

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
Annual Report 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.

The North East Carterton development area continues to grow with some 800 houses now occupied. Planning approval has been given for the new local centre there and we hope that that will be complete by early 2008. The north east area will also include a much-needed community building which we want to see used by all the residents of the town. In fact one of our major achievements this year has been to secure grants totalling £150,000 which will be used to top up the funding that the developers have already put aside to pay for this new building.

Building has also continued on our two new industrial sites at Ventura Park and the West Oxfordshire Business Park. It is true that the progress has been at something approaching snails pace at times and I am sure that we will all be relieved to see both sites completed. But I promise you that things are happening!

But most of our efforts continue to be directed at developing the town centre. Over the last twelve months, the Town Centre Development Group has been working on proposals which include building shops and homes in the south west quarter of the town. We held a very successful public consultation exercise last summer and

will continue to involve the public as we work up proposals for future development.

Progress on the rebuilding of the married quarters has been frustratingly slow. A consortium had been identified more than 2 years ago but it fell foul of the Government's PFI rules. We were led to believe that things were back on track but all has gone quiet and I doubt if anyone would like to predict a start date.

The provision of recreational facilities continues to be a high priority for us. Our annual Xtreme Wheels Day has now become a regular fixture with the youngsters taking on much of the organisation themselves. And, after a break of a number of years, the Town Council and the RAF jointly arranged a hugely popular 10K road race in March with more than 250 runners taking part.

The Carterton Fast Forward Project is now in its third year and continues to provide a fine example of how much can be achieved with community involvement. One particular project involving the recording of our local history has particularly captured the imagination of our residents. Having completed a very successful first phase of the project we have been lucky enough to be awarded another grant in excess of £20,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will allow us to complete the second phase, including the production of a DVD and a Community Play and the excavation of a Saxon Burial ground.

My thanks go to all those volunteers, too numerous to name, whose involvement makes Carterton the special place that it is.

As Mayor, one of my many functions is to help raise funds for charity. The Mayor's Walk on New Year's Day is now a regular feature in our calendar and this year raised more than £1,300 for Macmillan Nurses.

I should like to end by thanking my fellow Town Councillors and the Town Hall staff for their support over the last twelve months. Particular thanks go to Margaret Tinner, the Deputy Town Clerk who retired in March 2006 having served the Town Council for nearly 26 years.

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

Town Mayor
April 2006

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2005/06. 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 4 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 2005/2006 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 the summer of 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.

A Quality Council

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. Using grant aid from the Quality Council Fund, work is underway to expand the services provided at the Town Hall. We have provided an integrated travel information point and are now able to give out travel tokens to eligible residents. Carterton has also been awarded Beacon Status for its CFF work

Recreational Facilities

The new leisure centre, which is run by Wycombe Leisure, opened in November 2003 and continues to be very popular. A new recreational area on Trefoil Way was opened during the year and provides different equipment for a wide age range, including a ball court for teenagers.

The Council organised a successful 'Xtreme Wheels' day at the skateboard park in 2004 and was delighted when the youngsters said that they would like to organise their own event, with help from the Council in 2005. We hope that this will become an annual event.

After a gap of many years, the Council and RAF Brize Norton combined forces to hold a 10K road race around the town. More than 250 runners entered and feedback suggests that many would like us to hold the event again next year.

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. More than 120 applications have been considered by the Town Council during the year.

Also during the year, the Town Council helped to organise a public consultation exercise to seek the views of residents for the redevelopment of the centre of Carterton.

Promoting Carterton

Carterton is a thriving 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 ways to promote the town to the outside world. The Town Council web site (www.carterton-tc.gov.uk) has been redesigned. The production of a quarterly newsletter continues and provides a vital link between the Council and residents.

The Civic Function

The Council has continued to play an important Civic role. The annual St George's Day Charity Dinner and the Mayor's Walk raised substantial funds for charities. The Mayor has represented 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.

Annual Competitions

Every year the Council holds a number of competitions including the Best Kept Allotments Competition, the Carterton in Bloom Competition and the Best Decorated Premises Competition each Christmas. There is also an annual swimming gala held for the local primary schools.

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.

Grants to Voluntary Groups

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

Allandale	For taster sessions	*£4,000
Carterton Football Club	Coach to Holland	£1,000
Harefield Hamsters	For World Transport Games	£600
Community College	Games Co-ordinator	£2,500
Carterton Heritage Group	For DVD	*£3,000
West Oxon CAB	Running costs	£1000
		£12,100

* indicates grant not taken up in 2005/06

How your money is spent.

The net budget for 2006/07 is £259,900. Because of continuing new development in the town the charge to each household has increased by 5%. £125,000 has been allocated to recreation in the forthcoming year. This includes the maintenance of Alvescot and Swinbrook Road Recreation Grounds, Willow Meadows and the Dell, cutting the grass on highway verges and amenity areas, maintaining play areas including the new one at Trefoil Way, the skateboard park and the BMX track. All these contracts are being re-tendered in 2006. The Recreation budget also funds the town centre planting and the Christmas lights.

The Carterton Fast Forward (CFF) Project is supported financially by money from the South East Economic Development Agency, the Lottery Heritage Initiative, the District Council and other sources. Projects include the redevelopment of the town centre, preserving the heritage of the town and establishing a community cinema. In 2006, the Town Council has been awarded grants totalling £150,000 which will be put towards the costs of a new Community Centre. Construction work should start on this in 2007.

For further information about the Town Council contact the Town Hall on 01993 842156 or visit www.carterton-tc.gov.uk.