

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
Annual Report 2004/2005

Mayor's Foreword



The Annual Report provides an opportunity to take stock of the last twelve months. The Town Council is only one of many organisations working within the town and I would like to thank those who have helped and supported our efforts in any way. We have demonstrated that partnership working can and does deliver.

As you travel around Carterton, you cannot fail but notice the new development that is taking place all over town. The buildings opposite the main gate to RAF Brize Norton will form a new Business and Retail Park. The North East Carterton development area continues to grow with some 500 houses occupied. Residents were consulted in January on the design of the local centre. Construction should start on site towards the end of this year with a completion date of Autumn 2007. The north east area will also include a much-needed community building. We hope that this can be a multi-use facility open to all the residents of Carterton.

Over the last 12 months, much of our efforts have gone into the development of the town centre. Following a positive report from retail specialists, the Town Centre Development Group has been working on proposals to develop a selection of shops in the south west quarter of the town. This has involved discussions with key landowners, but also involves the community.

The provision of recreational facilities continues to be a high priority for us. Last summer a BMX track was installed next to the Skateboard Park at the Dell. We marked its opening by holding an *Xtreme Wheels* Day when more than 100 youngsters enjoyed displaying their skills. A survey of young people that we carried out at the end of last year shows that our young people are keen to try a wide range of activities, but they do need a bit of help and support from the Council and the wider community

We are also looking forward to the installation in May of play equipment for toddlers, older children and teenagers on the green space immediately in front of St John's School. The

Town and District Council have worked together to obtain equipment which is exciting and challenging and which we are sure children will enjoy

The Carterton Fast Forward Project has continued apace. We are very fortunate in having secured funding from the Countryside Agency for our Project Manager. I would like to record my thanks to all those people who have been involved in both the Heritage Project and the Cinema which had a successful launch in March. Both of these have brought together the wider community in a way that has been a joy to watch.

The Town Council has relatively modest financial resources. The net budget for 2005/06 is just over £243,000. Because of the growing number of homes in the town we have been able to restrict the increased charge to each household to only 3%. Nearly half of our budget is allocated to recreation. This includes the maintenance of Alvescot Road and Swinbrook Road Recreation Grounds, Willow Meadows and the Dell, cutting the grass on highway verges and amenity areas, maintaining play areas, the Skateboard Park and the BMX track. This budget also funds the town centre planting and the Christmas lights.

The year has seen a number of successful civic events. The St George's Day Charity Dinner on 23rd April is our main event; the Mayor's Walk on New Year's Day which this year raised more than £1300 for Macmillan Nurses, and the Switch On of the Christmas lights. The town-wide collection, which we organised on New Year's Eve for the Tsunami appeal, raised over £5000. We also held receptions and coffee mornings, which have been attended by colleagues and friends from Carterton and other towns in Oxfordshire. The Mayoress, Maxine, and I have thoroughly enjoyed our year of office and have been immensely proud to represent Carterton at a range of events and functions.

All that we do is only achieved by the hard work of Councillors and Town Hall staff. In closing I would like to record my thanks and appreciation to the Mayoress, the Deputy Mayor and Councillors for the support and help that they have given to me. My thanks also go to the Town Hall staff, who help not just the Councillors but all the residents of the town. Carterton is indeed fortunate to be served so well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Larkell'.

Town Mayor
May 2005

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2004/05. It also gives details about the services provided by the Council.

About the Town

Carterton, the second largest town in West Oxfordshire, is situated some 7 miles south west of Witney. The town lies on the edge of the Thames Valley and is close to the Cotswold area of outstanding natural beauty. Carterton's population has more than trebled in size during the last 30 years, to a present total of about 15,000. This figure will continue to increase as some 1400 new homes are built in the development area to the north east of the town.

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 Southern 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 1991 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 commuted to work outside Carterton. Since then, the number of jobs outside the base has been increased both by the development of the District-owned industrial estate off Black Bourton Road and by the new retail and commercial development in the town centre.

The attraction of Carterton to major employers will increase now that the link road to the A40 has been completed.

Carterton Town Council

The Town Council Offices are at the Town Hall, Alvescot Road, Carterton, Oxon OX18 3JL. Tel 01993 842156, Fax 01993 844898. Email: jeustace@carterton-tc.gov.uk Website: www.carterton-tc.gov.uk. The Town Hall is open 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

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

The Council and its Committees

The full Council oversees all the activities of the Council. The main areas of the Council's work are covered by a number of Committees. These are Administration, Planning, Policy, Recreation and Traffic.

The Council meets at 7.45 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. The Planning Committee meets at 7.30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meetings of the Recreation and Administration Committees take place on a Tuesday four times a year, and the Traffic Committee meets twice a year. Other Committees meet by agreement. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend any meeting.

Town Councillors

Carterton's sixteen Town Councillors represent the five wards in the town. They are elected every four years. The last election was in May 2003.

Gateway Ward:

Councillor Mrs L. Walcott
112 Queens Road, Carterton
Councillor W.O. Walcott
112 Queens Road, Carterton

Shillbrook Ward:

Councillor Mrs. D.V. Bulley
53 Swinbrook Road, Carterton
Councillor Mrs M. Crossland
111 Burford Road, Carterton
Councillor P.J. Handley
Westbourne, Pye Corner, Shilton

Upavon Ward:

Councillor B. Crossland
111 Burford Road, Carterton
Councillor L.H. Giles
25 Corbett Road, Carterton
Councillor P.L. Scott
39 Alvescot Road, Carterton
Councillor K.W. Stone
7 Humphries Close, Carterton
Councillor N Tully
16 Bluebell Way, Carterton

Rock Farm Ward:

Councillor D King
2 Barley Crescent
Councillor M A Townsend
60, Richens Drive, Carterton
Councillor P.G. Wesson
9 Brome Way, Carterton

Milestone Ward:

Councillor R. Crapper
13 Corbett Road, Carterton
Councillor Mrs. A. Madden
33 The Crescent, Carterton
Councillor P. Madden
33 The Crescent, Carterton

OFFICES

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2004/2005 the following Councillors held office:

Town Mayor

Cllr. B. Crossland

Deputy Town Mayor

Cllr P Scott

Chairman Administration Committee

Cllr. L.H. Giles

Chairman Recreation Committee

Cllr. Mrs. D.V. Bulley

Chairman Policy Committee

Cllr. P.J. Handley

Chairman Traffic Advisory Committee

Cllr. Mrs. D.V. Bulley

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

Staff

The Clerk of the Council

Janet Eustace

Deputy Town Clerk

Margaret Tinner

Administrative Assistant

Tan Marchant

Council Facilities

The Town Council maintains two recreation grounds, one at Alvescot Road and the other at Swinbrook Road, a children's playpark, squash courts, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell with a trim trail, 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.

Carterton Check and Carterton Fast Forward

The Council was fortunate to secure in 2002 a package of funding from the Countryside Agency to allow it to employ a consultant to carry out a Market Town Healthcheck. The Carterton Check was published in the summer of 2003. The Countryside Agency has provided

a further package of funding which runs until 2006 to help the Council employ a Project Manager to take forward the 49 projects identified in *Carterton Fast Forward Towards 2010*. Many organisations and individuals are now working to bring these projects to a successful conclusion.

Beacon Status

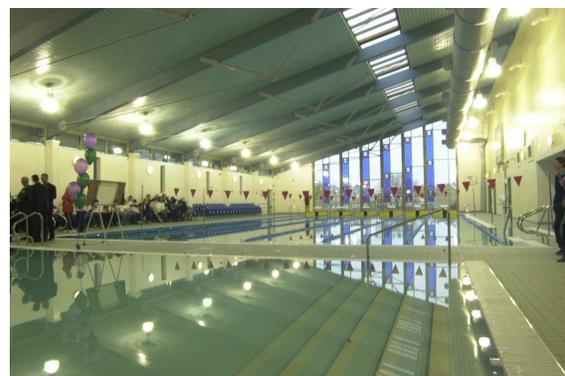
One of the main projects to come from the Carterton Fast Forward project is the redevelopment of the town centre. We are working with a number of organisations to secure a thriving town centre for the future. Our work in this area has been recognised by the Countryside Agency who have awarded the Council Beacon Status for this project.

Quality Status

In March 2004 Carterton Town Council was awarded Quality status: 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. In the coming months we will be considering how best to develop our role to provide local services in the most cost effective way. Using grant aid from the Quality Council Fund, work is underway to expand the services provided at the Town Hall. The aim is to improve accessibility for local residents.

Recreational Facilities

The new leisure centre, which is run by Wycombe Leisure, opened in November 2003. Usage and income continues to exceed projected targets. Feedback from users continues to be positive. Sadly there have been problems with the new playingfields. The District Council has now carried out the remedial works needed to bring the failing pitches and cricket square up to standard. This meant that the pitches were back in use by October 2004.



Carterton Leisure Centre