fund a Carterton PCSO for a three-year period.

The Town Clerk said he was working with the Neighbourhood Police Team to extend the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, currently working well in Chipping Norton, into the Carterton area.

Cllr Leverton asked about the CCTV covering the Recreation Ground. The Clerk said the CCTV system was owned by West Oxfordshire District Council and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Police at Witney Police Station. The camera equipment is getting quite old now and the Clerk had made representations to the CCTV Working Group that meets quarterly to update the equipment. Witney has 57 cameras and Carterton has four, yet both pay £10,000 pa. There is certainly a case for updating the cameras in Carterton, especially as parts are becoming difficult to obtain. In the summer there is a problem with visibility due to the trees restricting the view from the cameras and this needs to be taken into consideration when updating the system.

The Mayor thanked Insp Hookham for his report.

#### 4 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr Field-Johnson expressed his thanks to the Mayor and Councillors for their work this year.

The County Council had recently approved a new £800M budget for the coming year. Sixty percent of that has been spent on adult and youth care. The majority of concerns from the public is the poor state of the roads and much more money will be spent on this during the year. Last year, 40,000 potholes were repaired in this area. Himself and Cllr Handley were working to get a new slip-road onto the A40 at Minster Lovell, which will allow access to the west as well as just the east as at present, and this should commence within the next year.

He had worked with the Town Council to resolve the problem with bollards to prevent vehicle access along Swinbrook Road from the new Swinbrook Park estate. Opinion was divided as to the need for the bollards and there were concerns over access for emergency vehicles. A reasonable solution of removable bollards had been achieved.

He is supporting the Carterton Youth Club working out of RAF Brize Norton to encourage youngsters to be more active.

He highlighted the use of the Thames Valley Alerts mobile app, which is good for alerting residents about crime in the area, but it does cover a wide area. He recommended the West Oxon app covering Carterton, Brize Norton and Burford.

Cllr Handley gave his report, expressing his thanks to the Mayor and Councillors for their work this year.

The County had looked at all the junctions around RAF Brize Norton, which will go out for public consultation in the near future. Once the new junction onto the A40 at Minster Lovell is in place, the issue of redirecting HGVs from Shilton Dip and Brize Norton village can be addressed.

He continues to work towards getting the road surfaces repaired in Lawton Avenue and Corbett Road, which are in a particularly bad condition.

He is Chair of the Locality sub-committee covering Burford, Witney and Bampton, which allows County Councillors to concentrate on local issues and in the future will lead to more decisions being made locally.

The temporary Fire Station opened this year at Three Michaels Yard on Carterton South Industrial Estate. A permanent Fire Station, to be located off Monahan Way, is in the planning stage.

With the expansion of RAF Brize Norton more housing is needed locally. There are currently around 6,500 people working on the base, but only around 1,500 live locally and this has an impact on the local shops. This issue has been taken up with the District and County Councils.

Cllr Mead asked how the County Councillors had spent their allocations during this financial year. Cllr Field-Johnson said he had supported the Carterton Youth Club and funded traffic signage in Brize Norton and Burford. Cllr Handley had given £5,000 to the Day Centre towards a new roof, supported the work of Family Centre and funded traffic calming measures in Broadwell.

The Mayor thanked the Councillors for their reports.

## 5 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District Councillors had supplied reports on the activities of West Oxfordshire District Council in the last year, copies of which are appended to these minutes.

## 6 GENERAL QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

(a) Banking. A resident said he had lived in Carterton for 30 years and the town had improved over that time, but one shopkeeper had said to him that his business had reduced considerably since the banks had closed. He asked if there was anything the Council could do to bring banking facilities back to the town. He suggested having one office shared by a number of banks. He explained problems he had in obtaining Euros. The Town Clerk said that Councillor Crossland had led a campaign to try to stop Lloyds Bank closing, which had proved unsuccessful, but Lloyds have provided a mobile bank on the Market Square twice a week since the closure. An idea had come forward to site an ATM at the Town Hall and this could be worth looking into. Another resident said that an ATM would not solve the problems of paying money in and getting change. Cllr Handley agreed with the resident's suggestion of one building housing several banks and said that there were still a lot people who do not bank online.

(b) Condition of roads. A resident asked whether there was any plan to resurface Upavon Way, particularly as it is a bus route. Cllr Handley said the priority at the moment was to fill in potholes rather than resurfacing. Cllr Field-Johnson said the County were looking to make improvements on Monahan Way where there were problems with the location of the bus stops creating hazards for traffic flow. Work continues to improve the condition of the roads, but it would take a few more years to get them up to the standard they used to be.

(c) Carterton PCSO. Jo Smith, Manager of Carterton Family Centre, asked whether the PCSO to be funded by the Town Council would be able to undertake some work with vulnerable families to prevent youngsters getting involved in criminal activity. The Town Clerk said he was working with Insp Hookham to put together a contract for the new PCSO and one of the key tasks will be working with the schools.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

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Town Mayor

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**

**Martin McBride April 2019**

I joined the District Council in May 2018.

I have attended all main council meetings since my election.

I am also a member of the Environmental Overview & Scrutiny committee and a member of the working party looking into the reduction of "single use plastics".

I took part in the very successful "water day" which involved the Council, local residents and action groups holding Thames Water and others to task for pollution in West Oxfordshire rivers and waterways.

Although not a permanent member of the Lowlands Planning committee, I have substituted for absent members on a number of occasions, most recently looking at the possible use of Enstone airfield for a Motor Museum development.

Once I step down as Mayor and Chairman of Carterton Town Council, I shall be able to dedicate more time to furthering the interests of Carterton at District level.

M McBride

## **MAXINE CROSSLAND**

### **REPORT FOR CARTERTON NORTH WEST WARD 2018 -19**

This has been a very fruitful year for Carterton in many ways. So many projects on which I have been working for several years are finally approaching completion.

Last September the District's Local Plan for the next 10 years was approved by HM's Inspectors, which handed back to our local authority the power to refuse planning permission for what it considers to be inappropriate building applications. This is important because it allows us to protect vulnerable sites from undesirable or speculative building.

Additionally, construction has finally begun on a number of sites for which permission was granted several years ago. New housing has begun for: -

- 700+ homes at Carterton East (Brize Meadow);
- 150+ properties on Reema South;
- Phase 2 of the Leisure Centre (completion due in Autumn this year)
- Fire station and emergency hub off Monahan Way
- 40+ affordable homes at the old Osprey site off Upavon Way
- Emergency homeless accommodation at Horsefair, Chipping Norton that provides a 5 bedroom house with shared facilities +a self-contained garden flat, available to any needy WODC residents . This allows us to keep our local homeless people closer to home within the District.

And talks are proceeding to finally replace the demolished military housing at Northwood Crescent with new fit-for-purpose homes for our service families.

There have been a number of problems with the Shilton Park development, particularly around access for emergency vehicles to the football club, allotments and Country Park. This caused considerable local anxiety. Hopefully, the removable bollards, together with frequent reminders to the emergency services, seems to be working.

I also successfully defended the open spaces around Glenmore Park by objecting to a suggestion to build a car park here for the benefit of the football club.

Last May I was honoured to be elected Chairman of WODC and have been very busy across the District in a wide variety of events. I am very proud of the high esteem in which WODC is regarded nationally. A comprehensive report into how West Oxfordshire District Council functions has led to praise for its successful operations across many service areas by a team from the Local Gov. Assn. This body offers glowing praise for the authority, particularly for its strong financial position, ambitious approach to taking on major projects and the teamwork of both officers and politicians.

Four district Councils, West Oxon, Cotswold , Forest of Dean & Cheltenham District Councils joined together to establish a local authority company Publica. The idea was highlighted by the LGA as an "exciting" and "ground-breaking" model for local government.

It added: “The Council has shown itself to be ahead of the curve in respect of the innovative approach to service delivery and organisational design through the Publica delivery vehicle.”

The Council was seen as being “clearly in a strong budgetary position that would be the envy of many” and its involvement in major projects such as the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village was also praised as was its recent delivery of a Local Plan which the report says provided a “well-crafted framework” for its growth ambitions.

For example, over the last 18 months the company set itself a target to save £769K or £7.1m on its pensions service. It achieved actual savings of 8% or £1,970k (although it must be noted this was exceptional as much of this was one-off savings.) Target for 2019-20 is 881K

Proposed savings for this year will be achieved by

1. Merging revenues / benefits / customer services
2. Restructuring HR & Senior Management services
3. Reducing business costs by sharing telephone services, mobile phone licenses etc

Predicted saving over 10 years is £35m to taxpayers

The intention is to develop this commercial offer to other councils in future, sharing services to deliver savings in cost + faster service.

The result for local people is that we continue to charge the second lowest council tax in the country.

M Crossland

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS END OF YEAR REPORT 2019**

Cllr Nick Leverton

Carterton South Ward

Firstly, and most importantly I would like to thank the public who voted last May to elect me as their District Councillor for the Carterton South Ward.

Many things have impressed me at the District Council this year not least the sheer size of the job, but the very high levels of professionalism shown by the Districts Councillors and without exception all of the staff members that I have come in contact with.

Personally, I was selected to sit on the District Councils Planning Committee, and I feel that this area is the keystone of the district's future. We now have after much huffing and puffing an agreed Local Plan enabling the District Councillors to ensure we have the upper hand and not the Developers. This will bring forward a controlled supply of Infrastructure, Homes and Commercial space to ensure a sustainable future for the District and its residents.

For Carterton we have seen the long awaited multi-million-pound upgrade of the Leisure Centre take place and I applaud the long-standing Carterton District Councillors who tirelessly worked on our behalf to deliver the exciting and much needed upgrade.

As well as Planning I also sit on the Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This Committee covers many varied subjects ensuring that all and every matter presented to them is robustly discussed and analysed before being presented to Full Council. This Committee has allowed me to become informed in a whole host of important issues such as Modern-Day Slavery, Domestic Abuse matters and the complex issues regarding Policing.

Before I sign off I would like to assure the Residents of Carterton that your District Council is effective, proactive, well managed and Value for Money. I am extremely proud to represent you at District level and will continue to work hard on your behalf to deliver good services and a positive and robust future for Carterton.

Cllr Nick Leverton

## **District Councillor Report, Cllr Michele Mead, Carterton South**

I have been a District Councillor since February 2018 and have attended every council meeting since being elected.

I am the Conservative Group Secretary.

I am currently on one committee, Economic and Social, this has been extremely interesting year with having to scrutinise a variety of documents that the Cabinet or Council has requested be looked into before any decisions can be made, this has ranged from Homelessness Strategy and Tax exemption for Care Leavers to affordable housing needs, vulnerable persons and more recently domestic violence. I have also been on a small panel of councillors monitoring the refugees within west Oxfordshire, as this issue is sensitive, I hope you will understand I cannot go into detail on this, but needless to say we are working hard on this issue.

I have been involved in several motions that have been brought to full council, one was a cross party motion to have a modern day slavery policy within the council, this was supported unanimously, another was a motion for the council to consider all new/extended buildings to have fat traps installed, this was heavily supported by the council however we can only encourage all developers to do this, as yet there is no law in place to enforce it, most recently I seconded Cllr MacRae motion to ask the Leader Cllr James Mills to send a letter requesting funds be released so development on the REEMA North site can progress after a fifteen year delay.

Closer to home I have helped residents with parking issues, disputes with neighbours, bin collections, and more.

Cllr Michele Mead  
Carterton South District Councillor