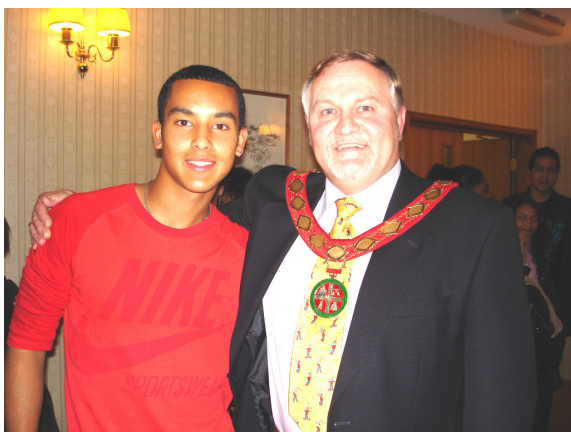


CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL Annual Report 2006



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 us in our efforts. We have demonstrated that partnership working can and does deliver.

The North East Carterton development area continues to grow with nearly 1,000 homes occupied. Building has started on the new local centre there and we hope that that will be complete by mid 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. One of the Council's major achievements has been to secure grants totalling £210,000 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.

Most of our efforts continue to be directed at developing the town centre, but the land is in the ownership of a number of parties so progress is slow. We have however had one success. Following the sale of the old market site, the Town Council obtained the necessary licences and road closures to allow it to operate a street market. This started in December and is steadily growing in size and popularity.

Progress on the rebuilding of the married quarters continues to be frustratingly slow. Action is needed soon because of the poor conditions in which our service families are having to live. We will continue to lobby for action.

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. This now looks set to be an annual fixture.

The Carterton Fast Forward Project is now in its fourth 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 has allowed us to complete the second phase, including the production of a Community Play and the excavation of a Saxon Burial ground at our cemetery at Black Bourton. My thanks go to all those volunteers, too numerous to name, whose involvement makes Carterton the special place that it is.

As Mayor, I have had a fascinating year and have been hugely privileged to meet many interesting people. Three of these warrant special mention: the Archbishop of Canterbury who attended our Remembrance Day Service; young Arsenal footballer Theo Walcott who switched on our Christmas Lights and HRH Princess Royal who visited RAF Brize Norton. I was delighted to be able to welcome them and many others to our town.

One of my many functions as Mayor 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 £1,500 for Macmillan Nurses. We also raised more than £500 at our St George's Day Dinner for Cancer Research. My thanks to all who give so generously.

I should like to end by thanking my fellow Town Councillors and the Town Hall staff for their support over the last twelve months.

Cllr Phil Scott
Town Mayor
April 2007

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2006/07. 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 1500 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 and Black Bourton Parishes were split.

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 Administration, Planning, Policy, Recreation, Traffic and Fire.

The Council meets at 7.45 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month (except in December when it meets on the second Tuesday). The Planning Committee meets at 7.30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meetings of the Recreation, Policy and Administration Committees take place on a Tuesday 4 times a year, and the Traffic and Fire Committees meet twice a year. Other Committees meet by agreement. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend any of the Committee meetings.

Town Councillors

Carterton's sixteen Town Councillors represent the five wards in the town. They are elected every four years. The next elections will be in May 2007.

Councillors serving during 2006 are listed below:

Gateway Ward:

Councillor Mrs. L. Walcott
112 Queens Road, Carterton
Councillor W.O. Walcott MBE
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 2006/2007 the following Councillors held office:

Town Mayor

Cllr. P. Scott

Deputy Town Mayor

Cllr. P. Handley

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

Chairman Fire Advisory Committee

County Councillor J. Couchman

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

Staff

Clerk of the Council

Janet Eustace

Assistant Town Clerk

Tan Marchant

Administrative Assistant

Stella Catt

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.

The market

In December 2006, the Council took over the running of Carterton Market. This followed the sale of the old market site to the Co-op. Each Thursday, 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, pet provisions and jewellery. A number of special events are being planned for 2007.

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 in 2005 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 both 2005 and 2006 when the event featured live local bands.

After a gap of many years, the Council and RAF Brize Norton combined forces to hold a 10K road run around the town. As the 2006 run was so successful, the event was repeated in March 2007.

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 130 applications have been considered by the Town Council during the year.

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:

Witney Home Start	£1000
Harefield Hamsters	£500
Kilkenny Cricket Club	£500
Citizens Advice Bureau	£1000
Carterton Methodist Church	£500
	<hr/>
	£3500

The Council also pledged to allocate £500 as seed funding for a new Day Centre bus.

How your money is spent

The net budget for 2007/08 is £294,000. Because of continuing new development in the town the charge to each household has increased by less than 3%.

£150,000 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 were relet in 2006 following a competitive tendering exercise. The Recreation budget also funds the Christmas lights.

The Carterton Fast Forward (CFF) Project is supported financially by money from 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. The Town Council has been awarded grants totalling £210,000 and developer funding of more than £500,000 towards the costs of a new Community Centre. Construction work on this hall will start during 2007.

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