Oundle Oracle
May 2012
Annual Report & Newsletter

Golden Jubilee Project

Diamond Jubilee
It has been an honour and a privilege to represent you as your Mayor this last year. Government cut-backs and planning have dominated the headlines which we have seen on a local level here in Oundle.

What immediately springs to mind is the closure of the Recycling Centre which was a real loss to the town and surrounding villages and as a result there seems to be an explosion of fly tipping, which I would urge you to report should you see it. The threatened closure of the Public Conveniences was also a matter of great concern to the town but happily in this instance we were able to take ownership with reduced costs.

Future housing development sites are always a concern for many residents and the year has seen work on Phase 2 of the Creed Road development started. It appears that the planning application for the land opposite The George Public House is imminent and we are also expecting the application for Herne Road/Ashton Road to be resubmitted shortly. Oundle Town Council whilst not the Planning Authority always strives to ensure that these developments are in keeping with the town and delivered with supporting infrastructure.

On a positive note, the refurbishment of the Pocket Park has been a huge success and will be celebrated on the 4th June 2012 along with a celebration for the Queen’s Jubilee. This leads me to reflect on the many positive attributes of our town and the many and varied events organised by our hard working community groups.

During my term of office, I have had the privilege to attend many functions including, but not limited to:

The commencement of improved facilities to Oundle Bowling Club;
Celebrating Oundle Primary School’s Outstanding Ofsted report and also presenting awards at the leavers assembly;
Recognising charitable work by the Rose & Crown
The opening of Abbott House summer fete;
An Easter fun afternoon at Oundle Library;
and presenting Oundle Town Council Awards at the Music & Drama Festival.

Alongside all the many things to celebrate, Oundle Town Council achieved Quality Status and at this point I would like to thank my fellow Councillor colleagues for
their consistent hard work throughout the year. This could not have been achieved without our excellent Clerk and staff who work so well together to keep the Council administration and services running so smoothly.

*Cllr June Round (April 28th 2012)*

*Councillors and family members gather for a town wide litter pick in March*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of Accounts</th>
<th>Year ending</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£ ’000s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precept (Oundle Council Tax)</td>
<td>232</td>
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<td>Total other receipts (inc Market,</td>
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<td>Property, Cemetery)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>318</td>
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<td>Staff Costs (inc Salaries, PAYE &amp; NIC,</td>
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<td>pensions)</td>
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<td>LoanInterest/ Capital Repayments (QVH,</td>
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<td>Courthouse, Skateboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total other payments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(312)</td>
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<td>Net surplus</td>
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<td>Total Fixed assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Cash &amp; short term investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total borrowings (Outstanding Capital</td>
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<td>balance)</td>
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The accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012 will be submitted for external audit in the coming weeks and are scheduled to be approved at the Council meeting on May 17th.

Full details of the actual audited numbers will then be available for inspection at the Courthouse. The preliminary numbers are summarised above alongside the previous year comparatives.
Key points to note in respect of the last financial year were the impact on the Towns’ expenditure associated with costs arising from the following:-

1) The redevelopment of the Towns’ Pocket Park. The total cost of the project was nearly £125,000. This figure was however substantially supported by grant funding, notably: £50,000 from the Landfill Communities Fund; £1390 from East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) and £10,000 from the Big Lottery.

2) The assumption of costs relating to services previously underwritten by ENC and Northamptonshire County Council. These include:- the withdrawal of the former car parking subsidy, worth £14,000 in a full year; the part year costs of the Lollipop Lady at the Milton Road Primary School (£2,500); and the costs of taking over the public conveniences (£15,000 p.a.).

3) Funding the expenses of Oundle 2020 (nearly £5,000). This project is now gathering momentum and will culminate in the production of a neighbourhood plan in which all members of the town will have an opportunity to have their say.

4) It should be noted that the borrowings figure of £499,000 largely reflects loan finance obtained to pay for the major refurbishments of the Courthouse and the Queen Victoria Hall. These loans were taken out on very attractive terms and in the case of the QVH are not scheduled to be fully repaid until 2058. By contrast the figure for Total Cash and Short-term Investments (£449,000) for the greater part reflects monies held in respect of capital receipts and non distributable reserves. Some of these funds could be utilised on a future capital project such as the development of a new community centre.

The principal reason for Oundle Council Tax (the Precept) being higher than that of some of our neighbouring towns is that we are responsible for a greater number of facilities than most other councils in the area. This in turn drives up the costs of maintenance and administration.

On a positive note, the refurbished Queen Victoria Hall is proving to be an increasingly popular venue and bookings have remained healthy throughout the year. The Council has also been able to sustain and extend its support to local recreational, charitable and cultural groups ranging from Junior Football to Volunteer Action.

In summary the financial accounts have been responsibly managed and it remains the Council’s key objective to ensure that it maintains full accountability and control over Council finances and achieves best value for money on behalf of Oundle taxpayers in all areas of expenditure.

Cllr Phillip Rose
Properties Report

In the last 12 months we have continued to maintain all council property. There have been some significant decisions based on the implementation of our property portfolio strategy that we published some 3 years ago. This has included:

A change of use planning application for cemetery chapel is currently under consideration by East Northants District Council. We decided to sell the property a while ago but are now hoping that it can be bought as a residential dwelling;

The Drill Hall was put up for sale in December 2011 after confirming with the town via the Oundle 2020 town survey. The disposal of the building will enable us to build a new recreation hall, the plans for which are currently being developed.

We were delighted to redesign the pocket park play area. The new equipment seems to be very popular with the children and parents of the town.

Finally, we have received very positive feedback in relation to the appearance of the Church yard and cemetery and all our open spaces. Thanks should go to Tim and John for all of their hard work working on behalf of Oundle residents. Our thanks also go to Kevin, our wonderful ENC street cleaner.

Cllr Paul King

Planning Report

Oundle Town Council was asked to consider 54 planning applications between April 2011 & April 2012. In most cases the planning authority, East Northamptonshire Council agreed with our views. For example OTC objected to changes at 15 West Street and ENC upheld this objection.

Business signage in the conservation area leads to interesting debate. We objected to original signage planned on 14 West Street, which was finally granted after several visits by ENC enforcement officer. New signage at 4 St Osyth’s Lane was passed by ENC despite our objections.

We were also asked to comment on further changes at The Talbot Hotel’s and further development at 74 Benefield Road.

Cllr David Chapple
Let’s hope the sunny weather returns so that we can all enjoy

Mind your P’s ..!

Party In the Park  Monday June 4th
Picnic in the Park  Saturday July 14th

In the last Oracle I wrote about the aims and objectives of the **Communications Working Party**. But to put it succinctly here is the vision statement which we trust makes clear what we are about.

*“People in the town must be able to access information from a transparent council in a variety of ways that best suit their needs.”*

There have been a number of important projects that have taken the time of the Working Party since its formation in January 2012. These have been the Town Meeting held on April 26th in the Queen Victoria Hall and the Jubilee Celebrations to be held on June 4th.

The Town Meeting was deemed a success by those who attended. The Mayor gave an impassioned speech which touched many people about how we as a council very much care for the town and what goes on. She stated that we are facing a lot of external pressures but we take our duty seriously and diligently on behalf of the town. It was very well received on the night and got the proceedings off to a great start.

Oundle Town Council reports were short, so that there was more time to hear from the Police and the NCC Highways Agency, the public services invited this year. Sarah Barnwell, NCC Community Liaison Officer responded to questions and ideas about North Street and the South Bridge signage. As usual there was the opportunity to hear from the East Northants District Councillors representing Oundle as well as the County Councillor representative for the town. We ensured that there was plenty of time given to ask these representatives questions and get responses. The draft minutes will be made available in the library and on the Council website soon.

Only two questions, relating to Oundle Town Council, were sent in before the meeting, but residents present had the opportunity to raise any OTC item. Next year we hope for more questions in advance.

An innovation this year was to give each of the groups that put up display boards a chance to give a brief talk about who they were and what they did. This proved to be a very uplifting part of the evening that meant we ended on a positive note.

We are now working very hard on the next event – the Queens Jubilee Party in the Pocket Park on 4th June.

*Cllr David Fuller*
The Town Council has worked with the children from the schools of Oundle to come up with the ideas behind the Party in the Park on **Monday June 4th**.

The aim of this party is to:-

· Celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee
· Official opening of the Pocket Park
· A Children’s Party in the Park run by the Town Council from 2pm to 5pm.

We would like to encourage as many people from the town to come, and in particular the children of the town to join us for the party in the afternoon. The event will continue until 8.30pm so there will be entertainment for older members of the town, including live bands, after the childrens’ party finishes at 5pm.

The Town Council will pay for most of the entertainment during the party, and so the children will be free to play on the rides, slides and enjoy some circus skills and other surprises planned.

The children have suggested a number of competitions

· Cup Cake Fit for the Queen
· Best Crown – so keep the ones you created in any school competition
· Best dressed Boy and Girl: theme Red, White and Blue or simply Royalty.

So please come prepared to take part in these events, you never know you could win one of the prizes!

The schools are hoping to create a Jubilee banner, which will become a permanent display on the Pocket Park fence in due course.

We hope to offer a wide range of food on the day, both hot and cold. Soft drinks will be served as well. Unfortunately, food and drink does NOT come under the free entertainment paid for by the Town Council.

The Town Council is working with various businesses in the town as well as market traders to help the day turn into a special one for all. We do look forward to seeing you there.
Oundle – on your bike!

As summer approaches, can you imagine anything more idyllic than gently cycling in the sunshine through the streets of Oundle or along the leafy lanes to one of the surrounding villages?

Throughout the summer of 2012, the ‘Oundle – on your bike!’ project will run a programme of events to encourage people in the Oundle area to make more use of their cycles. The activities will centre on three themes which will be showcased at the Oundle Carnival on 24th June.

**Be safe.** A series of cycle training for schools, parents and families alike are planned and safe cycling tips and equipment will be promoted throughout the project. Cycle maintenance will be the focus of a stall run at local markets and events during May and June. Looking to the future, support will be lent to proposals for the establishment of cycling lanes and safe cycle storage points in the centre of the town.

**Have fun.** Stunt bike sessions are planned which in turn should encourage greater use of the bike ramps in the recently revamped pocket park. Local cycling routes are being drawn up and local social cycling groups will be promoted.

**Be cycle aware.** Cycling for all, whatever their physical ability, will be promoted at the Oundle Carnival with displays of accessible cycles, electric cycles and fun cycles.

Oundle’s cycling role models will be profiled - whether they are commuters, shoppers or simply doing the school run.

Other plans include a bike amnesty, allowing those who have redundant bikes hiding in their garages to be renovated and donated to a good cause and Bike themed competitions.


The project is being developed by Oundle Transition Town Group (OTTG) as a part of their aim to help our community to remain vibrant and self sustaining in a world where carbon fuels are becoming more expensive and less widely available. OTTG focuses on four themes: energy efficiency in houses, sustainable transport, local produce and services, lifestyles in a low carbon world. ‘Oundle – on your bike!’ forms part of the sustainable transport theme.
This year’s parade is set to reach new heights in terms of the numbers of entries and all floats, vehicles and walkers will incorporate an Olympics theme.

As the reputation of Oundle Carnival grows, so the event has attracted parade entrants from further afield. There are various new and interesting entries confirmed as well as many of our regular paraders including: A large motor yacht from Fairline Boats, a truck pulled by local gym members, various vintage vehicles, many of our local schools, majorettes, dancers, stilt walkers, three marching brass bands, a troupe of Chinese drummers and also a samba band. There will also be a number of representatives from other Carnivals in the region who will be joining the parade. Also Connect FM will be broadcasting and playing music from the Market Place as street entertainers play to the crowds as they wait for the parade to arrive.

When asked what to expect, Parade Organiser Trevor Noddles was quoted as saying “The streets of Oundle will be packed to the gunnels with ambience, noise and colour. Local residents are in for a massive treat this year.”

Please note the Parade will set off an hour earlier at 11am this year.

AFTERNOON OF FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

Directly following the parade, the entertainment will continue at Oundle Rugby Club. This will include a funfair, stalls, live music, a pet show, beer festival, and various displays in the main arena. The exciting feature event of the day will come from a Mountain Biking Display Team who are set to thrill the crowds with some extreme pro-riding laced with tricks and stunts. Later in the afternoon, Carnival goers can also expect a daring parachute drop in from Sibson’s Parachute Display Team.

Oundle Carnival is also an important fundraising event for many local charities. Over the last few years it has raised over £10,000 for which is distributed to many local charities and the Air Ambulance.

Oundle Town councillor and co-chair of the organising committee Neil Fraser commented “Oundle’s Carnival festivities get bigger and better every year. The turnout last summer was excellent and we anticipate more of the same this time around as we have been really busy lining up a great day of amazing entertainment.”
Annapurna Indian Dance will present a vibrant evening of traditional Indian storytelling and dance as well as an interactive children’s music workshop. With the Olympics set to dominate this summer, there will a nod to all things international in the form of diverse acts such as the internationally-acclaimed Canadian string ensemble Trio Fibonacci, Australian organist Sarah Kim and Eastern European group Paprika. Not forgetting Björn Again who will headline our Picnic in the Park event on Saturday 14 July.

BBC Radio 2’s Folk Duo of the Year Nancy Kerr & James Fagan will set toes tapping in the Festival Marquee. Children’s events this year will include a performance of Roald Dahl’s The Twits by Illyria and a Passport to Music event giving children the chance to attend fun music workshops across the town.

The Oundle Festival Chorus will be showcasing their work alongside professional soloists with a performance of some of Schubert’s greatest works and ground-breaking Aurora Orchestra will be joined by organist Robert Quinney for a repertoire of Poulenc and Bach.

As ever, organ recitals remain at the heart of Oundle International Festival and will run throughout the week.

Tickets via www.oundlefestival.org.uk or by calling the Oundle Box Office on 274734.

FESTIVAL FACTS 2011 Oundle International Festival by numbers...

1 opera premiere in the form of Julian Grant’s Prophet & Loss
2 appearances by Robert Quinney, the organist from the Royal Wedding
32 performances in total
60 Festival Chorus singers performed stirring royal anthems
250 children attended our Kosmos string trio workshops
400 Festival goers watched our first ever folk act The Kathryn Tickell Band
5,600 attendees enjoyed Queen tribute act Killer Queen at Picnic in the Park
Speech and Drama classes opened the Festival and continued throughout. Once again the Open Drama evening produced outstanding work, with three distinctions awarded.

Thursday was exceptionally busy with school choirs filling the Great Hall to capacity. The singing was of a very high standard with Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School winning the award for the best interpretation of a choral piece with their performance of John Rutter’s ‘The Lord bless you and keep you’. Prince William School Choir were given the distinction mark of 90 for their programme, which included an outstanding performance of John Taverner’s ‘The Lamb’. It was good to welcome Gretton Primary, Thomas Deacon Peterborough, Sir Malcolm Sargent Primary, Stamford and Bourne Academy for the first time. Once again Oundle CE Primary brought all Year 3 and Year 4 children. The Year 4 choir were awarded the Brudenell Cup. Adjudicators congratulated all the school groups on the way they entered in to the spirit of the Festival.

The evening was devoted to instrumental classes, acting and junior solo singing. The latter culminated in the competition for the Young Singer of the Year. This was awarded to Katherine McLean, Raunds.

Prince William School and Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School bands and orchestras provided an exhilarating session of high class entertainment on Friday and this was followed by more classes of instrumental solos and piano.

On Saturday the Hall was again filled to capacity by the adult choirs, distinction marks being awarded to Peterborough Male Voice Choir. Entries in adult vocal solo classes were also well up.

The Festival ended with a Concert given by outstanding performers from the 4 day Festival, including the play-off for the Young Musician of the Year Award. This was won by violinist, Becky Taylor of Morton, near Bourne for her playing of Kreisler’s Praeludium and Allegro.

Oundle Festival of Music and Drama would like to thank Oundle Town Council for the Arts Grant awarded this year. This covered the cost of one of our two new banners and the prizes in the Speech and Drama classes.
Councillor Vacancies

Following the recent resignations of Don Campbell, Mark Ormrod and June Round sufficient registered electors have requested that the District Council calls an election to fill the vacancies.

Please watch out for further details of how to stand for election on Council noticeboards and on the website. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the Council please do not hesitate to contact any member of the staff or Council member.

Councillor Contacts

David CHAPPLE 273877      David FULLER 274030
Paul DAVIS 270133          Paul KING 270370
Paul DURMAN 273080         Neville OAKES 275818
Chris ELLIOT 275333        Gwen RADCLIFFE 273191
Neil FRASER 275215         Philip ROSE 272520
George HIGGINS 275584

Council Meetings

Full Council:  June 21st    July 19th    Sept 20th
Planning Committee: June 7th    July 5th    Aug 9th

Your attendance at all Council meetings is most welcome. Meetings are held at the Courthouse starting at 7.30pm.

A public participation spot is provided towards the beginning of each meeting for contributions relating to the agenda. If you wish to speak on a planning application please advise the Clerk to the Council, Debra Raper, at least 48 hours in advance.

Oundle Town Council,
The Courthouse
Mill Road,
Oundle
PE8 4BW

admin@oundle.gov.uk
www.oundle.gov.uk
Tel:- 01832 272 055
Fax:- 01832 272 122

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