



CARNFORTH TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

Working for our Community



www.carnforthtowncouncil.org

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

As my year as Town Mayor draws to a close, I've looked back over the past 12 months and selected some of the highlights, which have ranged from performing as speech maker to sod cutter to bingo caller!

My year as Mayor began with a series of presentations of special commemorative Coronation medals to the pupils of our four local schools and, in the process of a few weeks, I had the opportunity to meet over 600 local youngsters and their teachers.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being a Mayor is the unpredictability of the events that a Mayor is asked to attend. I helped with a tree planting project at Crag Bank in June which was quickly followed by the opening of the annual Carnforth Carnival and the first Carnforth Fringe Festival in July. My duties also took me "off the patch" during the summer.

My first trip, to the headquarters of the North West Air Ambulance at Barton aerodrome in Manchester, was a humbling experience. The Air Ambulance Service is a charity that relies entirely on donations to cover its annual £8 million running costs. Its three helicopters (two based in Manchester and one in Blackpool) provide emergency first response cover for over six million people in the North West of England. The expertise and dedication of the staff of the Service often go unnoticed until an incident occurs and they are needed. Their intervention is often the difference between life and death for an individual and they deserve our recognition and our support.

My second "trip" was to our twin Town of Sailly-sur-la-Lys in Northern France in August to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the close association between our towns. As always, the four-day visit was packed full of activities with our French hosts, culminating in a memorable eve of return concert featuring our very own Town Clerk! The twinning experience is special; it's an opportunity to see first-hand how ordinary people live their lives in another country; it's rewarding to be immersed in another culture for just a few days with friends without having to worry about language barriers or etiquette. Everyone "mucks in" and a good time is had by all. Long may it continue.

As summer turned to autumn my attention turned to our monthly Saturday Film Night programme.

Selecting films for screening that will prove popular isn't easy, but Barbie went down well with our Civic Hall audience, many of whom came dressed appropriately in pink. After a stint as bingo caller for members of the Gummers Howe Community Centre, I had the pleasure in December of switching on the Carnforth Christmas lights, an event that seems to be becoming more popular year on year.

The New Year has proved equally busy; an official sod-cutting event on the land next to the Porsche garage in January marked the start of the wider development of the site and the opening of the Food Club at the Hub on Kellet Road in April was quickly followed by the official opening of the new extension at the Swimming Pool also in April. My last official event was attending the annual summer concert of the Lancaster and District Male Voice Choir at Leighton Hall on Sunday, 12 May. I like to think I went out on the right note!

I can't end this piece without mentioning one or two things that have happened behind the scenes but which, I hope, will benefit the Town and its residents over time. In April 2023, the Town Council took back direct management control of Carnforth's Highfield allotments. It's hoped that we will soon be able to involve our local schools in "green finger" initiatives to encourage our youngsters to learn more about growing fruit, vegetables and other plants and caring for the environment using a community "plot" at Highfield. Plans are also afoot to improve our two public halls with particular emphasis on Crag Bank Village Hall for which we assumed management control in 2021.

I must also pay tribute to all my colleagues on the Town Council. Ours is a disparate team from many different backgrounds but whose collective enthusiasm and efforts help make the Town Council a force for good in our community. My Mayoral year has seen the retirement of two great colleagues, Malcolm Watkins, and Kath Bromilow, and I would like to record my thanks to them for their advice and assistance since I joined the Town Council in 2017. Finally, I and all my colleagues mourned the passing in December of another long-standing colleague, Paul Gardner. Paul was a great servant of the Town and City Councils, and we will miss him and his unique style.

Councillor Jim Grisenthwaite, Town Mayor

TOWN DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING (TD&P) COMMITTEE

The Town Development & Planning (TD&P) Committee usually meets on the first Monday of every month. This Committee considers planning applications, planning policy and infrastructure matters with input from site visits, the local community, and other stakeholders before making recommendations to the Town Council. Council decisions on planning are then submitted online to Lancaster City Council for subsequent consideration and final decision by their Planning Committee.

Led by this Committee, the Town Council works closely with City and County Councils to ensure that the views of our residents are considered when determining planning-related and highways issues and with many other agencies of a range of matters including health and wellbeing.

The Council promotes and advocates the town in many ways - whether it be representing our community on a residents parking scheme or the A6070 development; reporting dangerous buildings, or supporting local businesses through the inaugural Carnforth Business Expo in March.

The TD&P Committee is dedicated to developing our town and improving the wellbeing of our community.

The TD&P committee takes the lead in delivering our highly successful community events. Notable in 2023 was the first Carnforth Fringe which brought together acts enroute to the Edinburgh Fringe as well as local talent.

The Council hosted the Great Big Green Week which provided advice and support on how we can all be more sustainable, save energy and money! And, of course, we had our usual civic events like the Remembrance Day Parade and Service, Victory in Europe Day and Armed Forces Day Services.

Carnforth Town Council is extremely grateful to former Councillor, Major Malcolm Watkins, for being the driver behind many of our civic events and for his overall contribution to the town. We wish him well as he leaves the town he was born in to move to Kent to be nearer his family.



PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT (P&E) COMMITTEE

The Property & Environment Committee is responsible for all the Council's assets, including the management and safeguarding of essential community assets like Carnforth Civic Hall and Crag Bank Village Hall and the War Memorial Gardens.

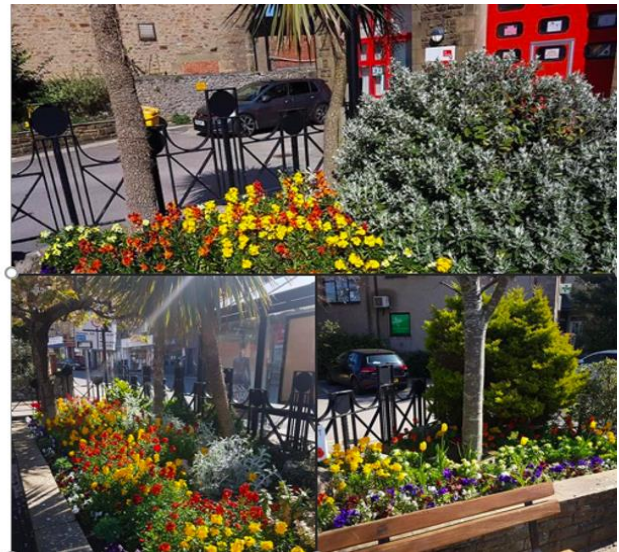
The Council maintains public rights of way, footpaths, open spaces, flower beds and numerous planters and street furniture around the town, including the 'train' at Crag Bank roundabout and the 'two owls' at the top of Hawes Hill.

Regular maintenance ensures that our statutory and health and safety responsibilities are met, and assets are regularly inspected to ensure they are safe and in good condition.

The Council also takes care of many of the planters and flower beds that you will pass daily, including those at the War Memorial Gardens, Scotland Road, Lancaster Road, Market Street and North Road, as well as many benches and footpaths in the town. The Council regular supports 'friends' groups of our local play areas and with the planting of trees.

In April 2023, the Council took on management responsibility for the Carnforth (Highfield) Allotments at the request of allotment holders.

We have since invested in the site and made several improvements, including the creation of a 'community' plot and making the paths safer to use. Plans going forward will realise the many benefits of the allotments to the wider community.



FINANCE & GOVERNANCE (F&G) COMMITTEE

The Finance & Governance Committee usually meets on the second Thursday of the month. Its functions include the consideration of new policies, developing strategy and monitoring the actions of all committees in delivering the Council's plans. It is also responsible for the Town Council's website, oversight of the Council's budgets and accounts as well as its internal control, governance, risk management and staff functions.

Carnforth Town Council is open and transparent about the way it manages its finances. All the statutory financial reports as well as information on the way the Council mitigates risk, maintains effective and efficient internal control and governance and ensures sound financial management in delivering the Council's plans and objectives can be found on the Council website at <https://carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk/document-category/financial-reports/>

The Council's finances are monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Town Clerk, Bob Bailey, acting in his statutory role of Responsible Finance Officer. The Committee considers monthly bank reconciliations and financial monitoring reports and makes recommendations to the Town Council on payments.

The annual accounts and supporting documents; systems of internal control and governance and compliance with legislation and accounting practices are audited by a qualified and highly competent internal auditor and external auditors appointed by Central Government.

During the year this Committee was responsible for the implementation of a new and vibrant website that provides a wide range of statutory and community information. The new website is fully compliant with legislation relating to accessibility and data protection.



CARNFORTH
TOWN COUNCIL



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Welcome to Carnforth



Carnforth is in the district of Lancaster in the Northwest of England. It is 9.24km to the north of Lancaster and bordered roughly by the A6 and local country roads to the south,

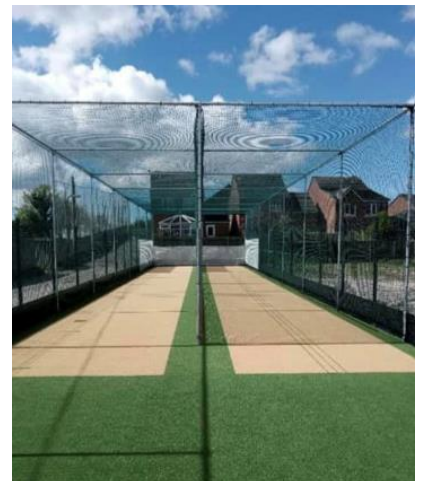


COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND



Each year Carnforth Town Council receives a grant from Aurora Wind Turbine funds to distribute to projects that meet the criteria for benefiting the community. In 2023/2024, Carnforth Town Council awarded £1,000 each to the Friends of Carnforth Canal Park and Carnforth Cricket Club towards the cost of playground equipment and

the installation of cricket nets respectively and almost £950 towards a new picnic table at Alexandra Park and a seat at what has become known as the 'Pat Woof Memorial Garden' on Market Street.



MONEY MATTERS

Recently you will have received your Council Tax bill for 2024/2025. The bill sets out how the money we pay will be allocated. The biggest slice goes to Lancashire County Council to pay for adult social care, roads, schools and libraries amongst other things. Next in line is Lancaster City Council who provide waste collection, environmental health, and housing amongst their services. Then come the Police and the Fire Services. Finally, it shows how much you pay for the services and functions provided by Carnforth Town Council - a minnow in comparison to the others.



Unlike district and county councils, parish/town

councils receive no funding from central government, relying solely on what residents pay and any income they can generate. In 2023/2024, Carnforth Town Council raised just over £50,000, largely from rent received for the hire of our community halls - Carnforth Civic Hall and Crag Bank Village Hall.

Planning for the coming budget and precept - the proportion of Council Tax that is received by the Town Council - starts in October when the Council starts to consider its plans for the coming year. These plans are continually discussed until the budget/precept setting meeting in January each year when the precept for the coming year is determined. This year, like many others, Councillors went through every budget line, pruning where it was sensible to do so and, for the first time, the Town Council consulted with residents on what was important to them to develop out town as well as protect and enhance important services and assets. From our consultation, residents made it clear that they value our heritage and community assets and wish to enhance the significant benefits of the town as a good place to live, work and visit.

In determining the annual precept, Councillors were mindful of the many challenges and financial pressures that we have all had to endure over the last few years whilst planning for a future that remains volatile and unpredictable.

Having taken all of this into account the Precept for the financial year 2024/2025 was set at £182,052, representing an 83% increase on 2023/2024. Whilst it is accepted that this is a significant percentage increase the difficult decision was taken to seek to deliver the town's ambitious plans now to safeguard the long-term future of generations to come.

For Council Tax purposes properties are banded from A – H based on their valuation /from lowest to highest. Most properties in Carnforth, some 2,500, are in Bands A – D. The precept for properties in these bands equates to between £1.34 and £2.00 per week.

So, what does the precept pay for? The Town Council uses the precept to provide several functions and services – such as those managed by the Committees as set out in this Annual Report. The Council contributes funding and support to a variety of valued community groups, and we have built on our ability to be more efficient and effective in serving our local community through modern technology. Through our website and social media platforms and the pages of the popular *Carnforth Express* the Council keeps our residents and local community up to date on local news and useful and supportive information from across the Lancaster district and Lancashire.

Having listened to residents the Council will be considering detailed options for investment in Crag Bank Village Hall in 2024/2025 and considering opportunities for the town from the Eden project in Morecambe which has the potential to bring considerable prosperity to the whole of the district, Carnforth included! This will involve further strengthening our already excellent working relationships with Lancaster City and Lancashire County Councils and working with Eden Project, Morecambe, and other key stakeholders.

Very few people would dispute that since 2020 everyone has faced challenges that have been the most difficult in recent living memory – despite this Carnforth continues to go from strength to strength. The Town Council will continue to diligently work for, and with, our local community and other stakeholders to: deliver quality services, projects and events; safeguard our heritage and assets, and; build on our capacity to be more resilient and deliver ambitious plans and aspirations for our Town – and all for around £2 a week!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024 / 2025

I am very much looking forward to serving as Town Mayor during 2024 – 2025. There are a lot of challenges that lie ahead for our Town but equally there are a lot of opportunities.

Carnforth continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council through the diligent and professional approach of the Town Council. We have worked collaboratively and successfully with both Councils on several projects recently (e.g., public events, planning matters and highway improvements) demonstrating we are a “can do” organisation. I intend to build on our positive reputation for the benefit of the whole community.



Our Neighbourhood Plan forms the basis for considering all future developments connected with Carnforth. Produced with your input, it sets out our vision of how we wish to protect the best of Carnforth and Crag Bank, while seeking to encourage growth and investment in our community and associated infrastructure. The Lancaster District Local Plan is currently under review and the Town Council will, in turn, review the Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan so that we can continue to shape the development and growth of our local community aligned to the strategic needs and priorities of the wider district.

The next twelve months will be a year of Remembrance – something that the people of Carnforth do so honorably and reverently. Starting on June 6th when the nation will come together to remember the tens of thousands of allied forces who gave service on D-DAY eighty years ago and helped secure the peace, we in the UK enjoy today.

June 29th is Armed Forces Day when the Town will have the opportunity to show its support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community from currently serving personnel to Service families, veterans and cadets. On August 15th we will remember Victory in Europe Day. Then between 8th and 10th November we will commemorate British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the War Memorial with a special parade and other events. Finally on 8th May 2025 there will be a shared moment of celebration for the 80th Anniversary of VE day,

A very poignant and exciting year ahead, and I can't wait! **Councillor Elizabeth Jones**

CARNFORTH TOWN COUNCIL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

ASSETS & SERVICES

- Bus shelters;
- Street furniture;
- Footpaths & Open Spaces;
- War Memorial Gardens;
- Planters; Flower beds;
- Litter & Dog waste bins;
- Community Benefit Fund;
- Planning & Traffic related matters;
- Carnforth Civic & Crag Bank Village Halls;
- Facebook/Twitter/Website;
- Carnforth Express Newsletter;
- Emergency Planning;
- Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan;
- Community consultation;
- Carnforth (Highfield) Allotments

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

- Remembrance Day & National events;
- Festivals & special events;
- Film Nights;
- Hall Hire

COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS

- Carnforth Integrated Care Community;
- Eggcup;
- Carnforth Chamber of Trade;
- Carnforth Rotary & Twinning Association;
- Salvation Army – Carnforth Branch
- Lancaster City Council;
- Lancashire County Council;
- Local schools and churches;
- A variety of other Community groups and stakeholders

2024/2025 COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

All meetings of the Council and Committees are open to the public – see the Calendar of meetings below. Each agenda includes a period when the public may address the Council. For more information please go to the Meetings pages on our website www.carnforthtowncouncil.org

2023/2024	Town Council	Town Development & Planning Committee	Property & Environment Committee	Finance & Governance Committee
MAY	15 th	13 th	7 th	9 th
JUNE	19 th	3 rd	4 th	13 th
JULY	17 th	1 st	2 nd	11 th
AUGUST	No meeting	5 th	6 th	8 th
SEPTEMBER	18 th	2 nd	3 rd	12 th
OCTOBER	16 th	7 th	1 st	10 th
NOVEMBER	20 th	4 th	5 th	14 th
DECEMBER	18 th	2 nd	3 rd	12 th
JANUARY	15 th	6 th	7 th	9 th
FEBRUARY	19 th	3 rd	4 th	13 th
MARCH	19 th	3 rd	4 th	13 th
APRIL	16 th	7 th	1 st	10 th

TOWN COUNCIL COUNCILLORS & STAFF 2024 / 2025

Position	Name	Email	Telephone
Town Clerk	Bob Bailey	clerk@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07828254149
Admin Officer	Leah Longhorn	admin@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07846245544
Facilities Manager	Rik Marsden	rik.marsden@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07858769524
Caretaker – Crag Bank Village Hall	Julie Cox	c/o clerk@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07961784856
Outdoor Maintenance Officer	Simon Jobling	simon.jobling@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07581447914
Town Mayor	Elizabeth Jones	elizabeth.jones@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07738134262
Deputy Town Mayor	Rowland Parker	rowland.parker@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07776228950
Members	Linda Downes	Linda.downes@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07746221362
	Paula Gardner	Paula.gardner@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07305684954
	Jim Grisenthwaite	jim.grisenthwaite@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07710864904
	Chris Hanna	chris.hanna@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07308121931
	Ian Laurence	ian.laurence@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07419772468
	Bob Roe	bob.roe@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07872824802
	Paul Turner	paul.turner@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07830 537565
	Steven Richmond	steve.richmond@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	
	Chris Smith	chris.smith@carnforthtowncouncil.gov.uk	07775817854
Vacancy	Crag Bank Ward		