

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson
Burford and Carterton North

A YEAR OF TURBULENCE

A great deal has happened since the Elections last May in 2021.

A new Liberal-Labour-Green Alliance took over from the previous Conservative administration and have made several significant policy decisions which have affected the residents of Burford. They revoked the Burford HGV ban which had proven to work successfully in Burford and had showed no increase in the outlying villages as HGVs tend to use the A40, A34 and M40. It was revoked as the Lib Dem-Labour administration believed Burford had selfishly financed the ban which then adversely effected outlying areas and the new administration wanted to outline a county wide policy and felt that the Burford decision had been too unilateral. Although I and Burford Town Council have supplied ample evidence that the Burford ban not only worked but also benefitted the surrounding areas. However, not all is lost, we will now re-file for an 18 ton limit ETRO (rather than the current 7.5 ton limit). **We will continue to fight for a ban as we do not want to see long traffic queues re-emerge in Burford, together with further air pollution. We need to protect our historic town. This is not the end of the road – please watch this space.**

The Liberal-Labour Alliance also implemented a 5% increase in Council tax (compared to the Conservative administration's proposed 3.5%) at a time when everyone's pockets were hit by rising prices and taxes. We have seen significant increases in energy prices: electricity doubling from 14p per kWh to 28.5 per kWh, heating oil increasing from 50p per litre to £1 per litre and petrol prices leaping from £1.30p to £1.60 per litre. This has significantly hit those on a fixed income and has left many people struggling and having to decide between spending money on heating or eating. This was not a time to increase Council tax to 5%.

Furthermore, this new Lib Dem-Labour-Green administration wastes so much time on non-County issues. The first motion that was proposed was to change the name of Chairman to Chair or Chairperson. This was followed by a motion advocating that only plant-based food should be served at County Council held functions at a time when our farmers and local producers need every support. Furthermore, they continue to serve melon, strawberries, grapes and other produce from Morocco, Spain and other far-away countries – hardly supporting local producers. Veganism is a personal choice that should be respected but this attempt to dictate the diet of others is totally unacceptable. Our local Farmers staged a protest at the February Full Council meeting and this gained more coverage from the Media than the OCC Budget. Even Jeremy Clarkson complained.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

**Cllr Nick Leverton
Carterton South and West**

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you that took the time to vote for me during last year's election. I do hope that after my first year you will consider your vote well used. I have also been extremely grateful for your kindness and patience toward me in the early months while I was finding my feet at County Hall.

I have wherever possible tried to help you with issues, not always successfully but not for the want of trying. I will continue to be available to you all so please do not hesitate to contact me if you have issues you think I may be able to help you with.

Transgender Rights Motion

A LibDem councillor successfully moved a motion at the April meeting of Full Council dealing with a number of transgender issues and stating that one gender inclusive bathroom should be installed in every public building owned or operated by the Council. The Conservative Opposition abstained on the basis that the topic was far too complex and sensitive for a short council debate; the motion did not provide significant safeguards for women; and that the costs of the building works were unspecified and could run into six figures.

20mph initiative

Lower speed limits in and around Eynsham have been approved by Oxfordshire County Council despite objections from Thames Valley Police. New 20, 30 and 40mph zones will be created having received the green light from Tim Bearder, the county's cabinet member for highway management.

Views of the police are sought as part of the consultation process with a response from the traffic management officer stating that new limits could not be justified on Hanborough Road, Oxford Road, Witney Road, Station Road or the B4449 between Station Road and Oxford Road. "The current speed of traffic is a reliable indicator of how acceptable a new speed limit would be," it read. "If the mean speed is over the proposed limit, it is unlikely to be effective without other measures such as engineering or continual enforcement. There is a proven link between road environment and character and the speed of drivers." "If it is not accepted as realistic it will quickly be abused and be the source of constant demands for police action. The police stance still reflects that 20mph limits and zones should be self-enforcing."

I recently had a discussion with Council Officers and clarified that the signs would be paid for together with necessary lining and road markings, ie 20mph and SLOW markings. There are some grey areas as to who would do a traffic survey!

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

Cllr Jill Bull
Carterton North West

During 2021–2022 so far I have been involved in several projects to support the town and district.

I have been privileged to be the Deputy Mayor and support Cllr Leverton as our Town Mayor.

Myself and fellow Ward Councillor, Maxine Crossland, have been trying to finalise the missing footpath just outside the entrance to Swinbrook Park. This has not proven to be an easy task as OCC highways and the developer David Wilson Homes have not been in agreement as to whose responsibility this is. Many emails and site visits have come and gone and still we are trying to get the legal agreement in place. We very much hope that we are near to completion of this work, but we will continue to pursue this until we have a footpath in place.

In my role as Inclusion Champion, I have been involved in many meetings to ensure that all district projects have the right access and availability for all. These have included the Country Park and the project to re-build the Pavilion. I am pleased to say that I have been able to secure £40K funding for a Changing Places toilet area for the new Pavilion that will mean that everyone will be able to fully use this facility and will enhance the use of the Recreation Ground. I was a member of the working group to re-look at the plans for the new Pavilion which took account of people's views with regards to its size etc. I believe we have now come up with a great compromise and I look forward to seeing it built and used by many groups.

I have chaired the Events Working Group, which has seen some great projects within our town, not least of all the Lantern Parade and Christmas Lights Switch On. I have been involved with this project for several years and believe that it is a great event for the town, all the children, young people and their families. Alongside that I have also organised the Carterton Carnival, which is a fun day for all to enjoy. We also have events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which include a Street Party for younger children and then in the evening music entertainment for all on the Market Square, as well as a Play Day for all children and young people on the Recreation Ground. So I hope you all enjoy these events.

Cllr Jill Bull

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

**Cllr Maxine Crossland
Carterton North West**

This year has seen a lot of activity in the northern end of town:

- Planning permission has been granted for another 200 houses.
- Thames Water has finally begun a significant programme of pipe replacement along Swinbrook Road, which should address the long-standing problems of flooding and sewage overflow there.
- Most of the roads on Shilton Park have finally been adopted by OCC, which means they will accept responsibility for their future maintenance.
- Complaints about wobbly manholes and fenced off parts of Price Way and Tumbler Way have been swiftly dealt with.
- A footpath linking up Price Way with Shilton Road is due to be installed shortly.
- A development of 50 affordable houses is currently under construction on the old Osprey site.
- The underpass on Upavon Way is being restored to provide a safe way for pedestrians to cross this very busy road.

All these came under my role on Lowlands Planning, and I am very pleased to see things moving forward. Equally as important in my role as a planner is to modify or reject plans that would be harmful to other people or to the area. Much of this work goes unseen by the general public, but is vital to protect our town.

I have also been busy as a member of the council's Social and Economic Committee, which oversees social care, housing provision, education, links with RAF Brize Norton and health care.

I am very proud to have been able to serve my town at District level for the last 12 years. During this time, we have seen Carterton grow and flourish. There is still much to do; but even Rome was not built in a day. This is my final report as a District Councillor. My term of office ended on May 5th, and I have chosen not to stand for re-election. It is time for someone younger to pick up the reins. But I shall still be there for you, serving on the Town Council.

Cllr Maxine Crossland

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

**Cllr Nick Leverton
Carterton South**

Sometimes it is easy to forget the breadth of responsibilities that fall to our District Council.

We manage and deliver services ranging from emptying of our bins to recycling (second best in the country), and we also support residents Clubs, Associations and Charities in the locality with Project Funding.

Our society does not work by itself, it needs effort and a determined approach to ensure forward planning and future proofing for the district. Environmental challenges, availability of suitable, and affordable, housing, and associated planning have been successfully delivered.

The District Councillors and members of staff working as a team have responded to every eventuality that has been thrown at them. The extraordinary effort needed to manage the COVID 19 pandemic was delivered with a high level of professionalism, and they were supported by a large number of volunteers. People from all walks of life, and many for the first time, engaged with volunteering the like of which we have not, I am sure, seen in most of our lifetimes.

It is a pleasure to serve as a District Councillor and I thank the public who have just gifted me another four-year term. I would also end by thanking those of you that continue to serve our Town in so many ways.

Cllr Nick Leverton

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

Cllr Michele Mead
Carterton South

I have been a District Councillor since February 2018 and have attended every council meeting since being elected. I am the Conservative Group Leader and at the time of writing this I am the Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council.

It is fair to say that the last two years have been a challenge for us all. WODC have worked tirelessly with the whole community. £49 million was distributed in grants to the businesses that applied during the pandemic. Food parcels were delivered, thousands of phone calls were made to those isolating and our more senior residents.

Normal day to day services continued with household waste still being collected, the council owned leisure centres being supported. The planning department have been working extremely hard as planning applications increased by over 50% during the pandemic. We have been able to offer families from Afghanistan resettlement homes and we are working with the Home Office ready to welcome Ukrainian families to our district.

More locally we are still working hard to find a resolution on how to move forward with the REEMA land.

A community hub worker has been funded to work together with organisations within our town.

My role as leader also included my membership to OxLep, OxCam Arc and The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) which I have chaired for the last year. The FOP is responsible for the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan. This has brought all the district councils, city council and county council in Oxfordshire together to work on a plan that will suit the whole County. The key topics are housing numbers for area, infrastructure and climate/environment.

On a local level I have continued to help and support residents in Carterton (not just in my ward). This has been a variety of issues from helping with housing issues, bin collections, parking issues, dog poo, dog poo bins, litter bins and planning issues.

It has been an honour to lead the District Council over the last eighteen months along with the hard-working Cabinet, all the officers and members.

The health and wellbeing of the residents of our Town and the District has always been my priority and this will never change and I will continue to work hard for you all over the next year.

Cllr Michele Mead

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

**Cllr Martin McBride
Carterton North East**

As a member of the Environment committee, I have been involved in the decision making to improve bio diversity around the district and particularly in Carterton.

The climate action group is now combined with the Environment committee. Flood defence has been high on the agenda working with other agencies of Oxfordshire. Waste management issues were addressed and services maintained despite Covid creating staffing issues.

As a member of the Audit & General Purposes Committee I have been involved in scrutinising the work of the Cabinet and was pleased that the Council managed to produce a balanced budget in very challenging times.

I was also privileged to be elected as Chairman of West Oxfordshire District Council and chaired all but one of the main council meetings. I also represented the District Council at a number of Civic events throughout the region and was particularly pleased to be presented to Prince Charles on one of his visits to the region. My final civic duty was attending the Queens Garden Party on 11th May 2022.

Cllr Martin McBride