



Royal Station Hotel helps couple after dramatic Kyiv escape



My son James Gibson and his Ukrainian wife Anna Matiunina were forced to flee their home in Kyiv at the end of February.

Having met while both working on cruise ships they married and have lived in Kyiv for three years. After sheltering for two nights in the basement of their apartment block during the start of the Russian missile attacks, a neighbour gave them ten minutes to pack as he had decided to head south with his family and offered them a lift. Sadly, their neighbour's wife had to leave her mother behind.

Having decided to take up the offer, they drove for almost a day using back roads until they eventually reached the southern Ukrainian town of Kosiv.

From there they were helped by their neighbour's family to reach the border with Romania where,

with the help of a friend of a friend, they were taken south eventually managing to fly from Cluj - but only after Anna had received an email from UK Immigration giving her permission to enter this country. They arrived at our front door in Carnforth on 3rd March with just a few carrier bags in their hands – the only case they had taken with them having been ruined on the flight by another passenger's spilt food sauce! They were absolutely shattered - but gladly safe! As soon as I hugged Anna she burst into tears.

I had spoken with Glen at the Royal Station Hotel the day before as we were struggling to find accommodation for them and he kindly offered a room at the Hotel! During their week's stay they regained a sense of normality and were able to pick themselves up and decide what to do next. Fortunately, my son, who is a singer on cruise ships, was able to revise his contract and get permission for Anna to join him on board.

Mrs Caroline Andrews – Carnforth resident

Footnote: The Carnforth Express contacted James who had this to say 'Anna and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Glen and all the staff at the Royal Station Hotel. They couldn't do enough for us - their generosity was incredible. Residents of Carnforth showed amazing kindness too, offering cooked breakfast and words of comfort whenever our story came up in conversation! As occasional visitors to the town we had heard about its community spirit and friendliness – in that week, at a deeply upsetting and bewildering time for us, we witnessed it first-hand and we will never forget it'. James Gibson

Play Area gets new lease of life with help from its Friends



Saturday 2nd April was/is the official opening of the new play park and woodland trail at Crag Bank Park. If you have been following this story over the past eighteen months or so, you will be aware that a team of neighbours came together to raise funds to revamp a tired, old and little used play area. Two years of hard work and endless fundraising has really paid off. The team has raised over £65,000 and - with the help of our friends at Lancaster City Council who have supported us throughout this journey and installed the new play area - there is now a fantastic facility for children of all ages to play on. New picnic benches and seating for mums and dads have also been installed so that they can watch their little ones play on a wide range of new and challenging equipment.

The project started on a wet and windy night in February 2020 when residents from Crag Bank were invited to attend a meeting at Carnforth Town Council offices. The room was packed with people who wanted to improve the existing play area and a wide range of views and thoughts were exchanged.

In the early days of this project an online survey sought the views of neighbours and users to ascertain exactly what they wanted to see in the park. Seating, tables, swings, climbing frames and interesting and challenging equipment for the kids featured highly and, if you check out the park now, you will see that these aspirations have certainly been delivered.

Leading a project as large as this is not easy at any time but events over the past couple of years made fundraising and progress even more of a challenge. But we have got there and we have done so because of the tireless efforts of a host of people. Gemma Wilson, our chief fundraiser, has been instrumental in driving funding applications, running raffles and generating many ideas to raise funds.

Dan Taylor ran focus groups and provided many designs which assisted in achieving the end result. Andrew Kitchen, Michelle Holden and Terry and Antonia Allum have all chipped in with help, ideas and support over the past months.

These friends have given up hours of their time for the benefit of others and the wider community – that is community spirit at its best and I would sincerely like to thank these wonderful people for all they have done in support of this project.

Our benefactors must also be thanked - Councillor Kath Bromilow MBE for her amazing help with our fundraising; Carnforth Town Council, The Lancashire Environmental Fund, The People's Postcode Lottery, Sodexo, Tesco, Carnforth Rotary and each and every neighbour that has donated. Special thanks must go to Councillor Paul Turner - if you live in Crag Bank and you see reindeers outside people's front doors you can bet that Paul made them with over fifty being sold over the last year and a half with much of the proceeds going towards the park fund.

But it's not all about play equipment - last November, fourteen fruit trees were planted, so we should see a fantastic community orchard in a few years' time. A hedgerow has also been established with the support of The Woodland Trust and over a dozen bird boxes have been installed throughout the park. At the same time, Lancaster City Council planted over 1500 bulbs which, in the months and years to come, will flourish into a spectacular floral meadow.

We are very proud of our achievements and what we have been able to deliver for the local community. Parks and open spaces are at the heart of the community and the changes we have made to the park offers families a fresh space to play, meet, chat and enjoy the surroundings that we have created.

Councillor Steve Watson, Chair of Friends of Crag Bank Play Area

Celebrating our Queen and community with funding from the National Lottery



Carnforth Town Council is celebrating after being awarded £8,700 in funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the United Kingdom.

This new National Lottery funding will be used to celebrate our local community for its collaboration, support and kindness throughout the coronavirus pandemic and the Queen's seventy years of service to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Working with local community groups, businesses and schools this will involve a range of activities and events over the four-day bank holiday, Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June.

We are calling it the *Carnforth Big Weekend!* Plans include a National Beacon Lighting (2nd June); Sports & Fun Day (3rd June); Royalty Day & The Big Lunch (4th June) and a Commemorative service & parade (5th June).

As plans progress full details will be posted on our [Carnforth Big Weekend Facebook page](#) and [Carnforth Town Council's website](#) – but read on for some of the early highlights!

Bob Bailey, Proper Officer



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting!



On Thursday 2nd June 2022, we will celebrate a unique milestone in our country's history, Her Majesty The Queen's 70th year as our Monarch and Head of the Commonwealth - her Platinum Jubilee.

More than 1,500 beacons will be lit at the same time throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories, and one in each of the capital cities of Commonwealth countries in recognition of The Queen's long and selfless service.

The beacons will enable local communities, individuals, and organisations to pay tribute to her as part of the official Platinum Jubilee Weekend of celebrations from 2nd to 5th June 2022.

Carnforth Town Council is proud to be a part of this unique event and to be lighting a beacon - similar to the one shown - at 9:45pm, the same time as the rest of the country.

But before that, at 2pm, the Town Crier will make an official 'Proclamation' in the War Memorial Gardens to announce the official lighting of the beacon. We will have entertainers, a variety of stalls and fairground rides available from early evening. St John's Hospice and Carnforth Community Choir will each be singing a selection of their favourite songs, culminating in a joint rendition of piece of music specially written for the occasion, called '*Song for the Commonwealth*'.

The beacon will be safely positioned on High Ridge and there will be a perfect viewing gallery from Carnforth High School field where all the other planned activities will be taking place. We are delighted that Linda Denby of the Carnforth Wombles has accepted our invitation to light the beacon in recognition of their litter picking efforts over many months around the town and the wider district. This will be a colourful and enjoyable element of our Big Weekend and you are all invited to join us! **Bob Bailey, Clerk & Proper Officer**

Royalty Day & The Big Jubilee Lunch: The Big Lunch is the UK's national celebration for neighbours and communities – a time when people come together to grow community connections and get to know one another a little better. This year the Big Lunch is an official part of the Jubilee celebrations and a perfect opportunity to bring people together to celebrate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Carnforth Town Council is delighted to invite you to this national event where you will be joining millions of people across the UK getting together in a simple act of community friendship.

The event will be held on Saturday 4th June with the main aim of bringing our community together to share '*food, friendship and fun!*' Plans are well on the way with permission having been given to close Market Street for the day. We are in the process of securing food vendors and craft stalls; arranging for fun and entertainment throughout the event and, of course, making sure that the event is properly controlled and safe for everyone.



Whilst there will be elements of last year's successful Street Festival this time will be all about getting together and enjoying each other's company.

Market Street will be decked out in flags and bunting and tables and chairs set out so that you can bring your own food and drink, relax and have a chat with anyone

around you or walk around Market Street and Ashtrees Way enjoying the street food and craft stalls, the entertainment, Beyond Radio, fairground rides and the fun atmosphere as only Carnforth can! We will of course have everyone's safety in mind and there will be sanitiser on hand - but the perfect ingredients for this event will be a lovely bunch of people rekindling old friendships or making new ones together!

Over the coming weeks we will be inundating you with ways in which you can individually contribute to this wonderful event, be it the perfect party recipe, ideas for dressing the tables, games for the all the family to play or making bunting! Keep checking our dedicated [Carnforth Big Weekend Facebook page](#); on Twitter @carnforthtc or on the [Carnforth Town Council website](#). Please do get in touch to tell us what you are planning to do or if you can help by being a volunteer on the day or can offer your services in other ways.

This is the party that will be right up your street, and everyone's invited so let's make the Carnforth Big Weekend an event to live long in the town's memory!

Plant a Tree for the Jubilee

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee by inviting people from across the UK to "**Plant a Tree for the Jubilee**".

Individuals, community groups, parish/town councils and businesses are encouraged to play their part in enhancing our local environment by planting trees.

The next round of official planting commences in October, through to the end of the Jubilee year. With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC encourages planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, and that will benefit future generations.

The Town Council supports this initiative and is encouraging anyone in our local community to come up with a plan for planting trees and to submit it ,to us so that, working with colleagues from Lancaster City Council, we can coordinate activity to ensure that there is a good spread of new trees and consider opportunities to raise, or use Council funds, to support a local programme that will be a lasting legacy. Please send your plans and ideas for both The Big Lunch and planting to Leah Longhorn admin@carnforthtowncouncil.org or call 07846 256 006. **Bob Bailey, Proper Officer**





Commonwealth Day:

The Town Mayor, Councillors, residents, children from Yealand Primary School and their teacher, Mrs Brown, marked Commonwealth Day on Monday 14th March at the War Memorial Gardens. Our Town Crier, Ward Councillor Mel Guilding, read the Commonwealth Affirmation and Councillor Major Malcolm Watkins gave a short service which was followed by refreshments at the Royal Station Hotel.

The theme for Commonwealth Day 2022 centred around the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting – '*Delivering a Common Future*' – which highlights how the 54 member countries in the Commonwealth family are '*innovating, connecting and transforming*' to help achieve goals like fighting climate

change, promoting good governance and boosting trade. Given that 2022 is Her Majesty The Queen's Jubilee Year, there was also a special focus this year on the role her service plays in the lives of people and communities across the Commonwealth

Full steam ahead for Great British Railways (GBR) HQ

Working with Lancaster City Council a submission has been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport making the case for Carnforth to be the new home of GBR. Building on the town's rail history and heritage, its location and connections with iconic films like '*Brief Encounter*', there is a belief that the town has a strong chance of success.



A shortlist of the best applications from towns and cities across the UK will be determined in May, after which a public vote will determine the winning location.

The new GBR HQ will bring a number of high-skilled jobs to the winning location; be at the heart of the rail network and provide strategic direction for the running of GBR. If successful it will boost our local economy and supplement plans for the Eden of the North Project. Connected to several new regional headquarters across the country it will also put decision-making and investment at the heart of communities that use our railways.

Applications will be measured against 6 criteria: *alignment to levelling up objectives; connected and easy to get to; opportunities for GBR; railway heritage and links to the network; value for money, and public support*. We know from our social media platforms and local conversations that there is a lot of interest in this opportunity and that many have signed the Lancaster Civic Society's petition in support of Carnforth. Our local Members of Parliament, David Morris MP and Cat Smith MP, have also backed the case for Carnforth speaking in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 8th March. The deadline for submissions was Wednesday 16th March - we wait with some excitement to hear whether Carnforth has been shortlisted! **Bob Bailey, Clerk & Proper Officer**

Putting a 'STOP' to it: The town has several instances where HGV long vehicles travelling down the street have resulted in damage being done to a barrier that protects the traffic light control box and additional damage to the traffic light pole itself. The Town Council has been concerned for some time about the safety implications of these accidents and have been working with Lancashire County Council on this issue. After considering several options the County Council is proposing to re-site the 'stop-line' at the traffic lights exiting lower Market Street. The line will be moved back towards Carnforth Book Shop, which will provide a greater turning circle for long vehicles.

The impact on vehicles using Walmsley Street will be carefully monitored once the work is completed, which we expect to be before the summer, along with some re-lining work on Market Street. Any comments or questions should be directed by email to:

chris.smith@carnforthtowncouncil.org **Councillor Chris Smith**

Would you like to sponsor the Carnforth Express?

- ✓ Are you the owner of a local business or are you involved in running a local organisation or sports team?
- ✓ Would you like to raise the profile of your business, organisation or team?

How we can help you

- ✓ The Carnforth Express is published bimonthly and is delivered free of charge to every home in Carnforth.
- ✓ It is read by over 5,000 people locally and as far afield as Australia!
- ✓ The news stories we carry are local, topical and relevant and aren't found in local weekly newspapers.

What you need to do

- ✓ Contact Bob Bailey clerk@carnforthtowncouncil.org or call 07846 256 006 discuss sponsoring the next edition of the Carnforth Express.

Final Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan consultation ends

The Statutory Regulation 16 consultation for the Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan ended on 18th March. Responses received at this stage from residents and interested parties together with the submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan and all its supporting policies and documents will now undergo an independent examination.



Once the detailed report of the independent examiner is received, recommendations will be considered and any necessary changes made, with agreement of Lancaster City Council before, the Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan is ready for a referendum. Lancaster City Council will lead on this and a simple majority in favour will result in the Plan being adopted.

This will mean that planning developments would have to take into account the policies and

objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan and it will be used to shape the future of the town for generations to come. The Council will implement an action plan and monitor delivery of the Plan's aspirations. One of these is a vision for sustainable transport for Carnforth and - notwithstanding that we are yet to have a referendum – we are seeking views now on how to improve pedestrian and cycle access in and around our town. If you would be interested in contributing to these discussions, please contact Councillor Chris Smith - email chris.smith@carnforthtowncouncil.org **Bob Bailey, Clerk & Proper Officer**

Free Methodist Church Community Hall opens its doors



One Friday morning in 2013 a group for pre-school children, Teacakes & Tots, was running at the chapel in Hunter Street and a sign had to put on the door saying 'Full, sorry no more'. That day was a catalyst for the vision of Carnforth Free Methodist Church (CFM) to find premises suitable for a range of community activities. The commitment of the church members to the project saw them consistently praying, giving and

volunteering through to completion with the new Community Centre on Kellet Road officially opening on the first weekend in March this year.

With much excitement and a warm welcome, tea and cake was served for the opening events on Saturday 5th March. Special guests on the Saturday evening included Carnforth's Town Mayor, Councillor Larry Branyan, Clerk & Proper Officer, Bob Bailey, Mr Julian Handy of Mason Gillibrand Architects and Quantity Surveyor, Mr Andrew Hood of Thornber & Walker, as well as Ministers from other local churches. On Sunday, 6th March, there were not one but three dedication services to fit in the numbers wanting to attend. Over 300 people came through the doors on each day.

The building is already the new home of Music & Memories, for people with dementia or memory loss and their carers. A drop-in for those grieving the loss of a loved one starts on 30th March and a carers support group is in the start-up stage.

The Community Centre will be open over Easter for an Art & Craft Exhibition with free entry and refreshments. All are welcome to look around on:

Good Friday, 15th April, 12-3pm; Easter Saturday, 16th April, 10-12pm and 2-4pm, and Easter Sunday 17th April, 12-3pm

The land next to the High School had been purchased in 2016, with volunteers then clearing the derelict site and recycling all useable materials. Building work started in September 2020 and was completed in January 2022. The church is grateful for all who have been involved in the building process with them.

The majority of the funds were raised within the church and supported by grants and loans. Special thanks go locally to Carnforth Town Council Community Fund, Lancashire Environment Fund and E & R Wilson Charitable Fund. The Benefact Trust and three other Christian trusts also kindly gave to the project. **Carnforth Free Methodist Church**

