

**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING FOR CARTERTON
HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2015 AT 7.00 PM
AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH**

Present: Cllr Mrs L Little - Town Mayor
Cllr Mrs D Bulley Cllr M McBride
Cllr M Brennan Cllr Mrs M Mead
Cllr R Brooks Cllr Mrs N Miah
Cllr Ms S Coul Cllr P Scott
Cllr R Crapper Cllr Mrs J Smith
Cllr Mrs C Delaney Cllr M Steward
Cllr M McBride

Officers: Tan Marchant - Assistant Town Clerk
Teresa Whitford - Admin Assistant
Scott Edwards - Admin Assistant

In attendance: Cllr N Owen - Oxfordshire County Councillor

41 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr D Melvin - Carterton Town Council
Cllr P J Handley - Oxfordshire County Councillor

The Mayor welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 13 May 2014 had been circulated, were confirmed as a true record - with the addition of Cllr Mrs N Miah as being present - and signed by the Town Mayor.

2 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

3 POLICING IN CARTERTON - PC RICH BARNES

PC Barnes said that the Neighbourhood Policing Team currently comprises one Sergeant, two PCs and two PSCOs and covers Carterton, Bampton and Burford. Neighbourhood teams work from Witney, sorting out neighbourhood issues such as neighbour disputes and domestic arguments. He said the neighbourhood team gets on well with schools and housing association tenants. The Witney team covers Carterton when Carterton personnel are not working. PC Barnes said that, although housing is increasing across the district, police numbers will not increase. Crime numbers continue to be low. Antisocial behaviour is the most common problem. PC Barnes stressed that the police need to be contacted if there is a problem, and if no-one phones, then the police will not know

4 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr P Handley had given his apologies for the meeting.

Cllr N Owen presented his report, which is attached to these minutes. He responded to a number of questions, including the proposed siting of a fire station next to a secondary school, and when will serious improvements be made to the A40 - posed by a school governor at the Community College who said it is hard to recruit because people do not want to come.

Cllr Owen said that Oxfordshire County Council consulted on a local transport strategy at the end of April and hopefully some of the strategy will alleviate major problems. A three-way junction at Minster Lovell has been confirmed (i.e. turn left to go to Cheltenham) and a further possibility is a park and ride at Eynsham. A dedicated bus lane is another serious contender. He agreed that traffic problems need to be sorted out in the next few years.

Cllr Owen said he would be happy to be contacted with residents' views and queries.

5 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District Councillors Mick Brennan, Mrs Maxine Crossland, Henry Howard, Mrs Lynn Little and Norman MacRae MBE had tabled their reports on the activities of West Oxfordshire District Council in the last year. Copies of the reports are appended to these minutes.

6 CARTERTON MASTERPLAN

An overview of the Carterton Masterplan was presented by Jessica Richmond of WYG. Jessica encouraged residents to attend the two public open days - the first being on 21 May at Carterton Community Centre, where consultants would be in attendance to answer any queries. The second opportunity would be on 27 May at the Town Hall.

7 GENERAL QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

- Does the Masterplan have the statutory power of a Neighbourhood Plan? Cllr Mrs Little responded that the Plan captures our aspirations for the town and its growth, which could grow into a Neighbourhood Plan in the future.
- On what grounds do you propose this development? Cllr Mrs Little said that this is where the growth must come from. The Town Council will engage with the parishes as that is the only way it can go forward. The Masterplan lets developers know our expectations.
- Is there any link with this plan and the Local Plan and how was the remit of its geographical boundaries decided. Cllr Mrs Little responded that the Town Council had taken advice from Chris Hargreaves at the District Council.
- Mr Clive Homer of Brize Norton asked how much consultation has taken place with the parishes? Cllr Mrs Little responded that there had been a number of parish meetings.
- District Cllr Mrs Crossland asked who is the RFO of the Town Council? A question about staffing was felt to be inappropriate.
- What is being done to improve the market? Cllr Mrs Little said that the Amenities Committee had held three meetings about the market. Signage could be one of the problems. Previously the road closure was a hindrance but the market had been more central. It is a priority of the Council and it will do its best to make improvements.

- What is happening about a Fire station? This is still work in progress. A planning application has not yet been submitted. Residents were assured that the Skatepark would not go until another facility was built.
- More land is needed for recreation. The Town Council is very aware of this.
- How are drugs being tackled? Councillors responded that Base 33 tackles this and similar issues, with the Town Council doing what it can.

Cllr Henry Howard asked a series of inappropriate questions at this point concerning whether the Town Council was running legally without a Clerk and the fact that the town's finances were being looked after by an unqualified individual. He also queried the whereabouts of £80,000 mentioned by the former Clerk in November 2014 when budgets were being reviewed. Cllr Mrs Little said that Cllr Howard's questions were not appropriate and staffing issues are not discussed at a public annual meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.

Town Mayor

REPORT OF OXFORD COUNTY COUNCILLOR NEIL OWEN

Cllr Owen reported that it had been a difficult year. Against a background of ever diminishing resource, i.e. cash, the County Council struggled to meet its statutory duties. A new and unexpected financial burden was imposed on the Council by the child abuse scandal in Oxford City. This meant funding a whole new tier of social workers, with their costs, to safeguard children in the future against this evil abuse. It is a sobering thought that 50% of the Council budget is spent on 2% of Oxfordshire's population: the children and the elderly.

However, all is not gloom and doom. Oxfordshire is a thriving and prosperous County and Oxfordshire County Council is committed to pressing central government for more funds to facilitate growth and a healthy economy. Improving the County highway system is integral to that vision.

It is a privilege to report to Carterton and I will represent the people of Carterton to the best of my ability for the coming year.

Cllr Neil Owen
Oxfordshire County Council
May 2015

Report from Maxine Crossland, WODC Cllr for Carterton North West

This year I have been honoured to be Vice Chairman of the District Council, which has given me the opportunity to promote Carterton's needs on a wide range of topics.

Planning is one of my particular responsibilities as I am also Vice Chair of Lowlands Planning. This committee meets monthly to debate the merits of larger developments, those which do not comply with current policies, or to which objections have been raised.

It is the responsibility of councillors to make decisions based on evidence, planning rules and policy. We are not allowed to let our hearts rule our heads. One over-riding issue is a clearly documented demand for affordable housing across the county, so building will have to take place across our district sooner or later. We cannot hide from the rise in population locally and the change in patterns of social behaviour. My job is to ensure that we get the best designs and infrastructure gains from these new developments.

But what about all those empty sites within the town's boundaries? Many people see the large areas of open space within Carterton, and suggest this is where the new homes should go. I know of only one such place left within the town boundaries which has not already received planning consent for extra homes. Almost every one of these "open" spaces is privately owned. It is entirely down to the owners' personal assessment about when the economic situation is right for them to start construction. .

There are already planning consents for around 1900 dwellings on sites along Upavon Way, Swinbrook Road, Burford Road opposite the primary school, the old Petit Enfant site next to the shops, the Osprey site on Upavon Way, some gardens along Black Bourton Road and houses at Carterton East. It is the job of the planners to ensure the needs of the locality are protected and that developers make fair and proportionate contributions to the infrastructure and social needs of the town but WODC has no power to tell developers when to start to build.

Part of my work arises from the **Economic and Social Committee**. I am very involved with **economic development**. My work here has included looking at road improvements, plans to upgrade the B4477 to an A road standard and easing congestion on the A40. I have become something of an expert on drains, sewers and solar farms and I have supported local industries and businesses experiencing administrative difficulties.

Health wise I have sponsored the development of a club for dementia sufferers and their carers; I preside over U3A, a learning organisation for the retired; and am championing the provision of a wide range of health care services for the disabled and the aged. Transport to hospitals by bus has improved and I monitor the response times of ambulances to the town and call the South Central Ambulance NHS Trust to account when necessary.

Recreation has benefitted from my on-going campaign to upgrade basic services at the Leisure Centre. I recently set in motion a rectification programme at the Centre covering a wide range of issues brought to me by local people. I have also helped a number of local clubs and charities find funding sources for their premises and facilities .

I shall continue to pursue all these issues and any others brought to me by local residents.

**Cllr Maxine Crossland,
Vice Chairman WODC
Carterton North West Ward**

Report from Cllr Henry Howard, WODC Cllr for Carterton North East

I have continued my work this past year as one of two District Councillors for Carterton North East Ward by supporting and promoting the needs and aspirations of the citizens of North East Carterton. This is not always as easy a task as it might sound, primarily because as a District Councillor the needs of all citizens of West Oxfordshire need to be balanced against those of Carterton and against available finance. I am a member of four District Committees namely: Planning, Environment, Financial Management and Audit & General Purposes. Apart from my committee work I provide a wide range of assistance to residents on individual problems that require input from WODC. Most of the time these are housing issues. I am also the district's "Armed Forces Champion" and provide help and assistance to all serving and ex armed forces personnel particularly here in Carterton.

Planning: Cllr Mrs Crossland as a colleague on this committee will cover this subject as part of her report to you.

Environment: This committee has a wide ranging remit that covers, Waste Collection and Recycling, Flooding, Air Quality, Car Parking, Countryside matters and Pollution. We are constantly striving to maintain and improve the quality of our waste collection/recycling. Our main concern is that of the "Bring Sites" particularly the site behind the Co-op store in Carterton, which suffers badly from "Fly Tipping". It is planned to provide CCTV coverage of the site as well as officer cover, so as to identify if possible the culprits, and you can be assured that WODC will prosecute those responsible. To help alleviate this problem, the waste disposal service to businesses will be enhanced as will more information be circulated via "Council Matters" to householders. Re-cycling rates in the district are well above the national average (Carterton being very good), but we need to keep up the pressure. Since the current system was introduced in the Autumn of 2010, WODC has saved over £2 million, easing the pressure on provision of other services.

Financial Management: This committee's prime responsibility is to oversee the work of district officers to ensure all income/expenditure is properly managed and also to assist with the preparation of the council's budget, providing advice on priorities, and the setting of Council Tax. We set Investment Strategy and oversee results to ensure that under-performing investments are identified and replaced at the earliest opportunity. Specifically for Carterton, monies are allocated and added to regularly in order to provide the second phase of our Leisure Centre. Soon to be introduced (2015/16) is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This will raise funding by charging £100 per square metre for every house or building completed, to be used exclusively for infrastructure improvements. Top of the agenda for Carterton will be improvements to the A40 Junction at Minster Lovell and the B4477. I am pleased to report that this committee has been very successful in its investments and overall financial management that we have managed to keep Council Tax rates on hold for the fifth year running and are very hopeful that this will carry forward into 2016/17.

Audit & General Purposes: This committee examines the internal audit and results of every department within the District Council. The aim is to ensure that rules and procedures are adhered to, are up to date and improved where necessary. "Full Accountability" is our

watchword. As to General Purposes, we oversee the Licensing Sub Committee and provide oversight of all council work not covered by the other specialist committees.

I, in co-operation with my fellow Carterton District Councillors, continue to work hard to promote Carterton and provide the best service we can, and ensure that the needs and aspirations of Carterton are recognized in all aspects of District Council work.

This work is both exciting and rewarding and I hope will benefit the whole town. It is a task that I shall continue to carry out as well as I am able, now and into the future.

Cllr Henry Howard
WODC
Carterton North East Ward
9 May 2015

Report from Cllr Lynn Little, WODC Cllr for Carterton South Ward.

My thanks go to all who turned out to vote on 7th May in what has proved to be a very important part of our country's history.

As one of your District Cllrs for the Carterton South Ward, I represent residents on the various committees that I am a member of including Economic & Social Overview which involves all policies and strategies of the council that affect the social well-being of residents in the district. I have therefore assisted quite a few families regarding housing issues in and around Carterton. There have been problems with overcrowding, adaptations for disabled family members, and of course the all-important issue of lack of affordable homes in West Oxfordshire as a whole.

Another concern has been educational facilities, especially for families with disabled children; we need to build on this information and in time I would like to see these facilities available in Carterton as the town expands.

I am also well aware of the many concerns you have voiced regarding the need for more facilities for sport including football pitches, the need to have our own rugby club, expanding our cricket facilities, taking forward the second phase of the leisure centre, and much more. I have actively engaged with our local businesses in order to understand the concerns of high business rates and reduced footfall that seem to be a very worrying trend. I will continue to highlight this problem to the officers at the district to find the best possible solution.

I am a member of the Audit and Scrutiny committee and also a member of the Licensing Committee.

On a positive note I have been invited to attend a meeting regarding a potential aviation and Carterton history museum that would enhance and compliment other attractions we currently have in the vicinity such as Crocodiles of the World, and I do hope that more people will visit Carterton.

The town's appearance is, I know, of great concern to many of you and I continue to address the many issues regarding the maintenance of the flower beds and hedges and the loss of some of our trees.

I will continue to make sure that the residents of Carterton have a voice on the district council and that we see the town prosper with the right kind of housing and infrastructure, shops and restaurants, that so many of you have taken the time to write to me about.

Please be assured that I can be reached via WODC and of course as a member of Carterton Town Council.

Cllr Lynn Little
WODC Cllr for Carterton South Ward
May 2015

Report from Cllr Norman MacRae MBE, WODC Cllr for Carterton North East

First of all, thanks to all who turned out to vote on 7 May, and also to those who voted for me. May I take this opportunity to assure all, that whether or not you voted for me, I will do my very best to support you throughout my term of office. I would also like to take this opportunity to publically offer my sincere thanks to the staff at WODC who did a truly magnificent job managing the election.

I am sorry that I am not able to be with you this evening as I have another function to attend in my capacity as Chairman of your District Council.

This has been a full and enjoyable year. As well as holding one of the seats for Carterton North East, I am also the Chairman of the Council, Chairman of Licensing and Miscellaneous Licensing Committees, Chairman of the Standards Committee and a member of the Urgency Committee.

As I am sure you will appreciate, these roles and responsibilities take up a significant part of my time. As Chairman of Licensing I have been able, with my fellow committee members, to ensure the highest standards are maintained throughout the District from a licensing perspective. Some of you may be aware of the Milton Keynes issue where taxi drivers with criminal records in matters of a sexual nature were licensed as taxi drivers, on the recommendation of the Labour Mayor of Milton Keynes.. I am particularly pleased to be able to report that I made the decision to revoke the license of two of our licensed taxi drivers when I became aware of serious sexual allegations being made against them. This was done before the Milton Keynes situation so West Oxfordshire leads the way!

Moving to my other roles/appointments. It goes without saying that I am particularly proud and honoured to be Chairman of the Council. That role has enabled me to travel throughout the District and beyond promoting both our Town and the District. At times, my duties here prevented me from spending a lot more time in Carterton. However, I was pleased to be here on Armed Forces Day and also to accept an invitation to the Town Council Christmas Dinner.

As is obvious, the work of the Standards Committee is largely confidential; accordingly I will not dwell longer on that item.

So, what have I done in the town to work for the people who elected me? I have spent a substantial amount of time working with Building Control Inspectors on matters involving David Wilson Homes. Significantly more than two hundred houses were sold by DWH without the legally required Certificate of Completion (and our house was one of the two hundred). Through hard work and negotiation, we now have agreement from DWH that they will (a) have the houses inspected, and (b) should they fail, the houses will be brought to certification standard irrespective of the date of purchase. I have worked with the relevant agencies to ensure roads are kept clean when building work is underway. There have been occasions when I advised an elderly widow on her housing situation. In similar fashion, I have assisted couples with their concerns over benefits (various). I have intervened on behalf of

younger couples with their crowded and inappropriate housing conditions.

I am currently working with a small group in trying to make progress with a much needed pub/diner facility in town, particularly for families.

With my ward being predominantly occupied by working people, I have a strong view that I should be as accessible as possible to them should they so wish. To facilitate this, I have held a Surgery every month, alternating between the Town Hall and the Community Centre. I have a website with contact details, and I would like to thank Cllr Maxine Crossland for her assistance in producing this. Finally, my thanks to my fellow ward member, Cllr Henry Howard, for his support, particularly when I was incapacitated at the tail end of last year following major surgery.

**Cllr Norman MacRae MBE
Carterton North East Ward
Chairman of the Council**