



# Faringdon Town Council

## Annual Report

### 2021/2022



[www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)



# The Town Council did many things for the town in 2021/22 including:

- Community Venues: Corn Exchange, Pump House and Old Town Hall
- Community Parks: Oakwood play area, Tucker Park, Town park
- Information Centre
- Christmas Lights
- Allotments
- Bus shelters
- Maintenance for All Saints' Church Yard
- Community Cinema
- Community Awards
- Market Place benches
- Water Fountain
- Artist of the Month at Information Centre
- Window box & hanging basket grants
- Town centre property façade decorating grants
- New swing in Oakwood Park
- Lord Berners exhibition
- Faringdon Museum
- Faringdon Virtual Open Gardens
- Tidy Team
- Big Green Day
- Mayor's Summer Fun Market
- Community Champion course
- Community Larder
- Charity Christmas cards
- Christmas market
- Flowers for the War Memorial
- Bollards community art project
- Artweeks exhibition in OTH
- Telephone box library
- Old Town Hall refurbishment
- Purchase of 2 x speed indicator devices
- Consultation on changes to on-street parking
- Civic Service
- Pump House: new screen & audio equipment
- Tuckers Park: new bins





**We worked in partnership with Rotary, Royal British legion and Farcycles to provide the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations**

Which included: Bookmarks for children, Vintage Tea Dance, Beacon lighting, floodlighting buildings, RBL Parade, Farcycles Vintage & Family Bike Rides, Rotary's Picnic in the Park, Business Jubilee celebration packs and Street party celebration packs.

A big thank you to everyone who helped and attended!

**We also worked in partnership to provide:**

The Place, Saturday markets, refurbishment of the Southampton Street Carpark, Advice sessions in the Pump House from CAB, Twinning with Königstein in Germany, Fitness project in Town Park, The Wilderness, Faringdon Junior Youth Club, Faringdon Play and Activity Day, to find funding to resurface Elm's tennis court, Better Ways to School first two phases, Remembrance Parade

**Financial assistance was provided for:**

Folk Weekend, Faringdon Rugby Club floodlights, Faringdon Folly Trust, Faringdon Football Club mowing equipment, Folly Fest, The Pump House Project and COGs, Citizens Advice, Root & Branch, Duke of Edinburgh Award , Maymessy, Be Free Young Carers, Vale Community Impact, Faringdon Play & Activity Day, Earth and Faith 'Faringdon Branches Out' treecampaign, Friends of Wilderness Benches, Faringdon.org, Ox. Play Association Youth Club, Ox. Play Association Open Street





# Your Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Faringdon

At the Annual Meeting of Council on Monday 9th May Cllr. Kiera Bentley was re-elected as Mayor. Cllr. Liz Swallow was re-elected as Deputy Mayor and will support Cllr. Bentley in her duties.

You can contact the Mayor or Deputy via email

[cllr.bentley@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.bentley@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)

[cllr.swallow@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.swallow@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)

If you would like the Mayor or Deputy at your event please contact Liz Billson at [liz@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:liz@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk) or 01367 240281



## Mayors Annual Address

It is an honour and privilege to take up the chain of office as Mayor of Faringdon. We really do need more women in politics!

My thanks must go to my fellow Councillors, the council staff and the people of Faringdon who make the community what it is. In particular Sally Thurston, our Town Clerk, for her endless patience and hard work keeping us in order and importantly, on time, which may seem like an endless task.

My charity last year was The Wilderness and I have supported the group in a personal capacity as well as wearing my chain whether it be making mulled wine and mince pies for donations on Boxing Day or escorting scout groups through the under growth, I have thoroughly enjoyed watching their enthusiasm and knowledge blossom as they prepare to have more of a public presence and share the wonderfully eco diverse space with the wider public. This year my chosen charity is the Folly Trust which is such an icon for Faringdon and enjoyed and appreciated by so many from far and wide as well as the local community.

The Town Councillors continue to keep us on our toes with ideas and requests for using our money more carefully and of course ways to use our resources more imaginatively. Whether that be supporting initiatives such as The Place with a new venue or running the very successful community larder

This year has been a challenge for many in the town and there have been lots of highlights including the opening of high profile businesses such as The Narrows, Las Chicas and Floyd's Grill. And how can I not mention our lovely Old Town Hall that was shrouded in scaffolding for all that time, which now glows in the sunshine. We can rightly be very proud of our town centre.

As well as chairing the regular Town Council meetings and supporting the chairs of other committees where necessary I am the representative and Chair of Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils and delighted to gloat in Faringdon's achievement to be the first Council in Oxfordshire to be awarded the Gold Standard by National Association of Local Councils.

My 2021 year started with a great event at Sudbury House – The Gin Festival run by Gin To My Tonic. I was also delighted to share birthday celebrations with our older Faringdon residents. I've eaten a lot of cake this year it seems! Who can forget the Mayor's end of Summer event? What a glorious day we had with children playing in the street and families enjoying time doing .... Well, nothing, just sharing time and experiences together, something we plan to repeat again this year. Christmas in Faringdon is always a treat with our fabulous tree and lights, thanks to our sponsors and of course Rotary Club. I attended many AGMs of our wonderful community groups including the Rugby Club and now appear to be the Chair of the Women's Rugby for the Club. I have supported the Busking initiative in the town centre and live music that helps our town bringing energy and a great vibe to the market. The music was also playing when we launch our beautiful new artistic bollards at the beginning of Art Weeks in May 2022, which also saw a wonderful exhibition in toe Old Town Hall.

I cannot finish my address for 2021 without acknowledging the sad loss of Rodney Benson who did so much for fundraising in the community and Mairead Boyce who founded the food bank and I would like to pay tribute to their enormous efforts in our community. They will be greatly missed.

I look forward to working with you all again this year, I can only hope that you feel the same!



Cllr. Kiera Bentley, Faringdon Mayor  
[cllr.bentley@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.bentley@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)



# Faringdon's elected council 2019 - 2023



Cllr. Kiera Bentley  
Town Mayor



Cllr. Liz Swallow  
Deputy Mayor



Cllr. Stephen Smith



Cllr. Jane Boulton



Cllr. Rosalind Burns



Cllr. Peter Castle



Cllr. James Famakin



Cllr. Angela Finn



Cllr. Steve Leniec



Cllr. Lucy Martin



Cllr. Kimberly Morgan



Cllr. Bethia Thomas



Cllr. Gene Webb



Cllr. Mike Wise

## Faringdon Town Council Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

### Vision

Our vision for Faringdon is of a sustainable town that meets the needs of its residents

### Mission

Our aims are to provide a representative voice for the community and offer practical support to maintain the sustainable economic and social wellbeing of the town.

### Strategic Objectives

#### People

- To promote a sense of community.
- To consult and communicate widely and encourage greater public participation.
- To provide services and facilities which reflect the identified needs of the community.

#### Space

- To improve the appearance of Faringdon, whilst celebrating its heritage
- To make the Town an attractive place in which to live and work
- To work in partnership, with others, to facilitate sustainable tourism and economic development.

#### Money

- To promote employment opportunities for local people.
- To provide services which are efficient, effective and economic.
- Ensure that council grants are used to the benefit of Faringdon residents.

# Town Council Staff

Faringdon Town Council would like to thank Marzia Sellitti, former Deputy Town Clerk and Jo King former Town Clerk's Assistant who left in 2021, for all their work for the Council and wish them well. We are delighted to announce we have recruited four new members of staff:

Margaret Nairne - Town Clerk's Assistant  
Liza Cooper - Marketing and Community Officer  
Sarah Johnson - Services and Facilities Officer  
Rachel Williams - Information Centre Assistant

#### Staff Contacts

Sally Thurston	Town Clerk	01367240281	<a href="mailto:sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Liza Cooper	Marketing & Community Officer	01367 240281	<a href="mailto:liza@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">liza@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Sarah Johnson	Services and Facilities Officer	01367 240281	<a href="mailto:sarah@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">sarah@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Adele Vincent	Information Centre Manager	01367240281	<a href="mailto:adele@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">adele@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Liz Billson	Assistant Town Clerk	01367240281	<a href="mailto:liz@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">liz@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Margaret Nairne	Town Clerk's Assistant	01367240281	<a href="mailto:margaret@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">margaret@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Belinda Harrison	Information Assistant / H & S Admin	01367240281	<a href="mailto:admin@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">admin@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Billie Hayter	Information Assistant / Cinema Supervisor	01367240281	<a href="mailto:regentcinema@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">regentcinema@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Shirley Merchant	Information Assistant	01367240281	<a href="mailto:events@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">events@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Jane Mountayn	Information Assistant	01367240281	<a href="mailto:regentcinema@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">regentcinema@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Vinni Stepp	Town Ranger	01367240281	<a href="mailto:office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>
Gary Jackson	Leisure Services Assistant	01367240281	<a href="mailto:office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a>

**If you have any thoughts or ideas please contact us -  
[office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)**

# Faringdon Town Council has four main committees that look after the day to day business of Council.

## Planning and Highways Report



Land at Volunteer Way: Originally designated as Commercial use. Overturned by Local Planners despite objections from FTC.

Biodiversity: positively encourage biodiversity across the parish especially when concerned with new developments.

Land South Of Park Road

- 10 bat boxes, 10 bird boxes on buildings
- New school currently being built on the site. The original plans have been amended from conventional boilers for heating to a more sustainable system.

Rogers Concrete: this was originally intended for commercial development and was the only designated site left in Faringdon. Despite our objections this has now been approved for housing. We have lodged a formal complaint. This complaint has been dismissed and we cannot take it any further.

Steeds Farm: this is the part of the site originally intended for a pub, football field, playground, shop and allotments. Again the appeal from the developer has been upheld. The only mitigating factor in this is that the town gets the development surcharges and affordable housing that the developer originally said they couldn't provide.

Pavements: These were intended to be resurfaced when the roads were done. They are an utter disgrace but are now scheduled to be fixed in August.

20mph restrictions for the centre of town: these should be in force later this year.

Speed indicator devices (smiley ones) are being purchased.

Civil Parking enforcement: you will have noticed this has now started. It has caused problems of its own. A reassessment of the current parking restrictions is underway.

Faringdon Gateway: the stone gateway on the north side of Park Road was removed when Stickley Court was built.

Somehow the developers have lost it. A new one cannot be built in Park Rd as there is nowhere to put it without blocking visibility. They have now agreed to pay for 3 new gateways on Coxwell Rd and London St.

Thames Water: there continues to be a problem with water pressure and disposal of sewage. Thames Water asked that the new-builds not connect to their system until it's upgraded, which should have been done at least 4 years ago.

Community Assets: FAZE & Infant School have been logged as Community Assets which gives us a say in what happens to them.

Town centre loading: this has been a problem for the markets on Tuesdays and Saturdays. We have asked for an official restriction on those days. A bit of a moot point with regards to McColls at the moment.

Safe crossing A420: apparently OCC are putting in a "central refuge" at Little Coxwell junction that they seem to deem a safe crossing. A bridge for pedestrians, cyclists and horses across the road would be a much better option but is regarded as too expensive.

Folly Park car park: this is an ongoing issue as it is partly owned by two different people.

Budgens site: due to be turned into flats with commercial premises on the ground floor. The developer has also bought the Red Lion which will be part of the development, with the bar area turned into a café.

Stanford Rd from A420: opening up Stanford Rd from A420 for access only to Folly Park sports facilities. We think this would aid the traffic flow through town and encourage more people to use the facilities.

Traffic lights at A420/Coxwell Rd junction: should go ahead when construction of new Steeds Farm Development commences.

Safe pedestrian and cycle ways: FTC are trying to ensure there are safe pedestrian and cycle ways linking the new estates to FCC and the new primary school.

Cllr. Jane Boulton

Cllr.boulton@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk

# Finance and Audit Committee Report



As we start to move forward following two years of Covid we have had to be flexible in meeting the challenges thrown up. Throughout the different levels of lockdown our staff have worked hard to provide vital services including the Food Bank, Citizens Advice and Information Centre and as we move on we now need to be prepared for the cost of living crisis. The income generated by sales at the Information Centre and our venues has bounced back surprisingly well. The Finance Committee is responsible for recommending and overseeing the annual budget together with 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 2021/22 the budget was set at £455,612 giving a Band D council tax rate of £145.50

We have been able to deliver all our commitments through the year and end the year with reserves at £476,733. This figure includes £170,169 in earmarked reserves.

An Asset Replacement fund is held as a ring-fenced reserve for the renewal or repair of assets. This is currently £41,825 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 £71,1233

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.
- Reviewed Council bank accounts and investments.

Finance is responsible for overseeing the terms and conditions of council staff. We currently employ 15 members of staff both full and part time giving a full time equivalent of 8 staff. Staffing accounts for 60% 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 £9.90/hr.

Where appropriate we have enabled homeworking for our staff during the year, with a return to customer facing whenever it has been assessed as safe.

During the year we also oversaw: annual staff appraisal recommendations, staff training requirements, The Information Centre operation, Staff recruitment and allocated funding for the Community Awards and the Jubilee

## Grants:

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

### GRANTS AWARDED 2021.22

Faringdon.org £54, Pump House Project (Cogs) £1,800, Root and Branch £1,800, Vale Community Impact £2,000, Folly Fest £3,500, Citizens Advice £3,000, Folly Trust £3,000, May Messy £2,450

Friends of Wilderness Benches £800

Total Grants Awarded 2021.22 £18,404

### YOUTH Grants Awarded

Ox. Play Association Youth Club £5,000, Ox. Play Association Open Street £1,000

Painting and planting bursary £735

Finally, we would like to thank staff, volunteers and councillors for their support and dedication, in maintaining services and planning future improvements in challenging times.

Cllr. Steve Leniec, Chair of Finance and Audit Committee

Cllr.leniec@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk

Cllr. Angela Finn, Vice Chair of Finance and Audit Committee. Chair of Grants Sub-Committee

Cllr.finn@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk

# Facilities Committee Report



The committee has met regularly throughout the year, either online or in person once this was possible.

We have noted that the buildings and open spaces which are our responsibility, namely The Pump House, The Corn Exchange, Tucker's Park, Elms Tennis Courts, Town Park, Oakwood Park, Eagles Park, All Saints' Churchyard and The Wilderness have all been affected by the months of lockdown.

In the case of venues, this has meant a loss of revenue as well as a lack of opportunity for events to take place. However, both indoor and outdoor spaces have benefitted from maintenance work being carried out and all places are now back in full use, with the exception of The Wilderness which, as a new venture, is still being developed.

All work completed has been kept well within budget, as has the work on minor facilities such as bus stops, salt bins and the telephone box book swap library. The Tidy Team has also been busy responding to requests to clear litter where problems have been highlighted.

A major investment has been in a much needed mower for the Tidy Team; there have also been new bins installed in Town Park, with others due for Tuckers Park. In The Pump House a new screen and audio equipment have been installed. Future plans include a PA system for events in the Marketplace, the possibility of live music returning to The Corn Exchange and updating of the noticeboards around the town.

Cllr. Rosalind Burns

[Cllr.burns@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.burns@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Communities and Partnerships Committee Report



The Community and Partnerships committee is responsible for overseeing partnerships and doing anything that benefits our community, which includes events.

If you want to work in partnership with us or have any ideas to improve our wonderful town please do not hesitate to get in touch or come along to our meetings and tell us your ideas!

Cllr. Peter Castle

[Cllr.castle@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.castle@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)

**Do you have ideas on how to make  
our town a better place to live and work?  
Get involved and stand for  
Faringdon Town Council in May 2023**



Our council members are elected to serve for four years. Elections will take place in 2023 for a new council.

If you would like more information about what's involved in being a councillor or how you can stand please contact Sally Thurston [sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk) 01367 240281



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