

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL Annual Report 2012/13

Mayor's Report



The Annual Report provides an opportunity to take stock of the last year. The continuing economic downturn has meant everybody has been operating in difficult conditions.

The past year has seen a number of significant developments within the town. The transfer of functions from RAF Lyneham to RAF Brize Norton has had a significant impact on our town and has resulted in a massive building programme on the base. There has also been a significant impact on the town's population which has a knock on effect on the schools 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.

During the year the Town Council has taken an active role in responding to West Oxfordshire District Council's draft Local Plan. The scale and location of future development of housing is a sensitive issue and one which will have a long-term impact on the town. We have also been pressing WODC to provide land for new employment and leisure opportunities, as well as making a case for much needed repairs and improvements to our road network.

The County Council is continuing to reduce its expenditure, meaning that more work is falling on

the Town Council. In 2011 we purchased the Allandale Centre to secure the long term future of youth work in the town. During 2012, we undertook a major re-tendering exercise of our grounds maintenance contracts and we have extended our work considerably to cover those many small areas which are currently falling through the net. Hopefully you will see an improvement in the coming months.

On a more positive note, we are hugely proud of the newly refurbished play area on Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. We were fortunate in having secured £120,000 in grants for this project, meaning that we only had to use a small amount of our cash reserve. The play equipment is proving very popular and the bandstand will be 'launched' this summer with a series of concerts

The Carterton Fast Forward Project is now in its ninth year and continues to provide a fine example of how much can be achieved with community involvement. Working together, the Town Clerk and the CFF Project Manager have secured more than £800,000 of grants over the last 10 years, which is a magnificent achievement.

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, which has been in place since June 2010 and has played a significant role in reducing criminal activity in the town centre.

During my year as Mayor, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and I was delighted to join in many local and county events. 2012 also saw the Olympics and I was privileged to be invited to the ceremony to mark the passage of the torch through Oxfordshire. The Mayoress and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many residents and being included in such a wide range of activities.

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.

*Adrian Coomber
Town Mayor
May 2013*

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Carterton Town Council during 2012/13. It also gives details about the services provided by the Council.

About the Town



War Memorial Garden

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 16,000.

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 Carterton South 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 2011 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 commute 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.

Retail

2012 saw the opening of a new Aldi store in the town centre. During the year, Morrisons secured planning approval for a food store on the old market site and we understand that they aim to open before Christmas 2013.



Morrisons

Repatriation of Fallen Service Personnel

With the closure of RAF Lyneham, the repatriation of fallen service personnel returned to RAF Brize Norton on 1st September 2011. The cortege travels from RAF Brize Norton, past the memorial garden in Monahan Way to the John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford. Each repatriation is a desperately sad occasion and teams of local residents come together to provide help and support to the bereaved families.



Memorial Garden Bell & Benches

During the year, the Town Council has worked with the District Council to secure funding to make improvements to the pavilion on Monahan Way. A new room is being created which will allow families more privacy than can currently be provided.

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 or go to the 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 and Recreation. A number of other sub committees and working parties are set up to deal with particular issues or projects.



Town Hall

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.

Town Councillors

Carterton's sixteen Town Councillors represent the five wards in the town. They are elected every four years. The next elections are in May 2015.

Councillors serving during 2012/13 are listed below:

Gateway Ward:

Councillor W Walcott MBE (*to December 2012*)
Councillor Mrs L Walcott (*to December 2012*)
Councillor M Brennan (*from 16 March 2013*)
18 Foxcroft Drive, Carterton
Councillor M McBride (*from 16 March 2013*)
17 Meadow Way, Carterton

Shillbrook Ward:

Councillor Mrs D V Bulley
53 Swinbrook Road, Carterton
Councillor Mrs M Crossland

111 Burford Road, Carterton
Councillor Mrs L Little
1 Connolly Drive, Carterton

Upavon Ward:

Councillor A D Coomber
132 York Road, Carterton
Councillor H Jobs
19 Boundary Way, Carterton
Councillor Mrs C MacRae
10 Hibiscus Way, Carterton
Councillor N MacRae MBE
10 Hibiscus Way, Carterton
Councillor P Scott
39 Alvescot Road, Carterton

Rock Farm Ward:

Councillor Miss E Liston (*to February 2013*)
Councillor H Howard (*from 16 March 2013*)
1 Lime Tree Close, Carterton
Councillor Mrs N J Miah
2 Willow Drive, Carterton
Councillor M Steward
24 Alvescot Road, 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 website for further details.

OFFICES

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2011/2012 the following Councillors held office:

Town Mayor

Councillor A D Coomber

Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor Mrs L Little

Chairman Administration Committee

Councillor P Scott

Chairman Recreation Committee

Councillor Mrs L Little

Chairman Policy Committee

Councillor A Farmer

Chairman Planning Committee

Councillor R Crapper

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 Assistants

Stella Catt

Teresa Whitford

Council Facilities

The Town Council maintains two recreation grounds, one at Alvescot Road and the other at Swinbrook Road, five children's play parks, squash courts, the Allandale Youth Centre, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell Skateboard Park with a pump track, the Queen Mother's Garden, and numerous open spaces throughout the town.

During 2012, the Council secured planning approval for a small extension which will allow us to create a ground floor reception area. We will use this to expand the Job Club (see below) and to improve the services which we provide to the public.



Town Hall Extension

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, greetings cards, pet provisions and jewellery.

Carterton Fast Forward

The Council carried out a Market Town Healthcheck in 2003. The Carterton Check (known as Carterton Fast Forward) was published the following year. 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 2009 progress was 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.

Work in the last twelve months has particularly concentrated on developing the town centre on the back of the new Morrisons development. But we have also been looking at ways of creating more employment in the town and strengthening links with our neighbouring villages.

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. Carterton has also been awarded Beacon Status for its CFF work.

Carterton Job Club

The Carterton Job Club has now been running for two years and continues to give fortnightly advice and support to job seekers. The Town Council has now secured a grant which will allow it to offer job search facilities on a daily basis during the hours that the Town Hall is open.



Carterton Job Club

Carterton Community Centre

Carterton Community Centre on 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



Alvescot Road Recreation Ground

During 2011 and 2012 the Council carried out a major refurbishment of the play area on the Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. This involved consulting groups of children but also other groups and individuals who use the park or who live close to it. The result is an attractive and exciting play area with equipment (including some fitness equipment) that appeals to all age groups. There is also a new bandstand on the Recreation Ground which serves both as a performing space and a youth shelter.

Carterton Leisure Centre, run by GLL on behalf of the District Council, continues to be very popular.

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.

During the past 12 months the District Council has been consulting on its Local Plan which sets out future development for the District for the next 20 years. The Town Council has responded proactively to each round of consultation making a case for more land for employment and leisure and for improved road links.

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 will be redesigned over the coming months to give a fuller view of activities within the town. The production of a quarterly newsletter continues and provides a useful link between the Council and residents.

Activities for Young People

In 2011 the County Council announced that it would be withdrawing funding from the Youth Service in Carterton and the Allandale Youth House was put up for sale. The Town Council purchased the building at a discounted price on the understanding that it remained in community use. After closing the building while some (grant funded) refurbishment work was carried out, the Allandale reopened in January 2012. During the day time, the building is occupied by ICE, an organisation providing care for young adults with learning disabilities. In the evening it provides a wide range of activities for youngsters from the age of 8 upwards.

The Civic Function

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.



Remembrance

This year, the Mayor and Mayoress arranged the third annual Junior Town Criers Competition which attracted a large number of entries. The finalists 'cried' from the Town Hall balcony to a large gathering of friends and supporters.

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:

Organisation	Purpose of grant	Grant
Carterton Children's Centre	Basic cooking on a Budget	£500.00
Edith Moorhouse Primary School	Adventure Play Area	£600.00
Prickly Tales Hedgehogs	Incubator	£250.00
Life Education Centres	Delivering Life Education to Schools	£300.00
St John's Church	£6,000 shortfall in money for building work	£4,000.00

How your money is spent

The net budget for 2012/13 is £388,000. 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 there was a major retendering exercise during the year which has resulted in new contractors being appointed to carry out general maintenance across the town. 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.