

# CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

## Annual Report 2013/14

### Mayor's Report



### Town Mayors Message

As I come to the end of my first Mayoral Year, it is time to reflect on the past 12 months and even beyond that. I have lived through Carterton in The Past (I have lived here since 1963), am working now in The Present and continue to be busy planning for The Future.

To me The Future is key – keeping hold of Carterton's individuality whilst striving to make it a place where people want to work, live, raise families and spend their retirement years.

All of this needs careful thought. The past and present teach us so much about what works and what doesn't. In The Present we need to be laying down firm foundations, talking to our communities and finding out what they want and need. I believe that with the Town Councillors and their dedicated and professional band of officers, we have the architects of Carterton's future. I am proud to be linked with a team who are striving to make our future safe, healthy and sustainable.

The best part of my job as Mayor is meeting the diverse range of residents. A big thank you goes out to all those who have taken the time to write to me or phone me and especially to those who stop me in the street and chat. Carterton attracts the most wonderful people and they never cease to amaze me with their warmth, friendship and support. If I had to pick one occasion that encapsulates the Carterton Spirit it was at the turning on of the Christmas Lights back in November 2013. The town was full and the atmosphere one of celebration. To see so many young families tells me that we are a town already building memories for their future.

We are busy building an even bigger and better programme of events in the town – look out for details in your local press, in PICK Magazine and through the BFBS Radio that we have recently welcomed to Carterton.

One thing I have learnt is that this town is full of people excited by change, people willing to take and manage the strategic vision and people not afraid to reach for solutions. Your Town Council is now lucky to have Councillors who are chomping at the bit to tackle the challenges faced by a transforming world and who see that world as providing opportunities for us in Carterton to finally get the services and facilities we so deserve.

As Divisional Secretary for SSAFA, honorary welfare officer for RAFA and the Royal British Legion, and a Family Liaison Officer for the Repatriations, I am in regular contact with RAF Brize Norton and the friends and families of our loyal servicemen. I am always humbled by the offers of help and support shown both within and outside our town. Together we have a very strong community and together we can make Carterton the Town we can all enjoy: a town with employment opportunities; a town with a diverse range of sport and leisure facilities; a night time economy; enough good quality nursery and primary school places; a Sixth Form at the Community College that is second to none; life enhancing services for our senior citizens and wonderful open spaces that give us all a sense of well being.

First, we have to have a plan and I am pleased to tell you that due to the dedication, commitment and leadership of our new Town Clerk, Carterton is ready to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan – so watch the Carterton Community Website [www.carterton.net](http://www.carterton.net) as you will all be invited to play a part.

My motto through life has always been '*Work for a cause and not for applause...*' and I hope to continue working for you as Mayor again next year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn Little".

Cllr Mrs Lynn Little  
Town Mayor  
May 2014

## Introduction

Carterton Town Council works to ensure a thriving community which is a healthy, vibrant and attractive place to live in, work and visit. This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2013/14. It also gives details about the services provided by the Council.

## About the Town



*Town Centre Planters*

Carterton, is the second largest town in West Oxfordshire, and is situated about 7 miles south west of Witney. The town lies on the edge of the Thames Valley and is close to the Cotswolds - an area of outstanding natural beauty. The population of Carterton has more than trebled in size during the last 30 years, to a present total of about 16,000.

Much of this high development rate has been due to the presence of the adjoining RAF Brize Norton air base. Carterton is rightly proud of its close and friendly relationship with the Royal Air Force, which is the largest employer in the area. Other local employment is found on the Carterton South Industrial Estate where there is a wide range of firms of all sizes. For employment further afield, Carterton is conveniently located for Oxford, Swindon, Cheltenham, Witney and Faringdon.

Carterton grew rapidly through the 1960s, 70s and 80s without any compensating provision of public leisure services. However, the current planned growth will be matched by improvements to the town centre and local facilities. The Town Council is working with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to attract new shops and businesses to the town and also to provide much needed sport and leisure facilities.

## Employment

The 2011 Census statistics revealed approximately 5,000 jobs in Carterton, of which a significant proportion were at RAF Brize Norton. About 50% of the town's residents commute to work outside Carterton. Since then, the number of jobs outside the base has been increased both by the development of the Carterton South Industrial Estate off Black Bourton Road and by new retail and commercial development in the town centre.

## Retail

2013 saw the opening of the new Morrisons store on the old market site just before Christmas.



*Morrisons*

## Schools

Carterton boasts a number of primary schools and a 'high achieving' secondary school:

### **St Joseph's Primary School,**

Lawton Avenue, Carterton, OX18 3JY

### **Carterton Primary School,**

Burford Road, Carterton Oxon OX18 3AD

### **Edith Moorhouse Primary School,**

Lawton Avenue, Carterton Oxon OX18 3HP

### **Gateway Primary School**

Netheravon Close, Carterton, Oxon, OX18 3SF

### **St John the Evangelist CE Primary School,**

Bluebell Way, Shilton Park, Carterton, OX18 1JF

### **Carterton Community College** Upavon Way

Carterton Oxfordshire OX18 1BU

Carterton Community College has been pressing for Post-16 Education for many years and the unanimous decision of Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 was to recommend that Post-16 provision proceeded. This is excellent news and there has been overwhelming support from the whole community, as well as County Councillors and the Local Authority. The first courses will start in September 2014 and these will comprise 'A' Level English,

Mathematics, Geography and History and BTEC Level 3 Art and Design, Creative Media and Sport.



*Sixth Form Art Class*

### **Carterton Town Council**

Carterton Town Council was established in 1985 when the Carterton and Black Bourton Parishes were split.

The Town Council Offices are at the Town Hall, 19 Alvescot Road, Carterton, Oxon, OX18 3JL. Tel: 01993 842156. Contact details are on the new Carterton Community Website - [www.carterton.net](http://www.carterton.net). The Town Hall is open 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

### **The Council and its Committees**

The full Council oversees all the activities of the Council and approves all financial expenditure. The main areas of the Council's work are covered by a number of Committees. These are Amenities, Economic Development, Planning, and Policy & Resources. A number of other sub committees and working parties are set up to deal with particular issues or projects.

Full details including dates and times of meetings can be found on the community website.

### **Town Councillors**

Carterton's sixteen Town Councillors represent the five wards in the town. They are elected every four years. The next elections are in May 2015.

Councillors serving during 2013/14 are listed below:

#### **Gateway Ward:**

Councillor M Brennan  
18 Foxcroft Drive, Carterton  
Councillor M McBride  
17 Meadow Way, Carterton

#### **Shillbrook Ward:**

Councillor Mrs D V Bulley  
53 Swinbrook Road, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs M Crossland (to Dec 2013)  
111 Burford Road, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs L Little  
1 Connolly Drive, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs J Smith (from Feb 2014)  
1 Richens Drive, Carterton

#### **Upavon Ward:**

Councillor A D Coomber (to Oct 2013)  
132 York Road, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs L Delaney (from Feb 2014)  
3 Magdalen Place, Carterton  
Councillor H Jobes  
19 Boundary Way, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs C MacRae (to March 2014)  
10 Hibiscus Way, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs M Mead (from Feb 2014)  
16 Trefoil Way, Carterton  
Councillor N MacRae MBE (to Dec 2013)  
10 Hibiscus Way, Carterton  
Councillor P Scott  
39 Alvescot Road, Carterton

#### **Rock Farm Ward:**

Councillor H Howard  
1 Lime Tree Close, Carterton  
Councillor Mrs N J Miah  
2 Willow Drive, Carterton  
Councillor M Steward  
24 Alvescot Road, Carterton

#### **Milestone Ward:**

Councillor R Crapper  
13 Corbett Road, Carterton  
Councillor A Farmer  
29 Corbett Road, Carterton  
Councillor P Madden  
33 The Crescent, Carterton

All Councillors can be contacted via email. Please see the website for further details.

### **OFFICES**

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2013/2014 the following Councillors held office:

#### **Town Mayor**

Councillor Mrs L Little

#### **Deputy Town Mayor**

Councillor H Jobes (from Feb 2014)  
Councillor Mrs M Crossland (to Dec 2013)  
**Chairman Administration Committee**  
Councillor P Scott

### **Chairman Recreation Committee**

Councillor Mrs L Little

### **Chairman Policy Committee**

Councillor A Farmer

### **Chairman Planning Committee**

Councillor R Crapper

The Councillors do not receive any payment or allowance for attending meetings or for carrying out any Council business.

### **How your money is spent**

The net budget for 2013/14 was £388,000. A Reserve of £100,000 has been set aside for improved sports facilities, with £10,000 for a possible Fitness Trail and £20,000 for improvements to the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. The budget also includes the maintenance of the Council's land, facilities and many of the verges in the town. All this work is carried out by contractors and there was a major retendering exercise during the year which has resulted in new contractors being appointed to carry out general maintenance across the town. The Recreation budget also funds the Christmas lights and the planned improvements to the planting in the town centre.

### **Council Responsibilities**

The Town Council maintains two recreation grounds, one at Alvescot Road and the other at Swinbrook Road, as well as 5 children's play parks, squash courts, the Allandale Youth Centre, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell Skateboard Park with a pump track, the Queen Mother's Garden and numerous open spaces throughout the town.

The Council provides allotments in Kilkenny Lane and a burial ground in the village of Black Bourton. The Council also pursues an active policy through direct action or grant aid measures to improve and enhance the general environment and condition of the town.

The Council runs the Carterton Market each Thursday, when the top end of Black Bourton Road is closed to provide a site for a street market. Stalls include fruit and vegetables, clothes, plants, meat, fish, cheese, sweets, greetings cards, pet provisions and jewellery.

### **A Year of Town and Community Improvements**

#### **New Market Square**

Plans have now been finalised for the creation of a New Market Square in front of the Town Hall. The

new Market Square will house the Thursday Market and a host of new markets including Farmers and Craft markets. It will also provide a focal point to draw shoppers from the new Morrisons Store into the Town Centre. The old Vets bungalow has now been demolished and it is hoped work will start on the Market Square in early summer 2014.



The plan above shows the general layout of the proposed Market Square, the War Memorial being retained in its current position, but with a new setting. There may also be some small changes to accommodate differing ground levels.

#### **Carter's Walk**

An exciting project saw the development of a proposal to enhance the visual aspect of the alleyway that runs between Giles Shop and Peaches. Members of the local retailers and residents joined with the Council to commission an artist who then submitted two sculptured designs for each end of Carter's Walk (see example of one of them below). The intention is that the alley will provide an ideal location for modern seating and together with new shop signage and information will become a focal point for the area and add interest and humour to the space.



## **Carterton & Area Leisure Map**

One of the suggestions to come out of a recent joint venture with the villages around Carterton was the production of a map which would detail a host of beautiful walks around the Carterton area. The annotated routes are able to be used by walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders. There are a number of existing routes in the area which exist in various informal leaflets produced a while ago, and the idea was to draw these together in a single map along with places of interest and refreshment. The maps are now available at the Town Hall and full details can be found on the News page of the community website.

## **A Quality Council**



In 2008, the Town Council was reaccredited as a Quality Town. The Council was initially given this status in 2004: the first town or parish council in Oxfordshire to achieve this distinction. The Quality scheme was launched by the Government in 2003 to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of local councils. Those Councils awarded Quality status are assessed as being representative, competent, well managed and able to take on an enhanced role. Carterton has also been awarded Beacon Status for its Carterton Fast Forward work.

## **Planning**

The Town Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications. As such it is responsible for commenting upon all the applications which fall within the Town. These comments are passed to West Oxfordshire District Council, who take them into account when reaching planning decisions. The Town Council has considered more than 100 applications during the year.

During the past 12 months the District Council has been consulting on its Local Plan which sets out future development for the District for the next 20 years. The Town Council has responded proactively to each round of consultation making a case for more land for employment and leisure and for improved road links.

## **Carterton Job Search Area**

The Town Hall extension was completed in November and we were honoured to welcome our Local MP and Prime Minister David Cameron to



*Job Search Area*

the grand opening. The extension hosts the new reception area, information centre and of course the highly successful Job Search area. Carterton Job Club has been running for a number of years and continues to give fortnightly advice and support to job seekers. This special area within the Town Hall is open every weekday for job seekers to access the internet, look through the job vacancy folders and newspapers and gain assistance from Town Hall staff.



*Prime Minister at the Opening of the Extension*

## **Promoting Carterton**

Carterton is a town with a great sense of community and is fortunate to have many residents who give willingly of their time and energy. The Council is now looking at better ways to promote the town to the outside world. The Town Council website has been redesigned and local businesses and organisations are invited to send in their details for inclusion on the site. The Town Council is regularly contributing to the new PICK magazine, which is available at the Town Hall and in local shops and the library.

The Town Council is also working with the District Council's Tourism Development Team to facilitate a 'Tourist Information Point' at the Town Hall. This will be especially important as we establish a

programme of events in and around the Town for 2014 onwards. Events are important to the economy of a town and the economic development of Carterton will again been a key part of the Councils work in 2014.

### The Civic Function

The Council has continued to play an important Civic role. The Mayor represents the Town at various functions throughout the County and has also undertaken a number of local engagements, including attending many events organised by clubs and organisations based within Carterton.

The Annual St Georges Day Dinner in April raised over £2,000 for the Mayor's chosen Charities which are The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the Carterton Educational Trust.

### Events

Last summer saw the launch of a series of Bandstand Concerts on the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground and a line up is already being produced for performances in 2014.



### Highways and Traffic

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for Highways matters but the Town Council has a Traffic Committee which takes an active interest in Traffic issues, advising the County Council of matters of local interest. During the year this Committee raised a number of issues with the County including road safety in the centre of town, speed limits, the siting of bus stops, the resurfacing of roads and vandalism to traffic signs and signals. Due to the bad weather in the winter

the roads are now in a very poor condition and the Town Council is constantly pressing OCC to carry out the necessary repairs.

### Carterton Community Food Bank



As a result of the success of the Food Bank in Witney, the Town Mayor took the initiative to investigate the opening of a Food Bank in Carterton. Funding was applied for and gratefully received from our County Councillors, local businesses and local residents, and help with painting was received from RAF Brize Norton personnel.

The Carterton Community Food Bank was set up in the Pavilion on the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground in Carterton in March 2014. Opening times are Mondays 2-6pm and Thursdays 10-2pm (these times may be subject to change) and the Food Bank is run by a band of diligent volunteers.

### Grants to Voluntary Groups

Grants and donations are awarded by the Town Council, at its Full Council Meetings, to community groups and other non-profit making organisations that meet the Town Council's strict guidelines and criteria. Any group or organisation receiving a grant must benefit the local community.

Council gives financial support to a number of local clubs and organisations. During the year the Town Council awarded the following grants:

Organisation	Purpose of grant	Grant
Bass 33 Youth Trust	Engaging young people in the town	£1,000
West Oxon Citizens Advice Bureau	Help towards running costs	£1,500
Carterton Day Centre	Help towards running costs	£6,000
Get Stuck In Project	Contribution towards holiday programme for 8-14 year olds.	£1,500

Organisation	Purpose of grant	Grant
Kilkenny Cricket Club	Contribution towards new equipment	£4,750

For further information about the Town Council, contact the Town Hall on 01993 842156 or visit

[www.carterton.net](http://www.carterton.net).

### **Behind the Scenes**

The Town Clerk, with the help of Staff and Councillors, has begun work on updating all aspects of the Council's Governance. In the region of forty policies and a growing list of protocols are in the process of being updated. The first draft of the new Staff Handbook is being written and a full review of the roles and responsibilities of the Staff Team is also underway. All this investment of time and energy will ensure that the Town Council is doing the right things in the right way for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. This is critical in order to deliver the intended outcomes for citizens and service users and operate in an efficient, effective and ethical manner.

In addition to the day to day running of the town council, we need to be looking to the future, to ensure the infrastructure is in place to meet the day to day needs and expectations of those who live here. In the past, town councils have all too often only been consultees to decision makers, feeling as if they have little or no power to have a hand in shaping the future for themselves and future generations. The Localism Bill received Royal Assent on 15th November 2011 and is now law. It sets out a series of proposals with the potential to achieve a substantial and lasting shift in power away from central government and towards local people.

The Carterton Community have always played an active role in shaping their town and we hope to see many more of you at forthcoming events...watch the website for details.

### **Council Staff**

#### **Clerk of the Council**

Caroline Ramsey (from August 2013)  
Janet Eustace (until August 2013)

#### **Assistant Town Clerk**

Tan Marchant

#### **Administrative Assistants**

Stella Catt  
Teresa Whitford  
Scott Edwards (from March 2014)

#### **Cleaner/Caretaker**

Denise Archer