



CARTERTON ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT

The Annual Town Meeting will be held at
CARTERTON METHODIST CHURCH, BURFORD ROAD, CARTERTON
on
TUESDAY 14 MAY 2024 at 7.00 pm

Members of the public are invited to attend.

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome by the Town Mayor
- 2 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 23 May 2023
- 3 Report from the Town Mayor
- 4 Report by Thames Valley Police
- 5 Reports by County & District Councillors
- 6 General questions raised by the public and answer session
(Questions can be sent in advance to the Town Clerk, Simon Garwood
clerk@carterton-tc.gov.uk) by Sunday 12th May 2024.

Cllr Kathy Godwin
(Town Mayor)

**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING FOR CARTERTON
HELD ON TUESDAY 23 MAY 2023
AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH AT 7.00 PM**

Present:	Cllr K Godwin - Cllr L Wood -	Town Mayor Deputy Mayor
Apologies:	Cllr N Field-Johnson - Cllr N Leverton -	County Councillor County Councillor
Officers:	Kay Linnington -	Town Clerk
In Attendance:	Inspector Chris Ball - Members of the public -	Thames Valley Police 29

1 WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that the meeting would be recorded and that only those living in the parish would be entitled to speak. The Town Councillors were present as members of the public on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 23 April 2019, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

Copies of the agenda and minutes, together with the Annual Report for the year 2022/2023, were available for all those in attendance.

3 POLICING IN CARTERTON – INSPECTOR CHRIS BALL

Inspector Ball gave an update on policing in the town. He said that the level of crime in the town is low. There have been some problems with drugs and there was one fatality. He asked if anyone had any questions.

A member of the public asked about the recent vandalism in the town, particularly the damage to the newly planted trees, and about a drugs problem at Stanmore Crescent. With regard to the drugs problems, a number of arrests have been made. He said that Carterton has one of the lowest crime rate figures in West Oxfordshire. For example, cases of criminal damage were around 70 for the year and theft from vehicles was less than 20.

A member of the public said they were disappointed that more police time was not put into the issue of vandalism to the trees and Inspector Ball said their priority was to protect children and vulnerable members of the community.

A resident asked what the policing situation was with Shilton Park as he had encountered problems locating an officer to report what he believed to be a crime. Inspector Ball said there were some people causing issues on the estate which will be dealt with.

With regard to the Town Council funding a PCSO, it had been raised about having a regular report from the PCSO and wondered if this would take place. Inspector Ball said that PCSO Richard Conner pays regular visits to the Town Hall.

A resident expressed their thanks to the police for (assisting with problems of teenagers misbehaving in the town centre and the bandstand – unclear from recording).

The Mayor thanked Inspector Ball for his report.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Reports from Cllr Field-Johnson (Burford & Carterton North) and Cllr Nick Leverton (Carterton South), attached to these minutes at Appendix A, were available for all those in attendance.

5 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District Councillors had supplied reports on the activities of West Oxfordshire District Council in the last year, attached to these minutes at Appendix B, and were available for all those in attendance. Cllr King's report was tabled at the meeting and is also attached at Appendix B.

6 GENERAL QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

(a) Bandstand. A resident had concerns that the bandstand was not being used for the purpose it was intended, but instead attracts groups of teenagers causing problems and takes up space on the Recreation Ground. She wondered if it should be taken down. The organiser of the May Day Fair spoke and said they used it for music all day for their event. There is also a jazz band and family picnic booked for the end of July as part of Carterton Celebrates Week. She believed it was a good thing and should be used more often. Another resident (Lynn Little) said that the bandstand has previously been well used over the summer months for bands coming from around Oxfordshire but this had lapsed recently. She believed this had been an agenda item, which would be looked at again in the near future. Cllr Mead said that when she had been Mayor, there were five bandstand concerts booked for the year. They had not been particularly well attended by the public and did not therefore represent good value for money. She suggested encouraging local musicians rather than hiring bands at a cost.

(b) Pavilion. A resident said that the Recreation Ground comes under the Open Spaces Act that states only 5% of the green space should be used for other structures. He had measured the space taken up with footpaths, pavilion, bandstand and play area on Google Maps, which showed that around 10% is being used. He asked that the Town Council look into this before any the proposed Pavilion work takes place. He asked those present to raise their hands if they wanted to have a Parish Poll to decide whether residents wanted a new Pavilion. More than ten people raised their hand. His proposal for a question for the Poll was: Do the residents of Carterton want a new Pavilion built on the Recreation Ground. The Mayor said that a Referendum on this matter had been agreed by the Council. The resident said that the poll should take place at the Town Hall within 14-25 days between 4pm-9pm. It is not legally binding but would give the new Council a good indication of what the public want. Another resident explained that, before she was the Mayor, Kathy Godwin had put a lot of work into getting a referendum agreed by the Council and it might be best to let that run its course. Cllr Mead said that proper consideration should be given to whether a Referendum or poll takes place. Another resident gave an example from a public consultation that had

taken place on Friday 8 February 2019. She also said that the Council had just spent several thousand pounds repairing the current pavilion roof, which is a part of the heritage of Carterton. Those responding for a new building on the same location was 11; a new building on a different location was 6; new building with no specific location was 8. Comments related to making sure it was kept clean inside. Cllr McBride said that for the Town Council elections there was a 25% turnout, so wondered what an acceptable turnout for the referendum should be.

(c) Meetings. Ian Worrell, Methodist Church minister, asked if the agenda and papers for this meeting had been available in advance. The Mayor said that all agenda and minutes are published on the Town Council website. Cllr McBride said that something raised frequently at Town Council meetings was a concern over members of the public only being able to raise matters relating to items on the agenda. He asked whether the new Chair of the Council intended to change this. Cllr Liz Wood said that this would need to be discussed by the Administration Committee. Cllr McBride said that as Town Councillors we are all here to do the best for the residents of Carterton and he looked forward to working with the new councillors. With regard to the court case a few years ago, Lynn Little expressed her thanks to the former Town Clerk who had supplied some information she had sought confirming that there has never been a skate park contract and the Council's insurance did not indemnify the Council for paying legal fees. She also thanked Cllr Melvin for his integrity on furnishing her with evidence on what was going on with the management of the Town Council at the time.

(d) Twinning. Sue James said she would be visiting Carterton in New Zealand in August this year. When she was a primary school child of six years old she had a pen-friend in Carterton, New Zealand who she wrote to for 25 years. She wondered whether the Town Council would consider twinning with Carterton in New Zealand. There are already some links with Carterton Celebrates and Carterton Library. She would like to take something from the Town Council with her when she visits, perhaps some pictures and a letter from the Town Council. There does not seem to be any legal process, with the only criteria she could find being that the towns needed to be of a similar size. Former councillor Maxine Crossland said that Carterton UK had 'twinned' with Carterton New Zealand in 2007 when a number of councillors had visited them and presented them with a Bond of Friendship. This would be looked into.

(d) Potholes. The Mayor was pleased to see that Upavon Way had been resurfaced following the longstanding problems with potholes. This is the first stage in a resurfacing programme.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Town Mayor

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2023**Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson
Burford and Carterton North****GENERAL OCC REPORT – ANNUAL REVIEW**

It is appropriate to review the year and OCC's performance. Some readers believe that I am critical of the current administration, and I am, as we are in opposition, and will point out the mistakes the current Administration continues to make. **The biggest error was the cancellation of the HGV ban in Burford and the continual focus on Oxford City** with its controversial policies on bus gates, LTNs and using traffic filters to divide the city into six "15 minute" zones as well as highly ambitious aims relating to climate change. I will not even linger on the wasted Council time on discussing the issue of serving vegan food at Council events. There is little focus on our rural communities which is very frustrating.

REVIEW OF HGVs IN OXFORDSHIRE

We continue to campaign for a lasting HGV ban for Burford and OCC has agreed to review HGVs routes throughout Oxfordshire, but this continues at a slow pace. This is extremely hard to tolerate given all the work that has gone into the Burford HGV campaign.

OCC WORKING TO RETAIN BUS SERVICES IN THE CITY OF OXFORD

Following Oxford Bus Company's announcement of the withdrawal of bus services to parts of the city, recognising that this will adversely affect many local residents, OCC has launched a tender process for replacement services. Earlier in the year, the council set aside up to £2.5 million over the next two years to protect previously commercial services at risk of withdrawal as a result of lower passenger numbers and spiralling bus industry costs. The news has been received with anger by rural communities (such as in Brize Norton) with failing bus services who question why they don't get the same level of treatment.

OCC BUDGET

The OCC Budget process is now completed, and the administration has imposed a 5% increase in Council Tax on residents. The unexpectedly generous Local Government Funding Settlement left OCC with £9m more than anticipated at the time the draft Budget was drawn up. This presented the administration with an opportunity to cut the proposed Council Tax increase from 5% to 4% which they failed to take. The administration is continuing with pet projects which are indulgent at a time when household budgets are under pressure.

CARTERTON UNDERPASS REPAIRED

After months of continual flooding, the Carterton Underpass has finally been repaired. The pumps are working again, and all excess water has been removed and debris cleared. There remains graffiti which is planned to be removed in the coming months.

PLANS TO SPLIT OXFORD INTO FOUR SECTORS WIDELY ATTACKED

As previously reported, OCC plans to spend £6.5m on traffic filters that will split Oxford into four sectors: North, South, West and East. When the traffic filters are operating, for cars without a permit, movement within each sector is unrestricted, but direct movement between sectors is not possible and requires use of the ring road. Affected motorists will face much longer journey times and distances. Grave concerns have been expressed about these sectors proposal and the traffic chaos that may well ensue.

COSTS OF LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS (LTNs) IN OXFORD SOAR



OCC has acknowledged spending £73,000 repairing vandalised plastic bollards used in Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes in East Oxford. The total may have risen since that figure was released. Steel bollards are now to be installed at a cost of £100,000 after the "unprecedented levels of vandalism". It has to be questioned the vast sums of money being poured into this divisive scheme that might benefit a small number of residents in Oxford, while rural residents are complaining that budgets for mundane matters such as drain repair are inadequate.

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SPARE SEATS SCHEME CANCELLATION

Dear Parents/Carers

WITHDRAWAL OF SPARE SEATS SCHEME ROUTES 2-WT05 and 2-WT08: The Baldons, Blackbird Leys, Garsington to Wheatley Park School

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) provide school transport where there are children who qualify for free school transport according to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Prior to the Full Council meeting on 14 February, councillors were bombarded with emails from concerned parents and pupils alarmed by the administration's decision to withdraw the 'Home To School Spare Seats Scheme' in certain areas. Councillors understand that 235 children could be affected by bus service cancellations between now and September, with as many as 1,384 children facing their school bus service being taken away as bus contracts are retendered. A proposal was made for an additional £100,000 to be added to the budget to fix this problem, however, this was voted down by the administration.

Cllr Nick Field-Johnson

nick.fieldjohnson@oxfordshire.gov.uk / nfjuk3@gmail.com

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

**Cllr Nick Leverton
Carterton South and West**

My second year in post as your County Councillor has seen me working hard to ensure that my Broadshires Parishes have an equitable representation at County Hall.

Of great importance to the outlying Parishes is the lack of any rural bus services. This failure by the ruling alliance at County Hall to even acknowledge the issue is both frustrating and arguably shows that the alliance is ignorant of the negative impact of having no bus services. Ironically this is the same alliance that advocates penalising vehicle drivers with increasing parking charges and an array of negative draconian anti car measures. Their election promises of robust bus travel alternatives appear to have evaporated before the ink was dry on the ballot papers.

As I stated last year and several times over this past year, I was not voted in as an Oxford County Councillor - rather I was elected as an Oxfordshire County Councillor.

I have made myself available for all residents in my Ward and wherever possible in partnership with them we have found a solution to their problems. By far and away the biggest concerns are regarding Highways, not least of all the dreaded 'potholes'.

On a personal front, I was both surprised and delighted to join the opposition front bench as its Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care. Wholesale changes are taking place under the 'Pathway' programme that we believe will enhance and improve the present system to the benefit of the service users. This is a joint initiative with the NHS and collectively we are confident that our aspirations are deliverable.

Cllr Nick Leverton

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 2023
Cllr Nick Leverton
Carterton South

Following my re-election last year, the District Council formed an alliance following in the footsteps of County Council the year before. Whilst the Conservative members were the greater single party in numbers, the opposition parties rallied together to become the alliance they are today. I do wonder if I voted Labour and my member then gifted my vote to a party that did not have the same values that I have, could I reasonably suggest this could be the demise of democracy?

As in keeping with my previous five years at the District, I have been a member of the Development Control Committee and Lowlands Planning Committee.

With the ever-changing face of Planning and its legislation our job, and that of the Officers, becomes increasingly more difficult. Hopefully, some clarity and definitive direction will be forthcoming that will ensure our aspirational forward planning is made easier to deliver.

I also sit on the Economic and Social Scrutiny Committee where we audit and police the actions of many areas of the business that is WODC.

I will continue to be extremely Tall at the District and I am happy for fellow Councillors to call me Nick or Lofty!

Cllr Nick Leverton

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 2023

**Cllr Martin McBride
Carterton North East**

I have attended the monthly council meetings with full attendance and the Environmental and Climate committee with just one apology. I have substituted at several other overview and scrutiny committees to cover for Conservative colleagues' apologies.

I have dealt with several resident's issues concerning waste collection services and complaints concerning overflowing litter / dog waste bins.

I have achieved rectifications on several highway issues using "fix my street" app and I have now undergone training as a "super user" on fix my street.

I intend to work hard for the residents of Carterton and hold the opposition coalition to account for all the money being wasted on pet LibDem projects.

Cllr Martin McBride

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2023
Cllr Michele Mead
Carterton South

The last year has been very different at West Oxfordshire district council due to the new administration made up of Liberals, Labour and Greens and their priorities on spending the public's money.

But firstly, let's talk planning, the district council local plan is due for its review this year but consultants are already looking at it, officers are working on it and public consultation should happen this year, how will this affect Carterton? Well currently the Liberal, Labour, Green coalition cannot prove a five-year land supply due to developers not having faith in the current administration after the Oxfordshire 2050 was stopped at a cost of millions in investment to our county! This basically means houses can be built anywhere. Luckily, we have very little land in Carterton to build on but we've already seen from the continuous expansion of Brize Meadow - 99 more properties added to the planning application and approved just last month, this is how things could look in the future around the perimeter of our town.

The Council's budget was approved in February and was very worrisome, a budget I could not support, the priority was put into adding resource to the Climate change team while not approving help for the homeless, welfare and leisure teams. Now all of these roles are extremely valued but not focusing on the health and wellbeing of our residents is something I just could not vote for. The forecast for WODC finances now looks bleak with the Council predicted to be bankrupt in just two years time, the council has spent all its reserves on Marriotts Walk shopping centre in Witney using £11 million of the taxpayer's money so there is nothing left.

The new council plan for West Oxfordshire does show some hope as long as the initiatives are bought to the whole of the district and not just Witney (the plan can be seen on the WODC website).

Giving the residents of a Carterton a voice a WODC is what I was voted to do. I have attended every Council and executive meeting in the last year and spoken at every meeting supporting Carterton.

Cllr Michele Mead

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2023
Cllr Natalie King
Carterton North West

Introduction:

I joined the West Oxfordshire District Council in May 2022 after winning the election in North West. I am also Town Councillor in Shillbrook within North West Carterton which I won in January 2022 and secured for a full term in May this year. So far I have had a lot of engagement and positive responses from the residents so far and have worked with them on numerous issues over the year. After holding a residents meeting in Swinbrook and Linden Homes we now have a list of issues to focus on and I will hold other such meetings and surgeries to keep them updated on the progress and bring new issues to work on continually.

At Town capacity I will release new Surgery dates shortly for the upcoming year and I welcome all residents to make contact if there is an issue I can assist with.

District Update:

West Oxfordshire District Council is led by the Alliance which is made up of Liberal Democrats, Labour and Green party with the LD holding the majority. After the recent elections this will continue to run for another three years until the next District Council elections.

The Full Council meetings Calendar has now been released for the year and I welcome all residents to attend to see what it is we are voting on and be involved. The council will be doing up the Chambers this year to make the meetings available online to watch, but also make the chambers a room for the public to rent and make a revenue from.

A lot of changes have begun in the last year to make more money from Council premises as they have been under used for many years and could have more purpose than they did.

In May 2023 we welcomed Phil Godfrey to the second seat at North West Carterton and I look forward to working with him on lots of exciting projects especially the new development of the Carterton Football Club. He is well loved by the residents as he was Chair of the Carterton Football Club and has big plans to develop and grow the clubs possibilities. Alongside this wants to help me with the neighbourhood plan that Carterton is crying out for.

We also had David Melvin join us in Upavon Ward and with his vast knowledge of being a District officer and Town Councillor in the past I feel we will work strongly together to move projects along quickly. Welcome both of you.

My Update:

Earlier on in the year I held a cost of living Crisis open day at the Town Hall assisted by Andrew Prosser a fellow District Councillor, which saw a positive flow of people coming in with worries about upcoming price increases and we were able to point them into the right direction of receiving assistance.

I started the working group for the Play Parks Regeneration programme, which I will be able to pick up again now the elections are over with. This is broken down into three areas with Kilkenny play park at District, MOD parks and eleven Town Council parks. I am looking forward with the help of my fellow councillors and officers at town and District to see all the play parks refreshed and updated over the four years.

The repairs at Kilkenny Play Park should be carried out shortly as all been ordered and we will also see a new car park there to relieve some of the parking issues for the residents in the Swinbrook and Shilton Park estates.

I have been on the Economics and regeneration, Climate and the Urgency committees at District and found them to be very informative and made great headway with such issues as Thames Water, cameras within Carterton, sports available for families on welfare, wildlife and fly-tipping. These committees will be making a change this year to be even more productive and more information on this will be released shortly from District.

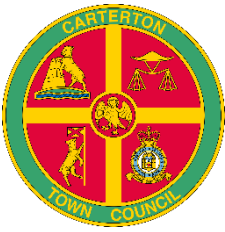
Town Council Summary:

I joined the working group for road safety and will make this a top priority ensuring all our roads outside the local schools are made safer. We are looking into various ways this can be done and will work alongside County Council.

I was part of the Amenities and Planning Committees and found them very interesting. I have always felt strongly against the new planning application for the Pavilion at the ARRG and so these two committees were key to ensure holding back this development with the support of the Save the Rec group. I feel this year and with a fresh new council we will now finally be able to resolve the issue and get our rec saved from future developments for years to come and improve the play park on the rec.

We as a party will bringing lots of ideas and plans for Carterton to the table to be discussed, ideas put forward by the residents and would welcome a consultation to the public to see more ideas that can be brought forward.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year at District so far and am looking forward to the next three and what they may bring. I welcome residents to contact me and my fellow councillors as we are always here to listen and assist as best we can.



Carterton Town Council

Annual Report 2023/2024

Review of the last year by Town Mayor, Councillor Kathy Godwin

I was humbled to be elected Mayor for 2023/24 and feel very proud to have represented the town this past 12 months.



During this year Cllr Liz Wood and I have been privileged to meet some very special people and to support some of the town's hard-working voluntary groups. Events supported have been both local and further afield.

One of these special people was the late Mrs Joan Messer on her 101st birthday, and others include the two winners of the Carterton Young Citizens Award at the Xmas Lights, Sam Harris and Robyn Gulley.



I have also been privileged to meet and work with many people in Carterton who have been willing to give their time and considerable effort to support events and groups in Carterton. In addition, many businesses have supported Carterton-based organisations and events, helping them make Carterton a thriving and happy community. A very big thank you to everyone.

Local Events Attended

Attendance of local events has included :

- the opening of the Community Garden on Shilton Park with the Lord Lieutenant attended by a small number of Cllrs and officers
- the opening of the Golden Eagle pub after their refurbishment closure
- presentations of awards at the Carterton Football Club two-day junior football tournament

- held a small presentation for the raising of the Armed Forces Day flag with a flyover provided by the RAF
- judging of teddy bears at the Teddy Bears picnic
- attendance at Brizefest
- attendance at the Battle of Britain Civic Service attended by many councillors and additional guests from afar (Cllr Andrew Coles (Chair of WODC), Cllr Gabby Barody (Dep Mayor Abington TC) accompanied by Bryan Evans, and Cllr Damien Macguire, Dep. Mayor of Bicester). Many thanks go to Alex Fleming who attended as the Mace Bearer.
- the Thingummybogs Panto Dress Rehearsal. This was a hoot, well done to all those involved in organising and putting on a great show, and I was honoured to be able to participate in the dress rehearsal performance.
- an opening of the Bee Garden on Queens Road with Cllr Liz Wood, Cottesway Housing and local resident Sarah Marshall who were instrumental in making the bee garden happen. Children from St Joseph's school also. Wild seeds and bulbs were planted in the garden and bird and bat boxes were placed in the trees.
- the Military Wives Choir 11th Birthday celebration. They are looking for new members and anyone with a military connection is welcome.
- Cllr Liz Wood and I attended the 50th birthday of the Witney and Carterton Branch of the Save the Children Fund. The Council was thanked for their continued support of the Save the Children fundraising activities. The May Day Fair brings many people together to support other town organisations and contribute to the local economy.
- attended St Johns School to present colouring competition winners with Easter Eggs on behalf of the Royal British Legion.
- the opening of the Prayer Room in the Sanctuary Garden at the Carterton Methodist Church.
- Supported the Save the Children May Day Fair with Cllr Brooks, Melvin, L Wood and Marie Stimpson serving refreshments
- along with Cllr Brooks and Melvin I attended a YOCO quiz night at the Allandale organised by the young people in the group.





I will be attending the presentation of awards to the Blue Sky graduates by the Jon Egging Trust at RAF Brize Norton this week and the opening of the arts project at the Carterton Community Centre.

Other Meetings and Visits

- visited the O60s Friday Club
- attended the kick-off meeting for YoCo (Youth Challenge Oxfordshire)
- attended the monthly Carterton Business Networking sessions facilitated by Howden and Burgers and Brew. Local businesses are very welcome to attend.
- attended a Business Breakfast at Carterton Community College to hear about how local businesses can help inspire young people by being involved in Career Fairs and offering work experience and apprenticeships.
- met with the Carterton Community College Head Teacher to explore the setting up of a youth council and met with students to discuss Road Safety.
- I received the Fatima class from St Joseph's School in the Mayor's Parlour who presented letters drawing attention to the amount of litter in the town and requests for new bins and a poster reminding everyone to dispose of their litter responsibly. A letter has been dispatched asking for suggested bin locations and a poster designed by the class for use around the town.
- children from St John's school were in the town interviewing passers-by and asking why they were visiting the town, what services they used, what they thought of the look of the town, and what they would like to see in the town. I later attended a presentation from Maple and Sycamore classes on their findings. The slide presentation is to be sent to the Council when available. Many of the students also asked about other improvements they would like to see around the town, raised issues that concerned them, and asked for updates on particular topics, they also asked questions about the Mayor Making and how the democratic process worked.
- attended a presentation on the WestHive funding.
- met with representatives from Carterton Army Training Corps, Carterton Day Centre, Boxing Club and Witney Rotary Club
- attended a meeting of the Royal British Legion whose membership has greatly increased to 84 in recent weeks
- as part of the Road Safety working group met with the Carterton Community College Student Council

- attended the West Oxfordshire Partnership Meeting at the Carterton Community Centre – there were presentations from the Head of Information and Advice, Age UK, Oxfordshire on Money Matters, the Oral Health Improvement Manager on the services provided by the Community Dental Services CIC, the Move Together Coordinator, the Service Delivery Manager from MyVision Oxfordshire and an organisation overview from each of the organisations in attendance.
- attended with Cllrs Field-Johnson and King a meeting of the ‘Student Council’ at the Carterton Community College to discuss where the young people felt that there could be improvements made to the town infrastructure to improve their safety in travelling around the town. See the draft report from the Road Safety Working Group meeting with students from the Community College.
- attended the OALC Oxfordshire Larger Councils Meeting with the Clerk – there were two speakers one from Oxfordshire Active Travel who presented their vision for a connected network of cycle routes within towns and the city. Some interesting ideas were reflected by those in the Road Safety Working Group meeting with representatives from the students at Carterton Community College.
- met with the Station Commander to discuss how the town and the RAF Brize Norton could collaborate and support each other as well as issues surrounding the needs of both military and civilian families and youth.

External Events

Networking events have included:

- attendance at the Mayors and Chairs Event at Dorchester Abbey with Dep. Mayor Cllr L Wood which provided an opportunity to meet with other Mayors and chairs
- a meet and greet at the Town Hall introduced Council to our neighbours in Black Bourton, Bampton and Brize Norton
- attendance at an afternoon tea at Wood Green hosted by Andrew Coles supporting his charities
- attendance at the Bicester Civic Service
- a WODC Local Plan consultation
- the RAF Enterprise Day (with Cllr Brooks)
- OCC Town and Parish Council Charter consultation
- Mayor Burford TC – Civic Carol Service, St John’s Church, Church Green – lovely event and refreshments in Warwick Hall catching up with our neighbours
- Oxfordshire Freemasons – Panto at Oxford Playhouse – a fun afternoon seeing so many having fun at the panto and sitting behind me were young people from Carterton
- attended the Chair VWHDC Bingo Night, East Hendred
- attended the WI International Women’s Day fundraiser with Cllr Liz Wood
- attended a Thankyou service at Wantage Church



There have also attended webinars and events hosted by Community First Oxon, Chairs OALC, Women's Diversity Event, Forecasting, Budgeting and Setting the Precept for Local Councillors

Council Staff

Councillors have over the year supported the staff during difficult times dealing with many changes, we have celebrated major birthdays and hosted a Xmas lunch.

The staff have supported the Council and the town at major events and they continue to be involved in the Events working group. I thank you as Chair of the Council for your passion and dedication.



Our Town Warden Alex Fleming has recently retired after 8 years of service and wish him well for the future.

Council Activities

Notable Council activities as well as their tireless preparation and attendance at committee meetings include:

- meet the councillor events at the town hall and the Community Centre to provide residents with opportunities during the year to come and raise concerns and ideas
- council strategy meetings to prioritise Council projects and objectives
- participation in ARRG Referendum working group, Cemeteries working group, Willow Meadows working group, Boxing Club working group, Playparks working group, Road Safety working group, and Events working group
- the support of a vulnerable group in the town after the collapse of Got2Be
- continued support of the local Carterton Connector bus service
- finalising of the Football Club lease
- the appointment of a new Chief Officer/Clerk and an RFO/Deputy Clerk
- working as outside representatives
- received presentations from land developers and the WODC Hvas Strategic Plan consultation
- taking possession of historical treasures from the disbanded Carterton Lions



- full budget review and agreement of 2024/25 Budget
- review of committee structure and revised TORs
- dealing with a large number of works for authorisation
- resolving some priority Quinquennial requirements
- many hours of effort leading to the approval of the Empire Drive playpark project
- working to resolve legacy issues
- dealing with HR issues
- working to resolve legal questions regarding the Old Pavilion on the Carterton Recreation Ground
- continued support of the Oxford Play Association and the Save the Children May Day Fair

I would like to thank the Locum Clerk who worked tirelessly on behalf of the Council over the past months. During her time with us, she successfully enabled the Council to complete its AGAR submission, deal with staffing issues and HR requirements, provide us with the basis of new TORs and Committee structure, and went to great efforts preparing the budget to provide us with the information we needed. In addition to all this, she addressed many more issues as they came in, listened to our gripes and moans and supported the Council in making good decisions. She completed a handover to our new Chief Officer/Town Clerk Simon Garwood leaving him and the staff with an evergrowing list of to-dos.

It has been five months now since we welcomed the new Chief Officer/Town Clerk to the Council and we have made good progress with many of the activities listed above. With the recent appointment of our Deputy Clerk, Claire Evans, I look forward to the Council making great strides forward.

Courses attended

All courses apart from those marked with a * were free:

- Councillor Introduction *
- First Aid Training *
- Finance Training for Councillors – affirmed what we have been doing with regard our budget
- Toxic Behaviour course – looking at the different types of behaviour and how they can be managed
- Year End for Councillors webinar
- Finance Training

Events Working Group

The Events Working Group has been working tirelessly to ensure that there is a full programme of events for the next 12 months and details can be found on the council's website under the Whats On tab.

The working group is made up of volunteers from across the town and has collaborated with the Witney Rotary Club, Witney Lions, Connecting Carterton Group, Save the Children and Carterton Celebrates to put on events for the town to enjoy.

Remembrance Day

Many thanks to Mark Garwood RBL and Cpl Melling and Sgt Jameson for their management of the Remembrance Parade and the St Johns Church for their work in making the event a special day.



Carterton Fire Walk 2024

The Carterton Fire Walk 2024 was a great success with many other Councillors supporting the event. Many thanks go to the Witney Rotary Club, staff, and the Events Working Group who made this event happen and many thanks also go to all the residents who turned out to make it a memorable event. This very successful event raised over £20K for the various charitable groups supported by local people.



Xmas Lights

It was a fantastic Xmas lights event this year and many thanks to Cllr Liz Wood, the Working Group, the staff, all the willing volunteers, the stall holders, the marshalls, the entertainers, the fair, Ubico, distinguished guests, young citizens and their families, the sound system, the light technicians, sponsored with by Howden and Chancellors, and anyone else I have forgotten to list here. Most of all, many thanks to all the people of Carterton who came out to support and take part in the event. It might not have been perfect, but we all had a great time.



It has been a steep learning curve for all of us since May but the events are getting better and better.

Volunteers worked flat out to help parents and children construct stars with Cllr Liz Wood (who organised the lantern-making events), supported by Cllr Brooks and Melvin along with Jenny Maxwell, Chris Stanley, Elaine Hatton, Ellie, the WI ladies, Fay and Arthur Harold, Marie Stimpson and more, but sadly I don't know all their names. Giving up their time to engage with the young people of Carterton and making the lantern parade at the Xmas lights a special occasion for them all.



Xmas Market Event. Thank you to Cllr Liz Wood for organising the various Love Your Market events and to all those who have come to support them. With the increased publicity new stallholders have been coming to the market and footfall is slowly increasing.



Carterton Youth Fund

I would like to personally thank Deputy Mayor Cllr L Wood, Cllrs Melvin and Brooks for their active engagement in support of the Carterton Youth Fund at which Cllrs Guest and Croft and other supporters, notably Chris Stanley, Marie Stimpson, Jo Leonard and Saxophony, Airplay Youth Café, Carterton Community Centre, Hoofs and the Food Angels as well as many more who generously gave their time and support.

The Battle of Britain Fish and Chip Supper and the Big Afternoon Tea were also well supported by our neighbours including Cllr Andrew Coles (Chair of WODC), Cllr Gabby Barody (Dep Mayor Abingdon TC) accompanied by Bryan Evans, Cllr Peter Higgs (Mayor Burford TC) accompanied by Mayoress Dianne Taylor, Cllr Georgia Meadows (Dep. Mayor Witney TC), Cllr Jane Boulton (Dep. Mayor Faringdon TC) and Cllr Wendy Way (Chair of Brize Norton Parish) accompanied by Cllr Lez Goble. We also welcomed the Deputy Lord Lieutenant – Ms

Tahmeena Ajmal, Vice Chair OCC – Cllr Alison Rooke and her husband Brian, Vice Chair WODC – Cllr Elizabeth Poskitt, Mayor of Faringdon – Cllr Peter Castle and Consort Sarah.



Plans are being pulled together to hold a first event and volunteers are being gathered, so if you are interested in getting involved please leave your name with the Town Hall.

Retiring Councillors

I would like to thank those councillors who served the town in the previous council term for their service. Some of them continue to serve the community in a voluntary capacity and, for this, we are all grateful.



As you can see from this report, to achieve the most, we need to work as a team with councillors, council staff, the people of Carterton, Carterton organisations and businesses all working together to build a thriving community.

It has been a great pleasure to serve and represent the people of Carterton this past year.
Thank you for the opportunity.

Cllr Kathy Godwin
Carterton Town Mayor

INTRODUCTION

The Town Council looks after a number of local services and works hard to improve the quality of life for people living in Carterton. It seeks to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

The services and facilities provided by the Town Council include allotments, the Cemetery at Black Bourton, Civic Ceremonies promoted by the Town Mayor, annual events such as the St George's Day Dinner, grants to community groups and other non-profit making organisations, recreation grounds, play areas, the weekly market, the Town Hall for hire, upkeep of the War Memorial and Willow Meadows.

The Town Council is not responsible for highways issues such as potholes, street lighting and road safety, all of which are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council.

Waste collections, planning issues, council tax and business rates are the responsibility of West Oxfordshire District Council.

PARISH PRECEPT

The Town Council receives most of its funding from the parish precept which is a relatively small proportion of the overall Council Tax Bill. (The Council Tax Bill also funds the District and County Councils as well as the Police and Fire Authority).

This year Carterton Town Council agreed to increase our portion of the council tax bill by 22p per week for the average Band D household. This means that the average household will pay £88.64 a year for all the town council's services.

As explained above, the town council provides a wide range of services and also runs/supports many free events and civic ceremonies promoted by the mayor each year, including fundraising events for local charities and the popular Remembrance Day and Christmas Lights switch-on events.

In addition to these services the council ensures that the views of Carterton residents are represented to our two principal authorities, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, whether that is supporting, objecting to, or commenting on planning applications, or pushing for improvements in roads, transport and infrastructure and other council services.

Unfortunately, the work the Council does for the community is not immune to the exceptional rises in inflation and interest rates we have all experienced in recent years. These include the rise in costs to heat buildings as well as unpredictable increases in the costs of building materials and hardware for repairs.

Councillors debated the budget for several months and have produced a budget which is £50,000 lower in terms of expenditure than it was last year. In other words, the council has tried to make savings wherever it can.

Carterton has a very low precept, one of the lowest in West Oxfordshire for a town/parish/community of this size. One of the reasons that Carterton has such a low precept is that the council has tried to limit increases over the past few years and has instead

relied on using up its modest reserves. Unfortunately, we are now at a point when there are no longer reserves to use up and, therefore, to maintain services and ensure that council finances are at an appropriate level for a town of our size, increasing the precept is the only remaining option.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

Bee Garden



On Tuesday 27 February, Carterton resident Sarah Marshall saw her vision of a garden to help save the future of the bees become a reality.

Cottsway Housing and John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Team, both supporters of the environment, were happy to lead the initiative to create a bee-friendly garden on an unused piece of land in Queens Road. After rotavating the land, the team planted one hundred bulbs and some flower seeds then secured some bird and bat boxes to the nearby trees.



On hand to help with the planting were some trusty helpers from St Joseph's Primary School along with Carterton Mayor, Councillor Kathy Godwin, and her Deputy, Councillor Liz Wood.

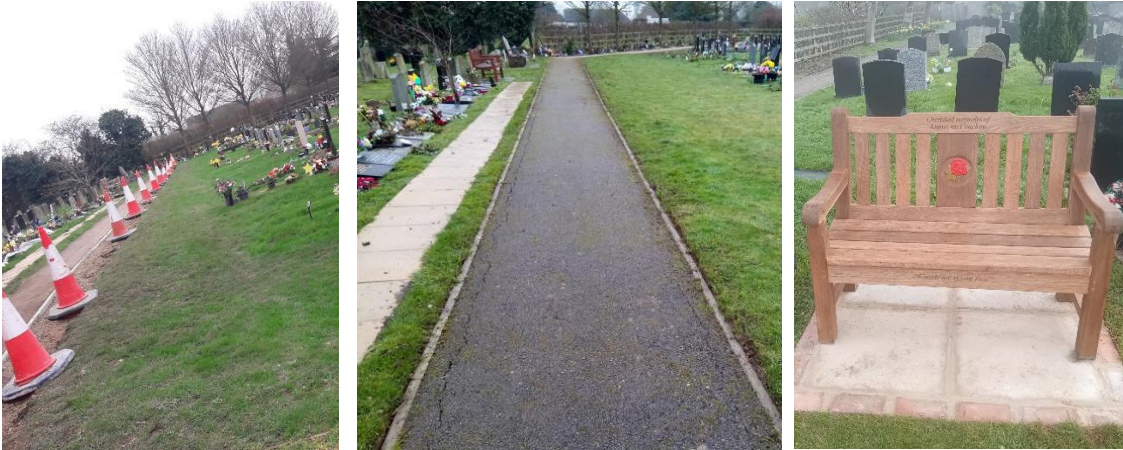
It was an exciting morning for everyone involved! We will **BEE** sure to keep an eye on the garden's progress and report back later in the year.

Black Bourton Cemetery



While the search for a new piece of land to service the residents of Carterton is ongoing, the Cemetery Working Group carried out a site visit to look at ways to increase the amount of grave spaces available to use. After considering the options, the group reported that one further row of grave spaces could be provided by reducing the width of the path that runs between the older and newer sections.

In February 2024, Contractor McCracken and Son completed a path reduction, to extend the life of the cemetery by two to three years.



Angus McCracken who ran the company for many years passed away in December 2022 is buried at the cemetery; a memorial bench has been installed in loving memory by his son Steve who has since took over running the family business.

Food Glorious Food!

The sun shone all weekend for Carterton's first ever Food and Drink Festival. Located on the Market Square, this special occasion took place over three days from Friday 12 April – Sunday 14 April and was organised by Zoom Events, one of the UK's leading themed market and festival providers.

Residents from Carterton and surrounding towns and villages visited to sample the wide variety of delicious food as well as shop at the interesting gift stalls. There was also a small funfair, ice cream van and great music for everyone to enjoy.



Here are some of the comments from visitors who came to the event:

“Great to see an event like this in Carterton. Hope it proves a success and thank you to all those involved in arranging it”.

“It was fab”.

“Well done Carterton Town Council, great effort and result by all involved”.

“Me and my husband went and thoroughly enjoyed it”.



Carterton Town Council look forward to hosting other exciting events in 2024.

Three for a Pound!

Our Market, held on the square every Thursday, is popular with visitors who enjoy shopping for fresh flowers and plants, delicious cakes, fruit & veg and greeting cards.



2024 has seen the arrival of some new stalls selling their wares. Memorial plaques and artificial flowers, homemade jewelry and wellbeing products.



We said a fond farewell to Lorraine and James (The Burger Van), who have been a regular for years, and welcomed The Spud Shack, tempting customers with a variety of tasty, filled spuds and a delicious menu.

More about Carterton Town Council

Carterton Town Council was established in 1985 when Carterton and Black Bourton Parishes split.

The Town Council offices are at the Town Hall, 19 Alvescot Road, Carterton, Oxfordshire, OX18 3JL. Tel: 01993 842156. Contact details and further information is on the Town Council's website - www.carterton-tc.gov.uk. The Town Hall is open to the public from 9.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

There are a variety of booklets and leaflets on display in the Town Hall giving useful local information, together with copies of the town map and the latest Town Guide. If you have any comments or queries, do call in and see if we can help.

Council and Committee Meetings



The Full Council oversees all the activities of the Council and approves all financial expenditure. The main areas of the Council's work are currently covered by the following committees:

- Administration Committee
- Amenities & Economic Regeneration Committee
- Planning Committee
- Grants Committee

Full details including dates and times of meetings can be found on the Town Council's website and on the noticeboard outside the Town Hall.

Working Groups

In addition to the Standing Committees, a number of Working Groups were set up this year to discuss matters in more detail before bringing them to one of the Committees or to Full Council, as follows.

- Alvescot Road Recreation Ground (ARRG) Working Group
- Boxing Club Working Group
- Cemetery Working Group
- Events Working Group
- Play Areas Working Group
- Road Safety Working Group
- Willow Meadows Working Group

The groups are made up of a mixture of councillors and members of the public and meetings are held as required.

TOWN COUNCILLORS

Carterton's sixteen Town Councillors represent the five wards in the town. They are elected every four years, and the last election took place in May 2023. Details of the wards which each Councillor represents, along with their contact details, are available on the Town Council's website.

Chairs

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the various Council Committees are elected annually in May. During 2023/2024 the following Councillors held office:

Town Mayor: Councillor Kathy Godwin

Deputy Town Mayor: Councillor Liz Wood

Chair - Administration Committee

Councillor Philip Godfrey (June 2023 – September 2023)

Councillor David Melvin (September 2023 – May 2024)

Chair - Amenities and Economic Regeneration Committee

Councillor Natalie King

Chair - Planning Committee

Councillor Martin McBride (June 2023 – October 2023)

Councillor Michael Tarpey (October 2023 – May 2024)

Chair – Grants Committee

Councillor Liz Wood

Councillors and the Wards they represent

Councillor Kathy Godwin	Upavon
Councillor Liz Wood	Gateway
Councillor Sandie Baylis	Rock Farm
Councillor Robin Brooks	Upavon
Councillor Roger Crapper	Milestone
Councillor Carole Croft	Rock Farm
Councillor Philip Godfrey	Shillbrook
Councillor Joanne Guest	Rock Farm
Councillor Natalie King	Shillbrook
Councillor Emma Leeming	Upavon
Councillor Nick Leverton	Milestone
Councillor Martin McBride	Upavon
Councillor Michele Mead	Milestone
Councillor David Melvin	Upavon
Councillor Michael Tarpey	Shillbrook
Councillor Kim Wood	Gateway

Town Councillors do not receive any payment for attending meetings or for carrying out any Council business, although from this year they are able to claim Dependant Care Allowance up to £500 per year to pay for care of a dependant to enable them to attend Council meetings.

Council Responsibilities

The Town Council maintains two recreation grounds, one at Alvescot Road and the other at Swinbrook Road, as well as children’s play parks, squash courts, the Allandale Centre, 23 acres of water meadows for public access at Willow Meadows, The Dell Skatepark with BMX track, the Queen Mother’s Garden and numerous open spaces throughout the town.

PLANNING

The Town Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications and as such is responsible for commenting on all 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 48 during the year 2023/2024.

TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Grants are awarded by the Town Council to community groups and other non-profit making organisations that meet the Town Council’s strict guidelines and criteria. Any grant approved by the Council must benefit the local community.

During 2023/2024 the Town Council awarded the following grants:

ORGANISATION	PURPOSE OF GRANT	AMOUNT PAID
Dotty’s Group	Funding towards cost of running Dotty’s Group (total cost of £18,000 to be paid over 3-year period)	£6,000
Acting Community Thingummybogs	Funding towards cost of using the Hall at Gateway School for Pantomime rehearsals and performances	£700
Save the Children	Funding towards May Day Fair 2024	£1,200
Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA)	Funding towards Play & Activity Day 2024	£1,500
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	Funding for Carterton Connector Bus (total cost of £16,000 for 2024/2025 to be paid quarterly)	£4,000
TOTAL		£13,400

COUNCIL STAFF

Clerk of the Council:

Simon Garwood

(from 8 January 2024)

Samantha Hayward - Locum Clerk

(from 24 July 2023 – 10 January)

Kay Linnington

(from 27 March 2023 – 20 June 2023)

Deputy Town Clerk:

Kay Linnington

(from 22 July 2023 – 22 December 2023)

Lyndy Dennis - Acting Deputy Clerk

(from 27 March 2023 – 21 July 2023)

Administration Officers:

Stella Catt

Katie Zasada

Lyndy Dennis

(from 21 July 2023)

Town Warden:

Alex Fleming

(retired 30 April 2024) - Vacancy

Mace Bearer:

Alex Fleming

(retired 30 April 2004) - Vacancy

Cleaner:

Denise Archer

Archivist (voluntary):

Roger Battley

May 2024

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

ANNUAL REPORT FROM CLLR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON

OCC BUDGET 2024/25

COUNCILS SECURE £600M ADDITIONAL FUNDING PACKAGE

Communities Secretary Michael Gove announced this year a total of £600m of additional funding for local authorities in England – including a £500m addition to the social care grant, and a £100m increase in core spending power. OCC is expected to benefit to an amount of approximately £5m.

BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/25

This unexpected development noted above means that the Liberal Democrat/Green administration and opposition groups had to rework their Budget proposals. As previously reported, the minority administration cannot pass a Budget without support of the opposition parties. A meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 20th February took place and a budget was approved.

Full details of the final budget are available on the council website. These show that the Budget will result in extra borrowing of £23.45m. The Budget continued to focus on Oxford-centric matters, including Oxford parking zones, Oxford ANPR cameras, Oxford congestion, Oxford 'Mini-Holland' project (at a capital cost of £2m per year) and an Oxford 'Citizens' Assembly' (at a cost of £150,000).

Despite repeated resident surveys and feedback from Councillors which show that roads and drains are near the top of the list of resident concerns, they still fail to get a mention and are not a budget priority. It is likely satisfaction with the council will continue to decline. (The latest 'Residents Survey' shows that 'Maintenance of roads' was rated by 67% of residents as one of their four most important council services, but just 19% were very or fairly satisfied.) I will continue to campaign for more funds to be spent on fixing the potholes and mending the sharp road verges which continue to cause tyre damage.

SAVING OUR WINDRUSH – FURTHER TESTING EQUIPMENT IN PLACE.

I am pleased to report that new river testing equipment is in place in the Windrush and I was able to contribute funding to WASP to purchase the equipment.

Windrush Against Sewage Pollution ("WASP") will manage the sophisticated testing equipment and will be responsible for the continual assessment of the river. This equipment will allow the local community, via WASP, to trace the releases of sewage from storm drains and elsewhere into our river and provide a comprehensive picture of the scale of pollution from what is described as the routine dumping of untreated sewage in some areas.

Thames Water continues to be criticized for its continual dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, especially for the long-term events which, when caused by groundwater infiltration (as many are) are not legally permitted. Now that we have professional testing equipment the Windrush can be monitored and excess discharges identified, effectively ensuring that there is a greater deterrent to pollution from any source in place. It may prove to be the case that Thames Water will have to file for bankruptcy this year and be placed back under public ownership

Ensured HGV ban in Burford was approved.

After 15 years of stalemate and with the help of the Burford Town Council, one of my first tasks was to ensure that OCC approved and implemented the HGV ban which came into place in October 2020. It was on an initial 18 month trial period which was to become permanent.

HGVs have caused significant damage to buildings and the Victorian underground pipes which meant that action had to be taken. It was also seriously damaging the tourist industry in Burford.

It is with great regret that the present OCC Administration reversed this decision. However we will continue to campaign for a limitation of HGVs in our towns and villages.

In October, with BTC, we met the new Cabinet Member for Highways, Judy Roberts who fully understood the issues facing Burford: its economy, building destruction and pollution incurred by the HGVs. We still are waiting for the County-wide HGV report. However, funding is needed to be provided to fund the project and this was approved in the February OCC budget.

The County-wide HGV study continues and is now focused on the positioning of cameras and collecting data. The main focus is on the Windrush Valley (including the Burford area) and Henley. We are still hopeful that a ban on 18 ton HGVs will be approved for Burford.

Burford Bridge.

In October, a meeting was held with OCC Officers to discuss the planned repairs to Burford bridge. They witnessed the HGVs on Burford bridge and lack of space for pedestrians.

Although progress has been slow (it is now almost two years since the original accident), repairs have at last started this month.

Speeding in our Villages – 20mph is plenty campaign.

Speeding remains a major problem in our villages and I will continue to back the 20mph speed limit in our villages and have provided funding for the 20mph signage in Burford and also supported the campaign and signage in Swinbrook, Taynton, Shilton and Brize Norton.

Active user and supporter of Fix My Street and to repair potholes.

OCC has drafted in more staff to carry out inspections and contractors Skanska are sending out more teams to carry our repairs. An additional Dragon-Patcher is now in action on the road network travelling round on an 'inspect and fix' basis on the rural network. OCC have pledged that defects that make roads hazardous will be dealt with within 24 hours. Remember, if a defect has paint markings around it then it has already been scheduled for repair and does not need a new report. OCC's own machine, along with the shared Dragon, has fixed over 21,000 potholes. It is expected that the new one, over the next twelve months, could fill up to 14,000 more.

Continue to support local charities through my Priority Fund.

I support and fund various projects in my Division:

Carterton: Supported local bus service and two Food banks to assist residents.

Brize Norton: Supported speed limit signage and the Humble Bumble café.

Burford: Raised funds for HGV signage and 20 mph signage

Swinbrook: Provided funds for 20mph signage and also two CCTV cameras

Asthall: Provided funds for village signage and a community bench.

Taynton: Provided funds for village sign and support for 20mph speed limit.

Shilton: Supported 20mph speed limit in village.

[OCC Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson, Burford & Carterton North](#)

nick.fieldjohnson@oxfordshire.gov.uk and nfjuk3@gmail.com

County Council Report 2023-2024

Cllr Nick Leverton

Carterton South and West Division (The Broadshires)

I will try to make this year's report as non-political as possible as I see no value in pointing out the obvious shortcomings of what has been a disappointing and difficult year at County Hall.

Wherever possible I have tried to help my constituents with their problems, unfortunately it became apparent as the year went by that any representations made to Officers to help with your concerns were falling on deaf ears. This has made it harder for all County Councillors to deliver solutions to members of the public who have had problems.

As a business they seem to have lost sight of their mission statement and after a damning report condemned them for their appalling governance of Children's S.E.N.D. services, a messy political divorce and harsh words in the Chamber has created a completely divided Council.

Sadly, the distribution of monies at County is very much Oxford City centric, hence the reason that so many Highways schemes were reduced from their original planned design. I live in hope that the Rural Parishes receive the Lion's share of any pothole monies to make up for last year's woeful shortage.

As the Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I have witnessed a sea change in the way Hospital Discharge protocols are now being managed. The new initiative is delivering a high-quality service too patients and shorter recovery times. Based in patients' homes and supported by the appropriate carers and medical staff the outcomes have been extremely positive.

County Council is a big machine, arguably with too many over inflated egos, my hope is that collectively we acknowledge our responsibilities and concentrate on delivering high quality services to our communities!

Cllr Nick Leverton

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Martin McBride – Carterton North East

I have a 100% attendance record at District Council representing Carterton North East Ward.

I have also attended several Lowlands planning meetings substituting for Conservative members who were unable to attend, including site visits to view planning applications in situ.

I have attended several Executive meetings while on tour and asked questions such as "how much does it cost to have all the officers travel around the district" When it was held in Carterton there were only 3 members of the public present !!!!!

I have assisted several ward residents with private matters and assisted others in sorting out problems with bin collections.

I will continue to question the executive on why they are wasting so much of tax payers money and driving the council towards bankruptcy.

The lack of 5 year building land supply has also generated a number of speculative planning applications which is not good for the district.

Martin McBride

Cllr David Melvin District Council Report year ended May 2024

I was elected as one of the District Councillors for the NE Ward of Carterton in May 2023. I have attended regular full council meetings and have been a member of the Audit & Governance Committee, Combined Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Licensing Committee. I have also sat on the council's standards committee and try to attend meetings of the council's executive when possible.

I was also pleased to appoint as the council's representative to Volunteer Link Up. I am also on the council's constitution working group.

The council was in its second year under an administration formed by an Alliance of three political parties, Liberal Democrat's, Labour, and Greens.

I am one of the few elected councillors who have also been an officer of the council, I worked for the Environmental Heath Team in the Councils Community Services Department until retiring in 2015. There have been significant changes in the way services are delivered and how the council is organised since I retired. Services are now delivered by two separate companies, UBICO which provide environmental services, waste collection etc, and PUBLCA which provide the majority of other more office based technical and administrative services such as planning, customer services etc. Both businesses are owned by the local councils that use them to deliver services. However, the council has started a review into the service agreement with PUBLICA and it's possible that the current arrangements will change soon, and some services and staff will return to working directly for the council in the future.

Most council meetings are open to residents who can attend and do have a opportunity to speak at some meetings, during the last year the majority of meetings were started to be live streamed so residents have more opportunity to view and observe the council's decision making process.

The council's executive committee has also been 'on tour' holding some meetings in different towns in the district including Carterton which make it easier for residents to participate.

Full details of all meetings can be found on the council's web site including recordings which can be viewed.

Other positive developments during the last year have been the start of consultations for the Local Plan for the District, this is the process that guides on future development proposals and addresses the needs and opportunities for the area. Carterton will figure in this and residents will have further opportunities to comment and contribute. Carterton is the second largest town in West Oxfordshire and home to what is possibly the largest RAF base in the country, we do need more inward investment, employment opportunities, improved transport links and other infrastructure improvements including health care provision, the district council has commissioned consultants to look at developing a strategy for Carterton town centre regeneration and other local area improvements.

It's important that our community, the town council and our neighbouring parish councils are fully consulted and involved in all proposed developments in the area and have a strong voice to ensure that we get our communities opinions heard.

The next full district council meeting is on May 22nd in the newly renovated council chamber at the councils Wood Green Office.

I understand that the current alliance administration will continue, this will be confirmed at the meeting and the council's executive team will be formally elected, we will also confirm committee membership and other appointments.

The new chamber is now a multipurpose room and can be hired for community meetings and other activities and will provide some additional revenue to the council. There have been other changes and improvements made to the Wood Green building which is now the main office for the council.

On a general note, it's been an interesting first year as a district councillor and returning as a town councillor for the Upavon Ward. There have been a few challenges but it's been a privilege to serve our local community and I am pleased to have been able to support our town mayor Cllr Kathy Goodwin and our deputy mayor Cllr Liz Wood with a range of projects and events during the year and hope to be able to continue to do this .

We have held a couple of residents surgeries at the community centre on Shilton Park and intend to have regular surgeries in future.

I'm a member of several residents and community groups including the Carterton Litter Pickers, West Oxfordshire Community Transport, and the Carterton Environmental Awareness group and Volunteer Link Up and will continue to work with and support these groups.

Looking forward to a productive and positive second year as a district councillor for Carterton NE and town councillor for Carterton Upavon Ward.

Cllr David Melvin

District Councillor Carterton NE Ward

Town Councillor Carterton Upavon Ward

Cllr Michele Mead Carterton
South Annual Report 23/24

West Oxfordshire District Council continues to be run by the liberal/labour/green coalition and this year the spending of taxpayer's money on vanity projects has continued the decoration of the council chambers cost £500,000 and it has not ended there as the committee rooms have also cost £20,000 for carpet and paint!

The council budget this year once again bought them even closer to bankruptcy and it was shocking to see that buildings owned by the council have been left empty with zero rental income this amounts to over £300,000 for one building in Oxford and doesn't include the loss of income from the empty shops in Marriotts walk which is also owned by the council.

To try and recoup some of this income, council tax was raised to the maximum and green waste license were raised again! I did NOT support the council's budget this year. West hive was launched which showed promise for community groups and organisations to be supported in fundraising and receive a percentage of their target from the council however out of everyone who applied during the year only one applicant was successful which is extremely disappointing as in previous years the entire grant budget was awarded to the community.

Planning continues to be turbulent with the coalition still not able to prove a five-year land supply and we have seen many appeals, Minster Lovell, Ducklington and Witney East this is hundreds of houses that are being built after the application was initially refused. Fighting an appeal costs the council thousands which is not budgeted for so on the last appeal the council didn't even bother trying to fight the case and just let the application go through.

The committee structure within the district council has been changed, the council no longer has scrutiny for Environment, Finance and Economic & Social it is now one committee that covers all. Initially this seemed like a good idea however as time as gone on the executive have made decisions with no scrutiny which is not good practice and does not give the public the opportunity to ask questions before decisions are made.

I attend every Council, Executive and Scrutiny meeting and more recently all planning meetings to advocate for Carterton so it is very frustrating when working hard for your community is not recognised. The decarbonisation of Carterton leisure and installation of more solar panels has now been indefinitely deferred due to costs. Some good news Kilkenny Play Park is finally getting its car park extended and much of the play equipment has been fixed or upgraded this is something the previous administration worked hard to on so it's great to see being delivered albeit two years later.

I can be contacted by email, phone or while I'm out on my daily walk with the dog (Leia the collie) And it doesn't just have to be about the south of the town anything Carterton and West Oxfordshire I will help wherever I can.

District Report 2023 – 2024: Natalie King North West Carterton

Introduction

I joined the West Oxfordshire District Council in May 2022 after winning the election in Northwest Carterton. I am also Town Councillor in Shillbrook within Northwest Carterton which I won in January 2022 and again in 2023 which is secured now until 2027.

In May 2023 we welcomed Phil Godfrey to the second District seat at Northwest Carterton and I have enjoyed working with him on lots of exciting projects especially the new development of the Carterton Football Club. He is well loved by the residents as he was the previous Chair of the Carterton Football Club and has big plans to develop and grow the club's possibilities.

In May 2023 we also welcomed lot of new Councillors to the Town Council as well as staff and we have a fantastic new Clerk and Deputy Clerk and I feel this has brought a new balance to the Town Council and finally getting it ship shape onto a new positive path.

In the two years I have ran I have had a lot of engagement and positive responses from all the residents and Football Club within my ward and worked on numerous issues over the year including holding resident surgeries to solve issues.

District Update

West Oxfordshire District Council is led by Andy Graham Leader of the Council and Duncan Enright as the Deputy leader who are leaders of the Alliance, which is made up of Liberal Democrats, Labour and Green party with the Liberal Democrats holding the majority. After the recent elections this will continue to run for another two years until the next District Council elections in May 2026.

One of the Councils big achievements are that all the Council meetings are now live streamed due to all new technology cameras installed in all the meeting rooms and the Calendar of meetings are on the WODC website to make note off if you cannot attend in person, but still can be steamed from wherever you are.

The Council Chambers refurbishment was also completed this year bringing this room into the 21st Century. It will now serve as a venue for the public to rent and the Council to make a revenue from, rather than leaving it empty the rest of the time of year. The customer service desk has now been relocated to the second entrance door and more security doors have been added to all the entrances to the building making it safer for staff and pass keys are needed throughout to enter.

The Woodgreen building has had a new lick of paint and carpet throughout making it feel fresher and overall a nicer place to work and visit for all and was well overdue. The Chairs office and Councillors office have also been freshened up to meet residents confidentially and so Councillors can meet before meetings.

A lot of changes have begun in the last year to make more money from Council premises as they have been under used for many years and could have more purpose than they did previously and potentially make a revenue from. All officer staff work from the Woodgreen office as a central hub now or work from home and this has meant that many of the other old office venues will now be occupied by local businesses giving the Council an additional revenue.

Thames water has been a hot topic within the Council since I joined and the Executive are working hard with Thames Water to improve the water quality and sewage problem we are occurring to frequently here in West Oxfordshire.

We are in the process of re-working the Local Plan and improving it for the future housing applications as we have not been able to meet the governments targets of housing supply and hope to bring a positive new spin on this in the next 12 months.

GLL are managing our leisure centres better and we are looking at the ongoing maintenance these buildings need due to years of neglect. This will come at a price, and I know the officers are working hard to apply for grants and other means to repair and get our venues to net zero.

There is many other things I could list as to be honest the last two years have been a catalyst of changes to make this council work better and more efficient for the people it serves and I am proud to have been part of steering this change.

My District Update

I started the play park working group for the Play Parks Regeneration programme within the Town Council and this is broken down into three areas with Kilkenny Play Park at District, MOD parks and eleven Town Council parks. Recently at town council we have ordered a new play park to be installed at Swinbrook Estate on Empire drive shortly, which was paid for from the S106 funds left from David Wilson Homes development.

I worked closely with Rosie Pearson to get the necessary repairs done at Kilkenny Play Park and I'm pleased to say everything is now finally fixed. It took a long time to get this project off the ground and due to the bad weather, it has taken longer than I would have liked, but it is now finished for all families to enjoy. My next step is to work on adding additional play park equipment to the park and make it the place to come and visit once again.

On top of that the new extension of the car park is about to begin and although this will cause some difficulty for local residents during the time the work is carried out, it will relieve the parking issues for the residents in the Swinbrook and Shilton Park estates when completed in time for the summer holidays.

The Council voted to change the committees structure half way through the year and Economics and regeneration and Climate were merged to become Overview and Scrutiny which has worked well in my personal opinion and I have found them to be very informative and made great headway with such issues as Thames Water, cameras within Carterton, sports available for families on welfare, wildlife and fly-tipping. These committees will be making a change this year to be even more productive and more information on this will be released shortly from District.

The Government have instructed the district to change the boundaries of the wards due to the increase in housing in 2027 and so my Northwest ward may increase to a three District Councillor ward, this is still to be confirmed. My time will come to an end in 2026 and if I re-stand, I will need to be elected in 2026 and 2027. Ideally this isn't great as this takes up a huge amount of my time from doing the job, however I am making residents aware as this may confuse them why I need to stand twice.

Town Council Summary

I joined the working group for road safety and will make this a top priority ensuring all our roads outside the local schools are made safer. Home close near St Josephs and Edith Moore Schools is awaiting new zig zag lines and a hatchet to stop the congestion and I am looking into 20mph in around school areas. We are looking into other various ways to make the Carterton's roads safer alongside with County Council and there will be improvements coming shortly.

I became chair of the Amenities Committees and have really enjoyed my year chairing this committee and increased these meetings to go from 3 to 4 times a year. I feel this could be increased to 5 or even 6 times a year and to have ownership of authority to reduce full town council meetings, so I will be suggesting this after the Mayor Making.

I have been supporting the Carterton Football Club at District and Town capacity and we are on the cusp of a very exciting change for the club to grow and develop with a potential relocation. It is still early days, however the district have agreed to contribute £360,000 towards the 4G pitch the club desperately need. More to come on this in the months ahead.

As I mentioned previously, I am lead on the play parks working group and we have finalised a brief for the skate park to go off to tender to our two preferred skate park suppliers. We will be holding a public consultation shortly to invite children in to see what our concepts are and get feedback.

We have also nearly finalised brief for the REC play park also and this will go to public consultation shortly or combined to the skate park to get feedback before it goes to tender also. We have some moneys set aside for this play park; however, we will be looking at using some S106 monies allocated to leisure and grant funding to purchase this exciting new project.

I have enjoyed my two years at District so far and am looking forward to the next two and what they may bring. I welcome residents to contact me and my fellow councillors as we are always here to listen and assist as best we can.

Councillor Natalie King

West Oxfordshire District Councillor Annual Report 2024.

Lowlands Area Planning Sub Committee Meeting

It has been a trying year for the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Sub Committee. We have rightly refused bad planning applications from some large House Building Developers only for that decision to be overturned by the National Planning Inspectorate. The Planning system clearly needs reform as it is something that works in favour of the Large Housing Developers. WODC again cannot demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Land Supply, and this is regularly mentioned and taken into account when the Planning Inspectorate makes his judgement on planning appeals by applicants.

Carterton has seen an increase of interest from multiple house building corporations and it will be a test as to how these applications are structured and what benefits Carterton and its surrounding neighbors can receive in its additional infrastructure. With a general election coming up no matter what political party will be in Office, West Oxfordshire for reasons out of its control is not meeting its present house building quota of 660 homes per year.

Community Sports Hub Project

These last 12 months District Councillors have been helping Carterton Football Club and WODC Officers to explore the possibility of an improved new Community Sports Hub for the residents of Carterton. WODC have pledged £347,000 towards the project. If achieved this will put Carterton on the map and supply the best sporting facilities for our youth and other diverse groups. The public consultation by the Football Club (which a lot of Councillors attended) had a 96% approval rating for this project's completion. In addition, it could unlock a substantial amount of monies that could be used for new Capital Projects in Carterton that are not sport related.

Kilkenny Play Park

District Councillors have managed to achieve improvements to this play park that attracts over 100,000 visitors a year. WODC are using over £80,000 of Section 106 funding for the works of

- Two new digger style play items
- Two new additional picnic tables for the sand pit area.
- A new rope basket swing
- The teen shelter to include a Centre 360-degree seta
- Three new rockers.

Also the adjacent Car Park is now being enlarged and extended.

Carterton Community Food Bank

District Councillors are working with the Food Bank in trying to explore options due to its increased popularity. Lynn Little and Pastour Blessom supply a much-needed service to residents and families in Carterton, but they need more space for their Project.

Most of their food is given by the Oxford Food Hub at unit 12 Curtis Industrial Estate in Botley, they distribute over £1.5m of food to Community Organisations across Oxfordshire which is run by CEO Cllr Emily Smith and Dave Parks.

All of these volunteers, both local and within West Oxfordshire should be commended for their volunteer work in the community.

Carterton Strategic Plan

WODC have set up a Carterton Strategic Plan to meet the challenges that increased housing and an increased population is bringing. This Strategy will :

- Look at the Town Centre and their businesses to help remain vibrant and successful.
- Help communities to protect their key rural services.
- Assist in Local people having the right skills that are needed by local businesses.
- Help with Leisure and Culture Facilities
- Determine the best way to maximise the economic benefit of the RAFs largest airbase.

WODC has funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and over £788,598 has been allocated for 2024/25.

End of Report

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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**