

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL Annual Report 2009/10



Mayor's Report

The Annual Report provides an opportunity to take stock of the last year. The economic down turn has meant that everyone has been operating in difficult conditions.

The major issue over the last year has been the application by Sainsburys for a foodstore on West Oxfordshire Business Park. As I write this report, the application has still to be considered by WODC. The Town Council looked at the Sainsburys application last autumn and warmly welcomed the retailer's interest in the town but firmly believed that the new food store should be in the town centre rather than on the edge of town. All the professional advice we have received underlines the importance of our having a town centre anchor store. The Town Council is therefore delighted to learn that two of the private landowners in the town centre have signed a formal option with Simons, which will allow the redevelopment of the town centre to go ahead. It has been a long time coming and there is still a way to go but we are now firmly on track.

With the completion of the NE Carterton estate, attention has turned to the future development of the town. The Town Council has taken an active role in assisting WODC in its consultation exercise on the local development framework. The scale and location of future development is a sensitive issue and one which will have a long-term impact on the town. We want to ensure that we make an informed decision, and we have therefore appointed a consultant to help us to review the options.

The date for the closure of RAF Lyneham and the move to RAF Brize Norton is getting closer. This move will have an enormous impact on the area. Not just on the base but also on the town. While the restructuring is underway we have seen a fall in population, which has had a significant impact on our schools. This trend should be reversed by 2012 and we may then find that we have a shortage of spaces, houses and medical services. It is difficult to plan when there are so many uncertainties but the Town Council has made strenuous efforts to ensure that the right people are talking to each other and that they will continue to do so.

Frustratingly, there are three areas where no progress has been made. In 2008 the District Council gave planning approval for a much-needed family pub restaurant and hotel on the land adjacent to the Broadshires Health Centre roundabout. Sadly the owner of the site has not taken this forward. In the same year the site of Dowleys Garage and Party Zone was sold to Aldis. Planning approval has been given for a store but

we have not yet seen a start on site. Also the Osprey site remains an eyesore. We have been pressing the owner's agent to take some action with this site but again the difficult economic conditions have held up progress.

The provision of recreational facilities continues to be a high priority for us. During the year we have refurbished the play area at The Maples, turning it into an attractive community garden. We are now drawing up proposals for improving the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. Our vision is to provide a new play area with exciting and challenging equipment for a wide age range and also to turn the Recreation Ground itself into a more attractive park. This will cost a significant amount of money and is dependent on our securing grant aid. We are continuing to support local events, and our annual Extreme Wheels Day has now become a regular fixture, with the youngsters taking on much of the organisation themselves. Additionally, the Town Council and the RAF again jointly arranged this year's fifth 10K road run in March.

The Carterton Fast Forward Project is now in its seventh year and continues to provide a fine example of how much can be achieved with community involvement. The project is now working on ideas for a new building to the rear of Carterton Community Centre and also a weekend of special events to be held in September 2010 to celebrate our town.

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. We have joined with WODC to provide CCTV in the town centre and this will be operational by May 2010.

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.

During my two years as Mayor I have been hugely privileged to meet many interesting people. I have continued with my fund raising for charity. 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.

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

**Maxine Crossland
Town Mayor**

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2009/10. 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.



Ventura Park

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.



Carterton Town Hall

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 2009/10 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 E. Wearing
24 Burswin Road, Carterton

Upavon Ward:

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

Rock Farm Ward:

Councillor Miss E. L. Liston
11 Lawton Avenue, Carterton
Councillor Mrs C MacRae (w.e.f. April 2010)
28 Netheravon Close, Carterton
Councillor Mrs N. J. Miah
2 Willow Drive, 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 our web site for further details.

OFFICES

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2009/2010 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 A Farmer

Chairman Planning Committee

Cllr Mrs D V Bulley

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, two children's play parks, squash courts, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell skateboard park with a trim trail, the Queen Mother's Garden, and numerous open spaces throughout the town.



Carterton Allotments

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 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, pet provisions and jewellery.

Carterton Fast Forward

The Council secured funding in 2002 from the Countryside Agency to allow it to employ a consultant to carry out a Market Town Healthcheck. The Carterton Check (known as

Carterton Fast Forward) was published in 2003. The Countryside Agency provided a further package of funding to help the Council employ a Project Manager to take forward the 49 projects. Many organisations and individuals have worked to bring these projects to a successful conclusion. During the last year progress has been reviewed and the original aims of the project revisited. New priorities have been identified and the project continues with the help of a number of dedicated volunteers.



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

The new community centre, which is at Marigold Square, was completed in November 2008. It 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 part-time staff. The Centre is proving to be a popular venue for a wide range of social and community events.

Recreational Facilities

Carterton leisure centre, run by Nexus Leisure on behalf of the District Council, opened in November 2003 and continues to be very popular. The District Council has also recently provided a new adventure playground at the western end of the country park. During the year, the Town Council has refurbished The Maples play area. This project involved working with local residents to take account of their views. The result is an attractive community space, which includes a number of elements that can be used for play.



The Maples - refurbished

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. Plans are underway to hold an even larger event in August 2010.

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 web site (www.carterton-tc.gov.uk) has been redesigned and is constantly updated. 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 represents 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 web site aimed at youngsters. The Youth Council has advised the Town Council on its funding priorities and has successfully secured funding for projects within the town. The Youth Councillors lobbied for the future of the local Allandale Youth House when it was threatened by County Council funding cuts.

The Civic Function



Civic Service at St. John's Church

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.

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.



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
St John's Church	Refurbishment	£5,000
Brownes Hall	Refurbishment	£7,050
CAB	Running Costs	£1,500
Children's Centre	Equipment	£575
Community Centre	Staffing	£3,000
Primary Schools	Competition	£500

How your money is spent

The net budget for 2010/11 is £323,400, which is the same as in 2009/10.

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 and the planned improvements to the planting in the town centre

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