



Annual Report

May 2019 to April 2020

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Mayor's Annual Report

Since my last report on 20th May 2019, I am sorry to announce the resignation of Cllr Julie Farmer, who had been a councillor for 13 years and Deputy Mayor, which means we have an unfilled vacancy. This vacancy will be filled as soon as the council return to meeting in person. However, I am pleased to say that the new Town Council elected last year has settled in extremely well and members have made a significant contribution to the Town. I am pleased to welcome new members of staff: Marzia Sellitti, Deputy Town Clerk, Jo King, Assistant Town Clerk, Shirley Merchant, Information Assistant and note the retirement of Hilary Sherman who had served the Town as Deputy Clerk and Planning Clerk for many years.

What started as an ambitious programme of events has been dramatically curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Town Council decided on 16th March to suspend all of its events, which meant that I, as a potentially vulnerable person, have not been able to take part in any subsequent external activities and have been confined to home. Nevertheless, the Town Council has been extremely busy since then in coping with the emergency and planning for the future as you will see later. Until then, I would like to mention some of the notable events that have occurred since our last May meeting and I'd particularly like to highlight the work of volunteers who contribute so much to the life of the Town.

Over the weekend of the 11th – 12th May, Farcycles organised a splendid musical extravaganza, the Farcycles Music Marathon, in the Corn Exchange, showcasing the many talents of our local musicians in a fund-raiser for the Faringdon Children's Cycle Training Park. Then, on Sunday July 7th, I was privileged to open this same facility on Folly Park, which has proved to be a tremendous asset for the town in enabling new cyclists of all ages to learn to ride a bike safely. Many thanks to all those who made this possible.

May also saw another visit from the Garrison Little Theatre of Fort Erie, Canada, as guests of the Faringdon Dramatic Society, with a superb performance of 'Airport Tales' at the Buscot House Theatre. The Dramatic Society also put on performances at FollyFest in July and a thought-provoking performance of 'Our Country's Good' later in the year followed by the ever-popular pantomime in January/February. I hope we will be able to see them performing again soon.

June saw the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in a well-attended ceremony; the first Volunteer Fair, organised by the Town Council and OCVA; and the town turning pink in order to welcome the OVO Energy Women's Cycle Race. The riders were cheered through roads adorned with garishly decorated bikes and residents as they flashed through the best turned-out town on the route.

The strongly contested Faringdon in Bloom competition was also held in June with award winners ranging in age from eight to 103.

July celebrated another well-attended FollyFest in a festival of musical and artistic talent; the 50th anniversary of the first manned moon landing, with a sample brought back exhibited in All Saints; the unveiling of the Faringdon Tapestry and the opening of the Museum in the Pump House.

In August the wind had died down sufficiently to enable the outdoor cinema in Tucker Park to show Bohemian Rhapsody, and the first Faringdon Buskers' Day was held with 15 acts performing in the Market Place.

Throughout last year 14 young people had been participating in Youth Challenge Oxfordshire (YoCO) to train and raise money for an expedition to the Nasio Trust in Kenya. In September they reported back on what had been a life-changing experience in undertaking projects to help AIDS orphans. Congratulations to all involved; the project is up and running this year, with a new group launched last October, but is obviously delayed.

October saw the launch of the Climate Emergency Working Party with a public meeting in the Corn Exchange which subsequently housed another successful Faringdon Art Society Exhibition later in the month. At the end of October, I was privileged to see Dave Arlott of Faringdon Fire Station receive the British Empire Medal from the Lord Lieutenant at a ceremony in Pembroke College; well deserved. At the same ceremony, Colour Sergeant Beth Leo, my former Mayor's Cadet, was made a Lord Lieutenant's cadet representing the Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force.



The Remembrance Day commemorative events in November had record turnouts, thanks to the Royal British Legion, and the end of the month saw the opening of the Lord Berners Exhibition in the Pump House.

On Saturday 7th December we had a successful Young Traders' Market in the Corn Exchange with other events taking place in the Market Place and the Pump House. Volunteers from the Place provided the refreshments to raise funds for which I was delighted to donate my well-received lemon drizzle cake. Magnificently on Boxing Day, the Wantage Mummings performed their annual charity play to a large, appreciative crowd in the Market Place.

The new year started with a Children's Clothes Swap in the Old Town Hall followed later in the month by Faringdon's first Record Fair. This event was packed and several local people and charities sold out their stock of old vinyl records, an event which we hope can be repeated when circumstances permit; thanks to the buskers who raised money for The Place.

February saw the start of an exciting collaboration with the Department of the Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University where, as part of their course work, students began undertaking case studies on how to develop Faringdon to be more vibrant and successful. The Faringdon Community Bus AGM reported on another successful year for this volunteer-run service that provides the community with an invaluable life-line for those who could not otherwise get about. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the staff of the Faringdon Library in putting on inclusive activities for children and for the not-so-young. I was pleased to have the opportunity to read stories on various occasions and reprise my role as a wizard for the Junior School's Harry Potter Event for the visitors from Year Four.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of some of our organisations who have performed untiringly during the current crisis.

The Place, which is a partnership between several community groups and benefactors, has provided a much needed and appreciated service to families with young children throughout the year and, particularly, during lockdown. We have plans to develop the service, which is often at capacity, with improved facilities to enable more families to participate and better working conditions for the staff.

The Food Bank is a volunteer-run service provided by Churches Together in Faringdon, supported by White Horse Rotary and voluntary donations, and housed by the Town Council, previously in a small office in the Pump House, but now in the Jubilee Room to facilitate safe self-distancing. To use the Food Bank, you have to be referred by an organisation: e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau, Christians Against Poverty, Health Centres, District Nurses, Wantage Independent Advice Centre, The Place, Churches, Housing, Schools, and others who will issue a voucher to those in need. It is open on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 10 am until noon.

Faringdon Viral Kindness is a group of volunteers who have been helping to get prescriptions, food and other help for people in lockdown who are self-isolating.

Thank you to all of the above, not forgetting those who have made masks and other items from home, and all who have volunteered and helped others throughout this time of crisis.

Let's look forward to a time when we can meet again in person.

Cllr. Dr. Mike Wise, Faringdon Mayor.

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Finance and Audit Committee Report 2019/20

2019/20 should have been a year of consolidation and continued progress for the Council. Covid 19 has unsurprisingly changed our focus, the Council and particularly our staff have adapted to do all we can to help our residents through a difficult time. Services from the Food Bank to Citizens Advice have continued and we have had to close our play areas and venues temporarily.

The Finance Committee is responsible for recommending and overseeing the annual budget as well as all aspects of Staffing, Grants and the operation of the Information Centre. The committee works closely with the Town Clerk and Chief Financial Officer, Sally Thurston, who reports to the committee directly, and together we continue to review services and bear down on costs.

Finance:

The committee is responsible for the overall financial security of the Council, setting and monitoring the annual budget. For 2019/20 the budget was set at £375,941 giving a Band D council tax rate of £135.71.

We have been able to deliver all our commitments through the year and end the year with reserves at £444,138 This figure includes £130,327 in earmarked reserves.

An Asset Replacement fund is held as a ring-fenced reserve for the renewal or repair of assets. This is currently £36,296 held as part of the earmarked reserve.

No additional borrowing was required in the year and FTC continues to pay down PWLB loans which were taken out to refurbish the Pump Rooms and the Corn Exchange. Our debt currently stands at £91,400.

During the year, the committee has also:

- Maintained financial records and received clean audits.
- Maintained sufficient reserves to meet possible contingencies.
- Maintained and reviewed the Council's asset register.
- Continued to fund staffing time for the Tidy Team initiative.

Despite the understandable fall in income in the final quarter of the financial year we remain in a strong position to meet the challenges as we emerge from lockdown into a new normal.

Staffing:

Finance are responsible for overseeing the terms and conditions of council staff. We currently employ 13 members of staff both full and part time giving a full time equivalent of 8 staff. Staffing accounts for 61.6% of the annual budget and has increased following the town's decision to support The Place. FTC is a living wage employer with all staff currently on hourly rates on or above the living wage rate of £9.30/hr.

During the year we also oversee

- Annual Staff appraisal recommendations.



- Staff training requirements
- The Information Centre operation
- Staff recruitment and redundancy.

Grants:

The Grants subcommittee awarded grants to organisations providing benefit to Faringdon Residents.

Name of Organisation	Amount	Room Hire
Faringdon.org	£ 86.76	
Folly Trust	£ 3,500.00	
Folly Fest	£ 3,000.00	£ 1,020.00
Faringdon Rotary Festive Faringdon	£ 1,000.00	£200
Beer and Banger Fest 2017		£ 348.00
RBL		£ 129.00
Whist		£ 150.00
Farcycles	£1,335	£ 415.50
CAB	£3,000	
WIAC	£2,000	
Oxfordshire Ass. Blind	£1,000	
Total Grants Awarded 2019/20	£ 14,921.26	£ 2,262.50

The Committee also allocated monies for:

- Community Awards.
- The relocation of The Place family support to a new permanent home in the Corn Exchange.

Cllr. Steve Leniec, Chair of The Finance and Audit Committee

Cllr.leniec@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk

Planning and Highways Committee

The Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect our town. The Planning and Highways Committee meet to consider applications and make representations to the Vale of the White Horse District Council who are the planning authority and make the final decisions. We have held nine Planning Committee meetings since May 2019 plus a planning session within the Full Council meeting in April 2020. 49 planning applications have been discussed and considered.

The Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee is Cllr. Jane Boulton

Cllr.boulton@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk



Community and Partnerships Committee Report

Faringdon has a strong and vibrant community and we strongly believe that Faringdon Town Council should consider this in all its actions. The Community and Partnerships Committee reflects the relationships the council has forged with a wide variety of groups and the calendar of events that run throughout the year which makes Faringdon a unique place to live and work. Last year saw the council host a variety of events created to suit all sections of the community including The Community Litter Pick, Faringdon in Bloom, The Volunteers Day, and Play Day at Tuckers Park. Communication is key to facilitating positive change and placemaking and Faringdon Town Council has increased its outreach activities, using every opportunity to listen to the community. Councillor Surgeries have provided opportunities for a free flow of ideas and suggestions to feed back to the council, so that residents may help to shape the future of their town, leading to the improvement of the services the council offers the community. Alongside this, the more formal partnerships linking the council with community groups, see individual councillors working to support and strengthen them, with grants available for those groups who may need financial assistance to allow them to offer services to the community.

We believe that one of the council's greatest achievements is the work it has done to establish the Regent Cinema in the heart of the community. Over the last twelve months in particular, audiences have grown significantly, and special screenings were designed to suit every age group and need in Faringdon, from the most elderly residents, visiting the cinema from Ferendune Court Care Home, to the youngest in baby and toddler sessions; we applaud all staff and volunteers who make the Regent Cinema so successful.

Linking with the Cinema, as well as many other aspects of the council's outreach services, "The Place" has been at the centre of many of the council's community activities. Again the staff and volunteers that make this possible should be congratulated, knowing that the work they do is vital for young families throughout the town; the council has committed to do everything it can to support its growth and its ability to continue this vital work into the future.

More than ever this year we have to recognise the huge changes that we have experienced since the covid crisis began. So many of the council's working practices had to be modified, and events cancelled. However, we would like celebrate the fact that we have adapted to this change, and are readjusting to suit the new normal, having announced the community awards online, and adapting "Faringdon in Bloom" to a virtual event.

More importantly, the achievements of the council, with the support of its staff and individual councillors, has seen a shift to supporting the most vital community services. Since covid, the importance of "The Place" has been highlighted, as has the need for increased involvement with the Food Bank, and the assistance we have given to Faringdon Viral Kindness, all emphasising the need to work with the most vulnerable members of our community in this most uncertain of times.

The council's response to the community, and the work it has put in over the last few months in particular, show that we as a council have proven to be adaptable and resilient, and that as time goes on, we may be able to adapt our regular events to allow for social distancing and continued restrictions, and to reschedule the planned Volunteer and Health Days that had to be cancelled this year, but are probably more important than ever. If nothing else, covid has proven over the last few months we will find a way forward regardless of the obstacles in our path.

While this year will not be the year we were planning, it will still have the strong community feel that makes our town so special, and we would like thank all of Faringdon's residents for the cooperation, good sense and generosity of spirit that has been shown since the crisis began in March, and that we are sure will continue to grow and flourish into the coming months.

Cllr. Bethia Thomas, Chair of Communities and Partnerships Committee

Cllr.thomas@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk



Facilities Committee Report

The Facilities Committee holds delegated responsibility for managing the property the Town Council is responsible for. This includes: The Corn Exchange, The Old Town Hall, The Pump House, Elms Tennis Court, Tuckers Play area, All Saints Church Yard, the Town Park, Oakwood Park, Willes Place Triangle, the Portwell Pump seating area and some of the grit bins and bus shelters. It also oversees the Tidy Team, who work in response to community requests in areas that do not necessarily fall under Town Council responsibility but need attention.

5 meetings were held during 2019.20

In response to a letter from a member of the public, an audit of bus stops was undertaken and a bus shelter is being investigated to the stop on Marlborough Street, as well as some improvements to existing stops. We are considering ways to make the bus stops more attractive and nature friendly in the future as well as being as vandal-proof as possible.

We were very pleased to work in partnership with The Allotment Society that successfully took over management of the Town Council allotments and we anticipate the provision of some dedicated, easily accessible plots in the not too distant future.

Wifi provision in The Pump House has been upgraded.

Work has started to make the land in Willes Close into a public “wilderness” space that will encourage connection to nature, education and wellbeing. Audits are being carried out and volunteers with environmental experience encouraged to come forward. The public consultation is on-going.

Flags were flown from Town Council properties for Remembrance Day and Christmas street lights were changed to white this year, with red lights on the tree; thanks to all involved with decorating the town and Council property, Faringdon looked quite magical.

A drinking fountain has been installed in the Town Centre and bursaries provided for Town Centre properties for external redecoration.

New benches on the Old Town Hall apron have been approved and more planters are on their way soon. Funding for planting Southampton Street Car Park borders will result in a welcome sight for visitors and residents.

The first Faringdon Town Council App has been launched.

Mindful of the Climate Emergency declared, this committee has been scrutinising working practices with the intention of making future recommendations in line with saving energy and resources in a cost-effective way without compromising standards or safety.

I would like to thank the Town Clerk and the Staff Team for their continued hard work throughout the year, other Councillors that embarked on Working Parties and Julie Farmer for her support as Vice Chair.

Cllr. Kiera Bentley, Chair of the Facilities Committee

Cllr.bentley@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk



Reports from County and District Councillors Outside Organisations Grant Recipients

1. County Councillor Heathcoat
2. District Councillors Grant and Thomas
3. Faringdon Fire Station
4. Faringdon Folly Trust
5. Faringdon United Charities
6. Faringdon Community Bus
7. Faringdon Rotary
8. Faringdon Twinning Association
9. Royal British Legion
10. Farcycles
11. Beer Society
12. Wantage Independent Advice Centre
13. Citizens Advice Bureau
14. Oxfordshire Association for the Blind



1. Annual Report to the Faringdon Town Council from C/Cllr Judith Heathcoat – Deputy Leader Oxfordshire

County Council and Cabinet Member for Community Safety. I represent the Faringdon Division which is made up off Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth with Tubney and Little Coxwell

It has been an exceptionally busy year with District Council Election and the General Election and of course the Covid-19 pandemic. With the period of “purdah” brought about by the General Election this has meant that there has had to be a cascading of meetings which have been held post 8th December and into the New Year. The Government Settlement was very late and not received until just before Christmas which meant that officers and Cabinet Members have been working all over the holiday period. Since the Christmas period there has been the Covid-19 outbreak to be supported. The County Council staff have all be working from home, we have not furloughed any of our staff all services have been delivered 100%. Virtual meetings have taken place using Microsoft Office “Teams”. The people in Faringdon and the surrounding villages have been superb, helping and supporting each other and I should like to thank the volunteers of the Faringdon Division and the staff particularly of Faringdon Town Council who have worked tirelessly during this stressful time.

My role as Deputy Leader covers the following duties – Governance and internal management, HR & Industrial Relations (UNISON and FBU), policy co-ordination, Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning, the Prevent Agenda and Gypsy and Travellers and Customer Services. I have deputised for the Leader of OCC at a number of meetings eg:- attending meetings for CCN (LGA County Council Network) and MHCLG (Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government) where the SoS (Secretary of State) and Minister for Communities have been in attendance. This year the conversations have of course been focussed on Covid-19 and the administrative and financial state of local government. All areas of my work reaches out to the community and their benefit.

I have attended the LGA Conference – for Fire held in Brighton last year and this in Blackpool 3-day affair with some 300+ fire officers and councillors attending – the Covid episode just allow for this event to be held!

I have driven 6320 miles in pursuance of my County Councillor’s role but I have also shared lifts with officers to confirm the County’s “Green Credentials”. I have driven in an “electric” car to London where I laid a wreath at the Fire Cenotaph by St Pauls Cathedral. (OFRS has 9 electric cars). I attend a plethora of meetings locally, Parish/Town, Presentation Evenings at the Faringdon Academy, Faringdon Educational Activities Trust, Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee, the “Pump House project”, “The Place” of course the annual Civic Service and Remembrance Service. I had held, prior to the Covid outbreak monthly surgeries in the library from 1000-1130. My phone number is: 01367 241468 and email address is Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk should you wish to contact me.

The County Councillor’s Priority Fund of £15,000 per annum for the last two year has meant the I have been able to support many local organisations within the Division and this fund is to continue into the next financial year. This will mean that I will have been able to invest in the local community to a total of £45,000. The Fund continues this financial year with a further £15,000 per County Councillor and I have already been able to support local organisations with grants.

Much subject matter has been covered in the last twelve months all the work benefits the Faringdon people.

- Shared Lives Scheme – Carers are paid for this home-based role, which matches people who need additional support to be independent, with carers and their families. This is supported well in the Faringdon area.
- Various Safety messages have appeared in my name from OFRS in the media relating to, domestic fire safety, “Safe Drive, Stay Alive”. We should be very proud of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the men and women who serve at our own station in Faringdon. I organised an evening at the station for all of the Parish Councillors in the Division to attend a “Drill Night” this was well attended by all the local councillors.
- Plans of working more closely together with Health and Adult Social Care and the outcomes of this work will have good outcomes for the residents that I represent within the Faringdon Division.



- New Blue Badge criteria which now includes “invisible conditions”, such as deafness or emotional problems. I have led on the work within the County Council and Oxford City Council to stop “Blue Badge” Fraud. Blue Badges are so important for everyone and none more so that the folk for the Faringdon Division.
- Roadwork Permit Scheme aims for “less hassle” for road users – should a construction company “over run” on a programme of works the OCC can now fine these companies no more over-running running and all the inconvenience that this causes to local communities especially in Faringdon.
- OCC lead on a multi-agency group on new suicide prevention plan and this reaches out to all the people of Oxfordshire, young and old who may have mental health issues.
- Council is planning to reach zero carbon by 2030
- As the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Trading Standards sits within my remit and there has been covert “test purchasing” of the Sale of knives this is where young people escorted by our officers attempt to buy a knife. Oxfordshire Fire Cadets have been the volunteer test purchasers. This has led to the successful prosecution of some and thus keeps our young people safe.
- OVO Energy Women’s Tour the OCC with OFRS officers led on this in close liaison with the Districts. It was a super day. I watched the cycle ride from our fire station and was really proud of what the officers had achieved to make this event so successful. Faringdon was on the TV local news.
- Social Workers “County Lines” risk – this is the use by gangs of young people to act as couriers in the movement and delivery of hard drugs. This was a TV programme on the BBC showing the work at OCC is doing. This work keeps the young people in our town and villages safer.
- “Summer of road surfacing – more than half a million square meters – more than 83km received a “surface dressing” at a cost of some £3.5m this included roads within the Faringdon Division of course – Gloucester Street and Marlborough Street and Park Road will be attended to during 2020-21.
- Zero-emission plan for transport in Oxford.
- “Living Longer, Living Better: Oxfordshire’s Older People’s Strategy
- Faringdon Town Council made an application for “The Place” and this was support by me as the local member and a grant of £11,300 was approved by Cabinet.
- Pilot to restrict traffic outside schools and to also educate those collecting students should not leave their car engines running.
- An older peoples’ strategy has been approved – “Living longer, Living Better – this is work between the County and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- I am the Deputy Chairman of Thames Valley Fire Control Service and soon to become Chairman – this is collaborative work with Oxfordshire, Royal Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Fire Services – we lead the way in having a central control room with “state of the art” equipment.
- Graphene enhanced asphalt road trial rolls out in the County – a new substance that could help more roads to remain pothole free.
- Annual Fire and Police target for safe drive – 5,000 6th formers and college students from across the county attended a special event in recently to learn about the devastating impact of being involved in a car crash.
- I am furthering plans to update the Faringdon library using S106 monies and also in discussion with officers to use the S106 monies for social services for adults in Faringdon .
- Trading Standards have been working on the traders selling counterfeit tobacco and counterfeit alcohol. There have been arrests and court cases have been fought successfully.

Judith
 C/Cllr Faringdon Division
 Cabinet Member – Community Safety
 Deputy Leader – Oxfordshire County Council
 June 2020



2. District Councillor Annual Report, David Grant & Bethia Thomas

When we were elected just over a year ago, we committed ourselves to working in a strong and close partnership with Faringdon Town Council. As Bethia holds a seat on both town and district councils she hopes that a stronger bond has been forged between the two, with David working in planning to open communications between the two councils.

Planning is possibly the most significant area where the two councils can influence the look and feel of the town and we have supported the town council in its efforts to uphold the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan wherever possible. Early on, our new council adopted the local plan for the Vale devised by the previous administration. This did not have the positive policies for our environment and our communities we aspire to – we are already working on new plans for these – but adopting it protected Faringdon from damaging speculative development. Wherever possible, we are working towards establishing greater links with residents and hoping to create community liaison groups which may give residents a greater opportunity to input into the future of major developments in the town.

Looking back over the year, we can see other areas of overlap. It has been great to see the development of Southampton Street Car Park, a joint project with the Public Realm Team at Vale, Faringdon Town Council and community groups to improve look of the area, replanting the beds and installing the bicycle maintenance station. We would like to strengthen this relationship, working together wherever possible to improve the look and feel of town in joint projects such as this.

The covid crisis has provided us all with a variety of obstacles to overcome, and we believe that by working together we have been able to support each other, working in partnership to establish Faringdon Viral Kindness and supporting our more vulnerable residents and businesses throughout lockdown. By establishing this partnership, we have been able to identify other opportunities to work together and hope to make more links with The Place to assist vulnerable families in Faringdon.

Unfortunately, the government support promised so far to already cash-strapped councils does not cover our lost revenues, with budgets already tight, we want to engage with government to help them understand the work district councils do for their local communities and find sustainable ways forward.

As lockdown measures relax, we look forward to seeing the town reopen and businesses get back to a “new normal”. We will be doing our utmost to promote a safe and healthy return to shopping locally, and encourage our community to return to our historic town centre. While we are uncertain of what the future may hold, we are keen to listen and act on the concerns and ideas of both the council and residents in shaping our town and community. We know this is an opportunity for great change and, rather than returning to business as usual, we seek to build a brighter, more vibrant and green future that works for everybody.



3. 2020 Brief Report from Faringdon Fire Station – By Watch Manager Becky Rimmer

Incident to date

Since our last report April 2018, Faringdon have attended 186 Incidents consisting of:

Alarms actuating at Residential and Domestic Properties.

Road Traffic collision

Special service calls i.e. lock in-outs, Animal Rescues,

Primary Fires i.e. House Fires

Secondary Fires i.e.: Bin Fires, Fire in the open.

Chimney Fires

Over the Boarder incidents, assisting crews from Wiltshire and Gloucestershire

Several major Incidents that we have helped assist with other emergency services, Police and Ambulance.

In addition, prior to covid -19, the station maintained its weekly training sessions along with annual refresher training days on our required core skills these include: Breathing Apparatus, Road Traffic Collisions, Working at Height, Water Rescues and other Life critical training. Unfortunately, during this lockdown period, we have had to suspend all practical training and only attend operational emergencies. This was achieved by sticking to the government guidance, maintaining the 2m distance where practicable and the wearing of extra PPE. Initially it was a challenge, but thankfully during the first stages of lockdown emergency incidents in the area did decrease.

We are now planning a return to weekly training, albeit in smaller groups to minimise the risk where possible.

Station Support

Our Station Support Officer Watch Manager Vince Sturt has been at the station for just over a year now and continues his role for Recruitment, Training, Fire Protection and community safety - Safe and well visits as well as being operational. Although since the lockdown Vince had been self-isolating so has not been at the station for a while. He will be returning for a few days a week so if you require any information, you can get in touch with him on 07775 827260 or email vince.sturt@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Recruiting

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service are recruiting for 'On Call' personnel over the age of 18years. We at Faringdon have had a good intake on numbers, to 17 personnel. However, we are looking for day and weekend cover still. If you or anyone you know off that would be interested in becoming a Firefighter, please get in contact with us at the Fire Station on 01367 240134, or you can visit the station on Wednesday's evenings from 19:00-21:00.

Our website (see below) will give you all the information you will need to know about the role of a firefighter and the recruitment process www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oncallfirefighter

Community Responding

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and South-Central Ambulance Service are still in partnership, training fire fighters as IEC (Immediate Emergency Care) so we can support and attend cardiac arrest patients. Through Covid-19 a few of our operational firefighter from Oxfordshire were seconded to assist SCAS for 4 weeks, giving them the help and support to attend emergency care through those unprecedented times.

Update on 365 Alive.

365alive is Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's vision to ensure that we are working every day to save and improve the lives of people across Oxfordshire.

The vision is supported by Road Safety, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning and Gypsy and Travellers Services.



As Oxfordshire thrives we anticipate a significant change in three key areas. There will be more homes, this will support new workplaces and miles travelled will increase in line with this growth. We have recognised that:

Extra people travelling more miles on our roads mean that we will see an increase in the risk of Road Traffic Collisions.

The growth in the number of home and workplaces built means that we will see an increased risk in the number of domestic and commercial fires.

The expanding and increasingly ageing population means that we will see an increase for an immediate medical response.

What do we want to achieve?

The vision will run for 6 years from 2016 to 2022, in this time we would like to achieve



For details on 365alive, please visit our website www.365alive.co.uk

Smoke Alarms

As part of our role, we were going out into the community to deliver fire safety talks and fitting smoke alarms, but due to covid-19 we had to cancel all visits. We are waiting on further guidance as to when we can re arrange and continue with our visits.

If anyone would like information on fire safety, then please get in contact with us on 08000 325999 or visit our website on www.365alive.co.uk



4. Faringdon Folly Tower Trust

On behalf of the Folly Team and our loyal band of volunteers, we would like to thank the Town Council for awarding us a grant in March 2019 in recognition of the importance of the Folly to the town. The grant was used to fund the essential work to reduce the height of trees around the tower, replace the Civil War cannon and refurbish some of the other "things to find" in the woodland.

We are coming to terms with the fact that we will not be able to open the tower to the public for the rest of this year. This was a major source of our funding - £7,670 last year. Unfortunately, we have to spend at least £6,000 this year to fund essential safety work in the tower and woodland, utilities, insurance (£2,066), and to replace the Christmas light (£1,000). We will continue our efforts to search for opportunities to apply for other grants.

We are delighted to get so much positive feedback on the Folly Winter light and *many thanks to Peter White for doing this for the past 20 years!*

During last year's 16 open days (April to end of October) we had 3,190 visitors climbing the Folly Tower and a survey indicated that

- 20% were from in and around Faringdon
- 20% lived under 10 miles
- 50% 10 to 20 miles
- 10% over 20 miles

It was interesting to learn that 70% of visitors were making their first visit and we were surprised that 60% had travelled more than 10 miles. It is unfortunate that this all happens on Sundays and, except for pubs and hotels, there is very little for them to do in the town.

We are aware that a many of our team have taken care of the folly for the past 15 years and we need to find new volunteers to *manage and run the Folly Tower and Woodland into the future*. Please get in touch if you are able to help.



5. **FARINGDON UNITED CHARITY**

Clerk's Office:

Bunting & Co,
Brunel House,
Volunteer Way,
Faringdon,
Oxon,
SN7 7YR
Tel: 01367 243789



REPORT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2020

During the last year, the Charity has continued to provide grants to organisations, families and individuals in cases of extreme need within Faringdon, Littleworth and Little Coxwell.

During the year ended 31st March 2020, £17,934 was paid out in grants with the largest grant to any one organization or individual being £2000. Organisations helped included Bromsgrove Day Centre, the Farcycles, Faringdon schools, Homestart and The Place.

Where organisations are based outside of the area of benefit a grant is given only where Faringdon and district residents are helped. Help was also given to individuals and families in need in Faringdon.

The Trustees expect that the income receivable from investments and royalties together with rents from the letting of agricultural land will continue to cover all the grants and costs of administration of the Charity in the coming year.

During the last few weeks the charity has completed the sale of development land adjoining Highworth Road. The proceeds of the sale are now invested on a long-term basis and will, in due course, increase the ability of the charity to provide support to the local community.

The charity, which is currently an Unincorporated Charity, will now complete it's application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This will provide greater protection for trustees with increasing responsibilities.

The Chairman of the Trustees is Mr David Keeling and the committee includes three other permanent Trustees. Other Trustees are the Vicar of All Saints Church, Faringdon and two representatives from the Town Council. The parishes of Littleworth and Little Coxwell each have their own representative on the committee.

The charity works in liaison with health care workers, social workers, church workers, local schools, Citizens Advice Bureau, national charities, youth organisations and early learning centres as well as other voluntary bodies in the town.

Applications for grants or requests for further information should be made in writing c/o Mrs V J Checkley, Clerk to the Trustees, Bunting & Co, Brunel House Volunteer Way, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7YR. There is an application form and contact details on the website www.faringdonunitedcharities.co.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY 237040



6.

FCB

Faringdon Community Bus 61



The Faringdon Community Bus has continued to run each weekday during the last year until the outbreak of Coronavirus, providing a valuable service mainly to the more elderly members of Faringdon to enable them to do their shopping and get to the medical centre independently and also to get some children to school. The numbers of people using the service has remained fairly constant but we would always be pleased to see more.

During the year we have changed the route to incorporate Swan Lane and London Street in order primarily, to serve the residents of Eastfield Court and Dove Court. We continue to go to the Great Coxwell Roundabout in the hope that we will attract custom from the two new estates in Coxwell Road. We are always open to suggestions as to how we might vary the service in order to serve areas not currently visited by the bus.

The bus is managed and driven by volunteer drivers and half of these are now over 70 and therefore during this pandemic the service has only been able to continue to run with the younger drivers being willing to drive. As a result the service has only been able to run for 2 days a week. It is hoped that as the restrictions are lifted we will be able to revert to a full 5 day a week service.

FCB also operates outings on weekday afternoons to places such as Witney, Burford and various garden centres. These continue to be popular and will be recommenced once the present restrictions are lifted.

If you need information about the bus or would be interested in becoming a driver, please contact any of our drivers or visit the FCB web site



7. Rotary Club of Faringdon & District- Annual Report for Faringdon Town Council – ref grant of £1000 towards Festive Faringdon

The Rotary Club of Faringdon and District , as in many years before, for 2019, organised the Festive Faringdon event, a great celebration for the whole of the local community to enjoy, lights, entertainment, music, funfair, food and drink and by no means least, Thomas and Father Christmas. The stewarding of the event was bolstered by volunteers from the Town Council and local residents.

The £1000 grant given to Rotary goes somewhat towards the cost of putting on the event, but the real cost is shown in the table below, £3648. The unseen contribution of over 200 volunteer hours, spent by individuals, not only during the day but before and after the event.

Event though the event takes time and money to put on, the Rotary Club of Faringdon & district enjoy doing this for the community.

Festive Faringdon 2020 may be very different, Covid raises many questions, will government rules allow the event to happen, where will the finance come from, as due to Covid, our ability to raise monies from our usual sources has been stopped in its tracks since March As an organisation with an average age of 70+ will it be appropriate for us to mingle in amongst crowds. The White Horse Rotary Group, which is part of our organisation in Faringdon, who have a much younger membership will I'm sure help out.

The table below also itemises the donations we have made within and to help the community over the past twelve months.

Glyn James

President 2019-2020

Rotary Club of Faringdon & District

DONATIONS 2019 - 2020

Motor Neurone Donation	250
Royal British Legion Wreaths	100
Dementia Adventure	1350
Longworth Pre School	500
Helen House	1060
William Thorne	250
Michael Brockie Head Trauma Unit	500
Water Aid	500
CK Office Jubilee Chairs Hinton Walrus day centre	859
Ellen Busby Ferundune Entertainment (6 monthly payment)	300
Expenses Festive Faringdon	2274
Christmas Trees Total Cost	1374
Donation Faringdon Food Bank	1000
Donation Shrivenham Food Bank	250
Ferundune Ipads for Skype	100



FARINGDON TWINNING ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION DU JUMELAGE



FARINGDON - LE MÊLE SUR SARTHE



8. 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

With the impending 30th Anniversary of Faringdon's Twinning with Le Mele in 2020, the calendar year of 2019 was relatively quiet. We just had one family visit, which was Faringdon visiting le Mele at the end of October. A full coach of local people including many new members made the most of a rather damp weekend with a sports-themed Friday – badminton and tennis were competitive but very friendly.



Others enjoyed a long walk along the drove byways in the beautiful

countryside. As always, the Saturday evening party, aided by the young people of le Mele, gave a fitting finale with many toasts of friendship, with vows to remain closely linked despite Brexit looming!

July 2019

hosting 10 French children and their 2 with local families for a week, with a full programme of excursions and Four local children and one leader to France with them for the return visit. thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and to go again (. . . sadly of course, that been possible).

During the year we have had various social activities, including two French Film Nights and a Winter Dinner at Sadlers. Our Quiz Night was cancelled as it was scheduled just as the pandemic hit.

Part of the reason 2019 was quiet was the anticipation of celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Twinning in 2020 in both towns (May and August), and funds and energy were being saved. It goes without saying, all plans for 2020 have had to be postponed until 2021.

We are very grateful that Faringdon Town Council have been generous in their support of Twinning, with grants to support the Youth Exchange, and to help with hospitality for the 30th Anniversary. The funds will be rolled over for these events next year (hopefully).

David Williamson

Chair, Faringdon Twinning Association



saw us
leaders

activities.
travelled
All
planned
has not



9. The Faringdon Branch of the Royal British Legion

The Faringdon Branch of the Royal British Legion are grateful to the Faringdon Town Council for their support in the way of a Grant towards the use of the Corn Exchange, for its Annual Festival of Remembrance rehearsal and event.

This Festival in aid of the Poppy Appeal goes towards the work of the R.B.L. in helping to sustain and help veterans and their families, and present day military personnel, who need support for their contributions towards the lives we live today (the present 'climate' excluded). Without the courage of so many who gave their lives and still do, and those injured during military wars, we have so much to be thankful for and appreciate all they gave and still do.

The Poppy Appeal is a well worthy cause and one we hope to support with our local efforts.



FARCYCLES LIMITED

Enabling cycling to thrive in our community



10. 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has been one of many achievements for Farcycles, the Faringdon-based cycling organisation.

Undoubtedly the highlight has been the building of the Faringdon Cycle Park, with the official opening by Mayor Mike Wise and other dignitaries in July 2019. Our biggest benefactor was the European Union with a LEADER grant for Rural



Development, but we are most grateful to Faringdon Town Council, who have been so very supportive every step of the way – from letters of support for the project in the early days and putting forward the planning application, to financial help with a Youth Grant for the rubberised beginners area, and a generous Town Grant including free use of the Corn Exchange for our Music Mayhem fund-raising weekend. To see a video of the making of the

Cycle Park, click [here](#)

The Cycle Park involved many local people in its conception, design and implementation. Artists painted the storage container and we had valuable help from horticulture experts and local builders, as well as numerous volunteer working parties. We also now have a bank of qualified trainers to teach children and adults, from beginners through to road safety, to leading rides. We have run 4 teaching weeks during school holidays which have proved immensely popular, families travelling significant distances to avail themselves of the facilities. Our Sunday morning teaching sessions had just re-started when the pandemic hit. During the lockdown, the Cycle Park has been treated as an 'open space' where families can exercise while maintaining social distancing.



which with distances facilities. sessions pandemic Cycle Park space'

Our regular Saturday rides are of course now suspended, but were becoming ever more popular, with over 200 on our email circulation list.

Typically, 30-40 would choose between the 3 different length routes, all supported with a leader. We have had younger riders joining us as well, which is encouraging for the future.



over 200 on list. choose different supported have had us as well, for the



During 2019 we had a significant number of beginner and less confident riders, and families, come to our Sunday morning rides, which we see as an introduction to group riding in our beautiful local countryside. There has been a new enthusiasm for cycling during the lockdown, and we are confident that local cycling will flourish. Farcycles was heavily involved in 'Turning the Town Pink' in June 2019 for the International Women's Bike Race which passed through Faringdon.

Our annual 'Tour de Farcycles' sportive brings about 200 riders to the town, with



family-friendly through to seriously challenging routes in our glorious countryside. The whole event is run by volunteers from the club and the surplus goes to funding local cycling projects.

OUR VISION

Our vision is of a less car-dependent society, for all the well-established reasons of personal physical and mental health, reduced air pollution and climate change. We continue to press for improved infrastructure to make it easier and safer to get around the town by bicycle:

- The Faringdon Cycle Network, which is awaiting permissions from District and County councils, to link the schools, town centre, health centre and the sports park.
- We are lobbying for a shared use cycle path along Park Road to make it safe to cycle to the shops along there.
- Progress towards a 20mph zone in the Town Centre is being made.
- A 'Bike Hub' is being created in the Southampton St Car Park with a Bike Repair Station (funded by District Council) and local walking/cycling maps.

Farcycles became a Charity, registered by the Charity Commission, in January 2020.

Thank you once again to Faringdon Town Council for your support.

David Williamson, Gavin Hopkins, Nigel Wilkinson, Richard Glazer
Directors, Farcycles Ltd
Registered Charity 1186837



11. Faringdon Beer Society Bangers and Beer Festival 2019

This is the fifth year that the Faringdon Bangers and Beer festival has taken place. It is a community event organised by a sub committee of the Faringdon Beer Society, held on the last Friday and Saturday of September. It features Local beers and Cider, Sausages made, cooked and served by the boys from Pat Thomas (Faringdons butcher) along with an eclectic mix of music. In 2017 the event made an overall loss and was in doubt if it would continue in 2018. The offer of generous grant of £400 from the Town council allowed us to put on the event again without suffering a further loss. This we did and made a small profit at the event. As the Society is a non-profit organisation this profit was donated to two local charities, The PumpHouse Project and The Place. The success of 2018's event kept us enthused to run the event again in 2019, our fifth year. On approaching the Town council for a grant supporting our 2019 event it was (correctly) deemed to be inappropriate to qualify for a grant as we had declared that profits from the event would be donated to charities that the Town council already supported. It was agreed that in line with the Town Council Grant policy we could apply for Assistance in Kind. This was approved and took the form of Venue hire and associated costs at Zero charge. This generous support allowed us to organise the 2019 event with a greatly reduced financial risk. The Fifth Faringdon Bangers and Beer festival was a resounding success. The Corn Exchange was full to capacity by late afternoon, with members of the public and performers waiting outside for numbers to reduce so they could enter the hall. A number of local businesses sponsored barrels of beer and were promoted through our social media and at the event. The Pumphouse project supported the Real Ale offerings with their popular "Pimped Prosecco". On the music front, Al Cane starred with his "Citizen Cane" DJ support over the weekend as did Dave Porter with his expertise in maintaining the music levels and fidelity for the bands that were performing. Many fantastic positive comments were received over the weekend and the weeks following the event. Negative feedback was received too. Quote "I was not impressed, I had to wait outside because the venue was full". Or is that a back handed positive one? We managed to raise enough funds from the beer and bar sales to donate £1600.00 to The Pumphouse project and to The Place. Two of Faringdon's well deserving charities. Despite the Covid-19 lockdown, plans are underway for the 2020 event. The Town Council have offered assistance in kind on the same basis as last year. A final decision the event will go ahead will be made in the coming months. Thank you again Faringdon Town Council for your support and confidence in our ability to deliver.

Mark Blatch Faringdon Beer Society



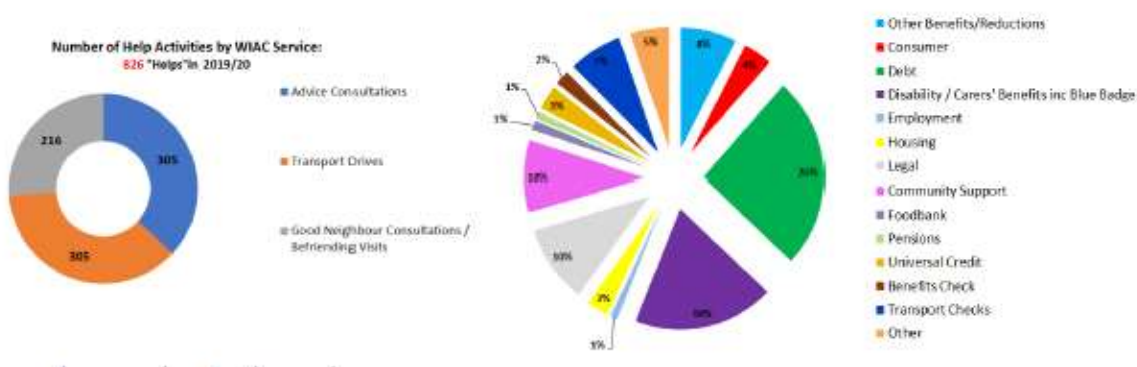
12. Wantage Independent Advice Centre: Report for the Town Council for the year 2019/20 In the Vale, For the Vale

Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC) would like to thank Faringdon Town Council for the £2,000 grant provided for the financial year 2019/20. The Management Committee and all of our volunteers very much consider our service reach to be "In the Vale, For the Vale".

The funding from the grant award contributes to the services across all three of the WIAC work-streams: Advice, Transport and the Good Neighbour scheme. The WIAC believes that the capability to entwine two or even three of our services together is a great benefit to the community and allows for a real tailoring, to suit each client's needs, to take place.

Our accounts for the financial year ending March 31st 2020 are in the process of being independently examined by a local firm of accountants and although there has been a slight delay in this exercise due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it is our intention to publish these in line with Charity Commission guidelines later this summer. It will be of no surprise that our charity's Annual General Meeting planned for mid-June has been postponed but it will be rearranged and members of the public are always welcome to attend. The WIAC's annual report is currently in draft form but that will be widely circulated in both hard and soft copies once completed.

In the last 12 months, WIAC has undertaken **826** help activities for the Faringdon community and its residents.



In comparison to the previous year this means an overall increase of **24%** in terms of the level of help activities provided, which includes a rise in Advice Consultations from 252 to 305 and a more than doubling in the number of Good Neighbour visits and consultations; with a new annual high of 216 being recorded. There has been no easing in the demand for our debt counselling and money advice assistance, with a quarter of the advice required by local residents being related to this topic. Our volunteers remain steadfast in their approach which is holistic in nature. The aim is not to focus purely on the immediate issue but to make plans to address the cause of the debt and where at all possible to sow the seeds regarding the prevention of reoccurrence. It is immensely gratifying for the volunteers when they receive feedback on how the clients have brought about positive change and how this in turn improves their general wellbeing. WIAC continues to work closely with the White Horse Medical practice, making and receiving referrals across the complete set of services. This collaboration targets the overall welfare of residents. Our charity is grateful for the support from the nominated Town Council representative, Kimberley Morgan, who has been a member of the WIAC Management Committee throughout the last year. The opportunity to host regular out-reach advice sessions at The Pump House is appreciated as is the ability to make use of the Council's computer, printer and telephone equipment.

Contact: help@wantageadvice.org.uk

16 Market Place
Wantage
Oxfordshire
OX12 8AE
01235 765348



13. Citizens advice, South and Vale REPORT 2019/20 JUNE 2020

Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale have been providing a successful drop in and appointment service at the Faringdon Pump House now for several years.

Since October 2018, we have also been operating a drop in and appointment service at White Horse Medical Practice. This service has also been a success.

Due to the increase in client numbers, I increased the service by adding another adviser to the Pump House (am) and in the White Horse Medical Practice in November 2019.

Client numbers for Faringdon have been rising steadily over the past 3 years:

Greater Faringdon	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Client numbers	286	340	376

These numbers are based on a *unique monthly client count*. That means adding up the number of unique clients who visit us each month to calculate the number for the year. This is the best measure of workload. However, some clients attend several times over a year. The number of unique clients *each year* is a lower figure (208 for 2019/20).

Age: the most prevalent age group amongst Faringdon clients are those aged 30-34, by quite a large margin.

Gender: nearly twice as many women (66%) as men (34%) visit us.

Health and disability: Over half our Faringdon clients (54%) say they are disabled or have a long term health concern.

Main issues: The main issues Faringdon clients bring to us in order are:

- Benefits including Universal Credit
- Debt
- Employment
- Housing
- Family relationships

The top item re benefits was making an initial claim for Universal Credit. **Covid-19** Since late March 2020, all our advice centres and outreaches have been closed. We have equipped 90 of our staff and volunteers to operate our Adviceline service from home. Top issues during this period have been Universal credit applications, employment, and Coronavirus.

Joseph Mailler Advice Services Manager Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale Abbey House
Abbey Close Abingdon OX14 3JD joseph.mailler@osavcab.org.uk Tel: 01235 364811





14. Support for people living with a visual impairment in Faringdon

OAB supports thousands of people a year who are living with any form of visual impairment. We are extremely grateful for the generous grant from Faringdon Town Council to be able to carry out our core service of information and advice over the telephone.

January – March 2020

From January to March OAB have been operating as normal providing our core services of:

- Information & Advice
- Equipment demonstration, loan and purchase from our dedicated resource centre in Oxford
- Technology Training in person and over the phone
- Social activities and coffee mornings
- Children and Young People's Activities
- Counselling

March to June

Due to the coronavirus outbreak like many organisations we have had to postpone and cancel many events and stop all our face-to-face services. We have also had to respond to the fact that many of our visually impaired clients are isolated and vulnerable at this time. Being visually impaired can be isolating at the best of times, with many relying on human contact for essential tasks, like shopping and regular exercise. All our staff have been working from home and proactively contacting people across the county, we have:

- Telephoned people to make sure they are well supported in their community, have provisions and are connected with people that can support them.

Registered office: Bradbury Lodge Gordon Woodward Way Oxford, OX1 4XL Tel: 01865 725595
www.oxeyes.org.uk



Oxfordshire Association for the Blind is registered as a charity in England and Wales No. 1140556 and as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 07465300. **Patron:** The Rt. Hon. The Countess of Macclesfield

