

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
Annual Report 2008/09**



Mayor's Foreword

The Annual Report provides an opportunity to take stock of the last year. 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 economic down turn has meant that everyone has been operating in difficult conditions. The North East Carterton development was near completion when the housing market collapsed but some houses are still to be sold. The opening of the shops at the local centre was delayed but two, a hairdressers and a food store, have both now opened. I am delighted that our new Community Centre did open on time and on budget and that it is already proving to be a great asset to the town.

Building has also continued on our two new industrial sites at Ventura Park and the West Oxfordshire Business Park. Last year the District Council gave planning approval for a much-needed family pub restaurant and a hotel on the land adjacent to the Broadshires Health Centre roundabout. Sadly the owner of the site has not taken this forward.

Following a change in the ownership of the old market site there has been a lull in progress on the redevelopment of the town centre. An agent has now been appointed and discussions with the various landowners have begun. The Town Council continues to run the market on its new location in Black Bourton Road.

Last year, the site of Dowleys Garage and Party Zone was sold to Aldi. During the course of the last twelve months, planning approval has been given for a store but we have not yet seen a start on site.

The rebuilding of the married quarters continues to be frustratingly slow. A consortium had been identified some 6 years ago but it fell foul of the Government's PFI rules. We now understand that

the PFI project has been scrapped and that a traditional procurement method will be adopted. We have no date for when this will happen but we will continue to ensure that our local MP David Cameron lobbies the MOD on our behalf. Meanwhile, the demolition of the worst of the flats on the estate continues.

We have also been pressing for the redevelopment of the Osprey site but again the difficult economic conditions have held up progress.

The provision of recreational facilities continues to be a high priority for us. Our annual Extreme Wheels Day has now become a regular fixture, with the youngsters taking on much of the organisation themselves. The Town Council and the RAF jointly arranged the fourth 10K road run in March 2009 and this was extremely successful.

The Carterton Fast Forward Project is now in its sixth year and continues to provide a fine example of how much can be achieved with community involvement. The main project undertaken during the last 12 months has been the refurbishment of Tower Square. Most of this work was funded by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

During the coming year we will be reviewing the achievements of the CFF project and looking to roll the project forward by another five years.

The Council recognises that law and order is a concern to residents and has continued discussions with the police with a view to achieving higher profile policing in the town. The Council has made the decision to support the introduction of cost effective CCTV in the town centre and is now discussing the details of implementation with the District Council and the police.

We have also been working closely with young people and I am particularly pleased that the Youth Council, set up in 2007, has gone from strength to strength.

As Mayor, I have had a fascinating year and have been hugely privileged to meet many interesting people. I have continued with my fundraising for charity.

I should like to end by thanking my fellow Town Councillors and the Town Hall staff for their continuing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maxine Crossland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maxine Crossland
Town Mayor

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2008/09. 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. The population of Carterton has more than trebled in size during the last 30 years, to a present total of about 15,000.

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 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.



Carterton Town Hall

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 Council's meetings.

Town Councillors

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

Councillors serving during 2008/09 are listed below:

Gateway Ward:

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

Shillbrook Ward:

Councillor Mrs. D.V. Bulley, 53 Swinbrook Road
Councillor Mrs. M. Crossland, 111 Burford Road
Councillor E. Wearing, 24 Burswin Road

Upavon Ward:

Councillor B. Crossland, 111 Burford Road
Councillor N.A. MacRae MBE
10 Hibiscus Way,
Councillor P.L. Scott, 39 Alvescot Road
Councillor A.D. Coomber, 8 Kestrel Close
Councillor Mrs S. E. Stone, 7 Humphries Close

Rock Farm Ward:

Councillor Miss E. L. Liston, 11 Lawton Avenue
Councillor S. D. Lodge, 28 Netheravon Close
Councillor Mrs N. J. Miah, 2 Willow Drive

Milestone Ward:

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

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

OFFICES

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2008/2009 the following Councillors held office:

Town Mayor

Cllr. Mrs M. Crossland

Deputy Town Mayor

Cllr N.A. MacRae MBE

Chairman Administration Committee

Cllr. B. Crossland

Chairman Recreation Committee

Cllr. A.D. Coomber

Chairman Policy Committee

Cllr N.A. MacRae MBE

Chairman Planning Committee

Cllr Mrs S.E.Stone

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, three children's play parks, squash courts, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell skateboard park, 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.

In December 2006, the Council took over the running of Carterton Market. This followed the sale of the old market site. 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.



Carterton Market

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 provided a further package of funding which ran 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 have worked to bring these projects to a successful conclusion.

In April 2009, a group of people representing various organisations in the town, met to review the progress that had been achieved and consider whether the original aims of the project were still relevant. A wider consultation will take place over the summer and a new report will be published.

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. 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.

Carterton Community Centre



Carterton Community Centre

The new Community Centre, which is at Trefoil Way, was completed in November 2008. The Centre cost £1.4m and provides a well-equipped venue for a variety of events. It has a large hall with demountable stage, a smaller hall, two meeting rooms and three offices. A community café operates on most days in the foyer and there is a well-equipped kitchen. The Centre is available for private hire and provides a lovely venue for parties, wedding receptions and conferences.



The Community Centre is owned by the Town Council and leased to a company which is limited by guarantee and which is also registered as a charity. The Management Company employ a part time manager and a caretaker.

The Centre was formally opened by HRH the Princess Royal in February 2009 amidst great celebrations.



Royal Opening

Recreational Facilities

A new leisure centre, now run by Nexus Leisure on behalf of the District Council, 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 Extreme 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, 2006 and 2008. Plans are under way to hold an even larger event in 2009.



Carterton 10K 2009

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 is now held annually, usually in March and attracts more than 200 runners each 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.

The Town Council has considered more than 100 applications during the year.

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 ways to promote the town to the outside world. The Town Council website (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.

Carterton Youth Council

The Youth Council, one of the first in Oxfordshire, was established in 2007. Youth Councillors are elected to represent schools, churches and other organisations and serve for 12 months. The Youth Council has raised funds for charity, helped to organise the Extreme Wheels Day and taken part in facilitated discussions on how to help combat antisocial behaviour. Youth Councillors have established a website aimed at youngsters. The Youth Council has advised the Town Council on its funding priorities and has successfully secured funding for the construction of a pump track and also for sponsorship of one of the Community College's kit cars.

The Civic Function

The Council has continued to play an important Civic role. The annual St George's Day Charity Event 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 House at Christmas Competition. 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:

PAYEE	AMOUNT
Children's Centre	£ 2,042.00
Annual Weed Control	£ 1,298.00
Oxford Assoc for the Blind	£ 200.00
Witney Junior Band	£ 366.00
Carterton Primary	£ 520.00
Citizen's Advice Bureau	£ 1,200.00
Windrush Amateur Boxing	£ 1,100.00
Carterton U3A	£ 1,000.00
JR Children's Hospital	£ 50.00
Carterton Lions	£ 50.00
Church Flower Festival	£ 100.00
RAF Dev Officer - Training Course	£ 575.00

How your money is spent

The net budget for 2009/10 is £323,400 which is a 3% increase on last year's budget.

Nearly £200,000 has been allocated to recreation in the forthcoming year. This includes the maintenance of the Council's land and facilities and of many of the verges in the town. All this work is carried out by contractors and is re-tendered every three years. The Recreation budget also funds the Christmas lights.



Refurbished Tower Square

The Carterton Fast Forward (CFF) Project is supported financially by money from the Lottery, the District Council and other sources. Recent projects include the redevelopment of the town centre, improvements to Tower Square and preserving the heritage of the town.

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