



Didcot Town Council Annual Report 2019/2020



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Mayor's Report

It has been an immense privilege and a great honour to have been given the role of Mayor of Didcot over the last year. As a lifelong resident of Didcot, I can think of no better way to show my appreciation for our community and my hometown of 38 years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Councillors and Council staff for all their hard work over the last year. I would like to give extra thanks to all those who assisted in organising the Didcot Town Council awards evening and the Mayor's Charity Ball.

These events are big days in a Mayor's calendar and without all their hard work they would not have been the success they were.

As the Mayor I have represented our town, and Didcot Town Council at many events all over Oxfordshire. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute and I have met some wonderful people.

I have been able to attend many of the events with my family, making that last year special for us all and most importantly it has meant we were able to spend time together. Many of the events that I have attended were around charities and the amazing things that some of our residents do to help others, it is truly inspiring.

I visited SOFEA and got to see all the good work they are doing with young people who otherwise may have found themselves on a very different path. I also attended the Didcot Community Larder summer BBQ and the Play 2 Give charity Ball.

I have attended several community and organisation's AGMs, the Thames Ridge Scouts, Citizens Advice and the Dicot Twining Association to name a few.

Some of my favourite events have been around our younger generation and their achievements. St Birinus School kindly asked me along to award the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and I attended the International Day at Didcot Girls School.

Just a few weeks ago I attended the Oxfordshire Gang show at Radley College. The dedication and time invested by children as young as 8 years old was clear for all to see, as the show was simply amazing from start to finish.

There are several organisations I would like to thank including the Didcot Events team. They have organised three events over the last year and I have attended them all. The Food Festival was brilliant and I really enjoyed the live cooking shows. They also organised the Christmas Street Fair which is always a huge success and the Christmas Craft Fair.

August saw Didcot's own summer Town Fayre. This was a great day held at Edmonds Park. The weather was wonderful, and everyone had lots of fun. Thank you to everyone involved in putting this event together.

In December I attended the Live Nativity in the Orchard centre. It was organised by the Kings Church and aided by Island Farm Donkey sanctuary. They put on a great show in the heart of Didcot, watched by hundreds - it spread a lot of Christmas cheer.

On Christmas day I was welcomed at several locations. I visited the wards of Didcot Community Hospital; I joined the residents at the Meadows Care Home for a chat and then went to meet guests and volunteers at the free Christmas dinner in the Civic Hall. It will be a Christmas I will always remember.

I have also used my year as Mayor to raise money for my chosen Charities. I chose Secret Santa 365 for my local Charity and Make-A-Wish UK as my national charity.

Earlier this month I held the annual Mayor's Charity Ball. It was a great evening and was attended by 125 guests from all over Oxfordshire. The Ball helped to raise a substantial amount of money for my charities.

In December The Didcot Choral society invited me to attend their Annual Carol Concert held at the Civic Hall. I continued the tradition of the Mayor singing the part of King Wenceslas and in return for a collection for the Mayor's charities at the end.

October saw the Didcot Town Council Awards evening. This was one of the highlights of the year. It was great to recognise and reward some of the people in our community who regularly put others before themselves. We incorporated a raffle into the evening to raise money for my charities.

It has been an amazing year full of so many great events, too many to mention.

I have met so many wonderful and amazing people. It truly has been a year to cherish.

Councillor Anthony Dearlove
Mayor of Didcot Town Council
March 2020



Leader's Report

This time last year, I was the leader of the opposition and now I am honoured to have been re-elected to Didcot Town Council (DTC) and proud to be the Leader during a key part of the Town's history.

Since May 2019, a lot of change has happened in Didcot. One significant difference was the change in the skyline of Didcot with the demolition of the Didcot Power Station's chimney and towers.

I was privileged to represent the Town on television, radio and press to speak about the impact the power station has had on our Town.

The make-up of the Council has also changed with the rise and fall of certain groups and parties, which has made it more challenging to get decisions through Council and made Council meetings a lot longer!

Thankfully, I have a great team of Councillors around me and very experienced Councillors chairing the Committees of the Council. You can see the work that each Committee is doing in the Chair's reports.

I am going to focus on some of the highlights:

- **Climate Emergency:** DTC declared a climate emergency and we are looking at ways that the Council and Civic Hall can reduce our impact on the environment. DTC has already instigated eco-friendly initiatives and any decisions by the Council must consider their contribution to the carbon footprint of the town.
- **Parks:** In our parks, we have opened the new Depot for our Outdoor Services team. We are acutely aware that the pavilions in the parks are not fit for purpose so we are looking at how we can best service sport and leisure activities in the town. We are going to provide a new splash park for the community and we are looking to build a new Pavilion that can cater for multiple sports and uses.
- **Civic Hall:** The management of the Civic Hall has been brought in-house and controlled by the Council. We have resolved an ongoing HMRC / VAT issue and the money we have saved can now be allocated to other projects. The Civic Hall team have been nominated for community and business awards and won – well done!
- **Didcot Garden Town:** This designation awarded to Didcot has been confusing. Many have not understood what it means and what the benefits are. Working with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), we will be holding and pushing for additional events and workshops so the community, Councillors and residents can get their views across. As Leader, I sit on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory

Board. I shall be fighting to ensure that Didcot is consulted and catered for, with funds made available for desperately needed infrastructure so that the potential for Didcot is unlocked.

- **Local Plan 2034:** The Local Plan was passed last week by SODC. I supported this as it protects Didcot from speculative development. Didcot needs this protection: we have had thousands of houses built without the necessary amenities or infrastructure in place.
- **Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE):** Illegal and inappropriate parking is one of the biggest issues that residents contact me about. Residents' views are regularly heard at the Traffic Advisory Group (open to the public) and at resident's meetings. I totally agree with these concerns and have supported motions at SODC and DTC to progress and implement CPE. I can assure you that we are continuing to push for parking powers to be passed from the police to councils, liaising also with Oxfordshire County Council who are responsible for highways to support CPE.
- **Council Tax:** DTC have to deliver services to the Town using the funds raised by council tax. We do not want to cut or reduce any services and we want to continue to support local charities and organisations through the award of small grants. We do all of this with a modest increase of 13p a month (on a Band D property) on your council tax given to DTC.

As you can see, there is plenty going on. DTC and I shall try and keep you updated on issues affecting Didcot.

On 1st August 2020, we will be holding our hugely successful Didcot Summer Fayre at Edmonds Park. There will be bands, entertainment throughout the day, drinks and food from around the world, over 80 stalls and plenty of family-friendly fun. Please come and support the Fayre.

I would like to thank our great team of hard working Council staff. Without them the Council and the Civic Hall could not function. Due to the nature of the work and evening Council meetings, some days are very long: I do appreciate their commitment and dedication to DTC.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking the residents of Didcot. Thank you for your feedback and support. The Council's purpose is to deliver for Didcot. The projects outlined above will not happen overnight but, with the great team of Councillors we have serving our Committees, I have every confidence that you will see the difference across Didcot over the next three years.

Thank you.

Councillor Mocky Khan
Leader of Didcot Town Council
March 2020



Report from the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Although the past financial year has been quite challenging in many respects the Town's financial commitments have been met as well as providing much needed support for numerous community and voluntary organisations in our Town.

The Town Council constantly seeks and strives to improve services, support residents and provide the best value to our community. From April, the next financial year will see some important projects starting off such as a replacement pavilion in Edmonds Park with the aim of installing a splash park there too. We are pleased that the project we started to replace the Outdoor Services Depot was completed in Early Summer of last year and now provides a much needed base for our Outdoor Services Staff.

Didcot Town Council is committed to transition towards a more environmentally sustainable way of working and do our part to address the Climate Emergency. We are also working with volunteer groups in the Town and others to promote environmentally responsible and better ways of working for residents and businesses. Ring fenced funding will provide initiators to kick start various projects in Didcot to achieve this. Didcot Town Council is committed to making the environmental impact of all our activities a key part of our decision making and incorporate this aspect in to the normal business of our committees.

This year has also seen many applications for Grant Aid Funding which together with improving our facilities and supporting new projects had led to a modest increase of £1.66 a year to the Town Council's component of Council Tax for a Band D Property which will be £108.19 per year or 13p per month

Councillor John Moody
Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee
March 2020



Report from the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee

The Planning Committee consists of five Councillors, two positions are unfilled, and is delegated by the Town Council to discuss and respond to new or recently amended planning applications received by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). Meetings occur every three weeks, and whilst the Town Council, as a statutory respondent, makes comments on all applications affecting the parish, it is SODC that will make the final decision.

The Committee also considers minor issues affecting traffic, highways and transport, as such the Committee discuss and respond to the Town Council's Traffic Advisory Group.

There is a continued increase in the number of applications for infill dwellings. Such applications can provide much needed smaller homes but can bring with them problems of parking and provision of sufficient amenity space. The majority of applications are for side and rear extensions.

Several reserved matters applications have been received for Land at Willington Down, following on from the outline planning permission. These give more details from the developer to the exact look and access through the development.

Refusal against any application can be made only using valid planning reasons as set out in the National planning policy framework and local plans. Most applications have no objections but we have had some notable applications that have been refused.

An application came to Committee in September 2019, for land East of Sandringham Road. This was objected to on several grounds, including traffic concerns and viability of the access to the development. No decision has been made as yet for this application by SODC. A recent application for new builds on a green open space in Brasenose was also objected to due to Highways issues and being out of character. Residents are welcome to attend all our planning meetings – and to speak during the public participation part of the meeting.

Councillor Denise Macdonald
Chair of the Planning and Development Committee
March 2020



Report from the Chair of the Environmental Committee

The Environment Committee consists of seven Councillors and is delegated by the Town Council to supervise and maintain parks and recreational open green spaces owned or leased by the Council. These areas include: Edmonds Park, Ladygrove Park, Smallbones Rec, Marsh Rec, Great Western Drive Rec, Loyd Rec, Stubbings Land and Millennium Wood. The lakes at Ladygrove and the Cemetery at Kynaston Rd make the combined land total area over 100 acres.

The Committee also administers five allotments sites with over 400 plots with the help of a Users' Liaison Committee who meet regularly to discuss their problems and their successes.

The Environment Committee carries out the Town Council's policies on sports, recreational activities, travel and all general environmental issues, within the town. Last year the Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency, to that end the Committee considers the impact and the effect of its decisions relating to climate change and the aspiration to work towards carbon neutrality for Didcot.

Ground staff support

The land that the Council maintains is cared for by a dedicated team of full time grounds staff led by Outdoor Service's Manager, Tony Rudge. This work load covers all general grounds maintenance including:

- Developing the Millennium Wood
- Tree care and new annual planting
- Allotment maintenance
- Litter clearance
- Cutting of grass verges on Ladygrove.
- Maintaining flower/shrub beds
- Play equipment inspection and repairs
- Marking out and providing sports pitches,
- Vehicle and machinery maintenance
- Provision of notice boards

Parks:

The Outdoor Service team moved into their new depot situated in Edmonds Park, but unfortunately the current pavilion at Edmonds Park was in such a bad state that the Committee had no choice but to close it. Plans are underway to replace it using ideas from a recent consultation with Didcot residents.

It was evident from the consultation that a splashpark was something that people wanted and I'm pleased to say that this will go ahead. The opening of this is likely to be next year. Unfortunately the Play equipment in the parks is subject to continual vandalism. It is far more expensive to make repairs and the bespoke parts can be hard to obtain especially when the original contractors are no longer trading.

Allotments

The allotments are an essential part of daily life to Didcot residents with over 400 plots in five sites in full use and through their liaison group the Committee implements the plot holder's requests where possible. The successful trial of having dogs on the allotments has ended and the decision was made to now allow dogs as long as they are on a lead at all times. Half plots are now available at all sites.

Ladygrove Lakes

The lack of rain and no natural source of water to fill the lakes has led to a fall in oxygen levels and closing the lakes to fishing. A working party has looked into solutions, which have included pumping a limited amount of water from a culvert and aerating the water using electric pumps until the solar pumps can be installed. Until we know that this is a sustainable solution the Lakes will remain closed to fishing.

Bus Shelters

A further two bus shelters have been ordered and a new budget has been agreed for maintenance. The Council will be taking on the maintenance of a further eight bus shelters on GWP originally supplied by the developer. The side panel on the bus shelter on Station Road has yet to be added.

Tyne Avenue

A strip of land on Tyne Avenue has caused problems to people on Ladygrove. A working group is looking into the legal ownership and thus responsibility for maintenance, and if this can't be decided they are looking at solutions as to how this land can be maintained satisfactorily.

Broadway Christmas lights

The Committee chose a new supplier for the lights last year. There were no problems with lights not working and I thought the Committee made a good choice.

Volunteer Litter Picking

Thank you to all the volunteers and organisations who participated in last year's litter pick. This year's litter pick is postponed due to the covid 19 virus - your health and well-being is the most important concern to Didcot Town Council.

Councillor Denise Macdonald
Chair of the Environmental Committee
March 2020



Report from the Chair of the Civic Hall Committee

The Civic Hall Management Committee is the newest Standing Committee of Council. It met just once before the May election in 2019, and its Terms of Reference were agreed in the summer of 2019. The Committee is responsible for:

- The oversight of the operational running and maintenance of the hall.
- The Civic Hall budget.
- Consideration of ways in which existing provision can be improved having due regard to the needs of existing and future users.
- The Committee shall make recommendations to the Town Council for any capital projects outside its budget, after inviting quotations for such work.
- The Committee shall consider the level of hire fees annually, and make recommendations to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Civic Hall is managed by Andre Silva and his team. They have worked hard to increase usage; the hall is busier than ever and is proving to be the venue of choice for a diverse range of bookings; from weddings and children's parties to Pilates and Slimming World. This is reflected in the hall being open and used 7 days a week.

Bookings are on the increase and due to make a turnover of approximately £200,000 by the end of the financial year. It is important to remember that the hall is subject to annual business rates of £45,000 and no longer enjoys the annual grant from the Town Council of £30,000 per year.

As well as business using the hall, there have been a variety of community events held, and are planning to be held, for example the Culture and Community Day, Fun Dog Show, and Didcot Family Day. The Civic Hall Team also worked with SOFEA and Didcot First to deliver the Grub Hub throughout the summer, providing meals for families during the school holidays.

The Civic Hall is the venue of choice for prestigious local events including the Didcot Food Festival and various charity Balls, including Play2Give and the Mayor's Ball.

There is a rolling programme of decorations in place to keep the Civic Hall bright and clean, this includes a Green Tourism initiative and single use plastics policy.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) we have postponed the inauguration of three permanent artworks by Suzanne O'Driscoll at the Didcot Civic Hall. This event was planned for the 20th of March 2020 along with an art exhibition from 15 local artists to commemorate Didcot A Power Station. We hope to reinstate this event later in the year.

As Chair of the Civic Hall Management Committee I would like to congratulate Andre and his team for all their hard work. Indeed their efforts also have been acknowledged by the nomination and winning of Event Venue of the Year 2019 by the Oxfordshire Prestige Awards 2020. I believe that the Civic Hall brings civic pride to the residents of Didcot, who are proud of their vibrant and Busy Civic Hall.

Councillor Pam Siggers
Chair of the Civic Hall Committee
March 2020



Councillors

All Saints Ward	
 Anthony Dearlove	43 Crossville Crescent OX11 7HE T: 01235 818665 anthony.dearlove@aol.co.uk
 Denise Macdonald	56 Campion Hall Drive OX11 9RN T: 07717 836 856 denise.macdonald@ntlworld.com
 Amanda Sandiford	39 Manor Road Didcot OX11 7JZ cllrsandiford@gmail.com
 Pam Siggers	8 Verlam Grove OX11 7SW T: 07956 331743 pamelasiggers@gmail.com
 Alan Thompson	3 Cronshaw Close OX11 7JT 01235 202652 alan.thompson670@ntlworld.com

Ladygrove Ward	
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 Neville F Harris	180 Abingdon Road OX11 9BP 01235 511363 nevhar@aol.com
 Victoria Haval	
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 James Durman	Didcotcllrjames@gmail.com
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 Mocky Khan	53 Hagbourne Road OX11 8DT 07956 301777 mocky.wantlabour@outlook.com
 Axel Macdonald	56 Campion Hall Drive Didcot OX11 9RN 07305 076203 councilloraxel@gmail.com
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Orchard Ward	
 Ceila Wilson	6 Bosleys Orchard Didcot OX11 7NY 07926 624628 cwilson@dtclub.uk
Park Ward	
 Anthony Hudson	7 Barnes Road Didcot OX11 8JL 01235 211249 anthony.hudson47@ntlworld.com
 Melissa Mallows	
 John Moody	63 Norreys Road Didcot OX11 0AW jmoody.dtc@gmail.com

Voting Committee Members

Finance & General Purposes Committee
J Moody P Siggers A Sandiford M Walsh V Haval M McNeill A Thompson
Environment Committee
D Macdonald A Macdonald C Wilson M Walsh D Rouane A Thompson A Hudson
Civic Hall Committee
P Siggers A Thompson E Hards M McNeill P Giesberg
Planning & Development Committee
D Macdonald E Hards P Giesberg J Durman A Thompson
Personnel & Administration Committee
M Khan E Hards A Macdonald A Thompson V Haval

Staff

- Janet Wheeler ~ Town Clerk
 - Tony Rudge ~ Outdoor Services Manager
 - Sharon Hickman ~ Finance & Administration Manager
 - Andre Silva ~ Civic Hall & Events Manager
 - Guy Langton ~ Planning and Environment Officer
 - Adam Duncan ~ Deputy Civic Hall Manager
 - Chelsey Lordan ~ Environment and Events Officer
 - Lucy Blake ~ Office Services Manager
 - Teresa Tye ~ Administration Officer
 - Beth Gillham ~ Information Centre Manager
 - Benny Cameira ~ Civic Hall Assistant (p/t)
 - Kate Buckle ~ Civic Hall Assistant (p/t)
 - Dan Furby ~ Grounds Supervisor
 - Richard Dowling ~ Grounds
 - Steve Andrews ~ Grounds
 - Mike Blake ~ Grounds
 - Sam Cobb ~ Grounds
 - John Jones ~ Gatekeeper
 - Neressa Copley ~ Pavilion Cleaner
-

Contact details

The Council Offices, Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7HN

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website ~ www.didcot.gov.uk

Facebook ~ www.facebook.com/DidcotTownCouncil/

Twitter ~ twitter.com/DidcotTC

Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet		
YEAR END	Unaudited Accounts as of 9th March 2020	
2019 £		2020 £
	Current Assets	
80,957.00	Debtors	128,741.00
1,064,325.00	Cash at bank and in-hand	1,125,125.00
1,145,282.00	Total Current Assets	1,253,866.00
	Current Liabilities	
120,990.00	Creditors and accrued expenses (repayable within one year)	134,516.00
1,024,292.00	Net Current Assets (Total Assets less Current Liabilities)	1,119,350.00
	Capital and Reserves	
2,972.00	Current Year Fund	94,977.00
470,300.00	General Reseve	473,273.00
100,000.00	Building Repair Fund	100,000.00
198,091.00	Depot Fund	198,171.00
14,388.00	Skateboard Fund	14,388.00
20,000.00	Ladygrove Lake Staging Fund	20,000.00
20,060.00	Building Project Fees Fund	20,060.00
32,616.00	CIL	32,616.00
10,000.00	Election Fund	10,000.00
12,460.00	GDPR Fund	12,460.00
10,000.00	Bus Shelters	10,000.00
120,000.00	VAT Contingency	120,000.00
13,405.00	CCTV	13,405.00
<u>£ 1,024,292.00</u>	Total Equity	<u>£ 1,119,350.00</u>

Feedback

Please use this form to provide feedback or ask a question about any service provided by Didcot Town Council, South Oxfordshire District Council or Oxfordshire County Council. You can also include any comments you may have on the Annual Town Meeting.

Name:	Telephone:
Address:	
Email:	
Comment:	

Return to:

Didcot Town Council
Britwell Road
Didcot OX11 7HN
E-mail: council@didcot.gov.uk
Telephone: (01235) 812637

or deposit in the box located in the entrance hall.

For Office Use Only

Response Required: Y/N

Date Responded:

Forwarded to:

Actioned by: