



# Welcome to Castle Cary and Ansford

A Guide to  
the Market House Information Centre  
and an introduction to the facilities in  
Castle Cary and Ansford

July 2020

## Welcome to Castle Cary and Ansford

Castle Cary is an historic market town set in the triangle of the A371, A303 and A37, but hidden away from the rush of traffic up and down to the West Country. Thus it retains its delightful charm and is relatively unspoilt and a haven for the travellers who "happen" to come across it just by chance.

Many of the houses were erected from the local Cary stone (a close relative of the hamstone which comes from Ham Hill near Ilchester where the Romans quarried). So on entering Cary on a sunny day this gingerbread stone gives a wonderful soft glow to the whole town. Castle Cary takes its name from the River Cari or Carith which rises in Park Pond and then meanders to Sedgemoor, giving its name to Babcary etc. If you stand by the bookshop you will hear a tributary of the river running beneath the road.

There have been settlements here since pre Roman times, the area originally being called Cari. The Castle was first erected by the Normans soon after the Conquest. Only defensive earthworks remain, seen by walking up the path to the right of The George Hotel. It is reputed that some of the Doulling stone from the keep was used in the building of the hotel. The same path also leads you up to the top of Lodge Hill, where there is the Millennium Observation Point and telescope, giving a wonderful panorama over Ansford and Cary.

In September 1651 Charles II spent a night in Cary following his defeat at The battle of Worcester. He was in disguise, fleeing from the Parliamentarians. It is unclear where he stayed. He was probably intending to lodge at Ansford Manor, where the Steward of Cary, Sir Edward Kirton lived, but it seems he had to decamp to a ditch nearby because the Parliamentarians had heard that he was in the area and were searching the houses.

Local residents have spent much time compiling books on local history, distant and recent. These can be seen in the Market House and Museum, and purchased in the local bookshop and Museum.

The town centre is dominated by the Market House, built in 1855 of Blue Lias stone and Castle Cary stone and dressed with Doulling stone. Corn and cheese were sold on the lower floor and the in The Shambles, meat and bacon. There was also a police station. Nowadays the lower floor houses the Information Office and the Town Clerk's Office. Above you will find the Museum which certainly is worthy of a visit. Woollen cloth was woven in the town and there still remains a working horsehair weaving factory, making fabrics for Royal Palaces.

Castle Cary retains many small, friendly, independent shops which rarely remain empty and are sufficient to meet all everyday shopping needs, and there is no large supermarket. There are also a number of venues for meetings, functions, concerts etc, including the Methodist Church and Schoolroom, All Saints' Church, Castle Cary Primary School and the Market House itself.

Sports facilities include the Donald Pither Memorial Field which is the home to the Pavilion, Castle Cary Cricket Club and Castle Cary Football teams.

Castle Cary Cricket Club is proud of its history when Britain was represented by Somerset and Devon Wanderers, a touring side made up from members of Castle Cary Cricket Club and old boys from Blundell's School. The team won an Olympic gold medal against

France in 1900. They were the only teams competing and medals were awarded retrospectively in 1912. The match was replayed in 2012 in conjunction with the London Olympics with the French President's X1 side and Castle Cary Cricket Club.

In Ansford there are a number of fine old buildings, including St Andrew's Church and Parson Woodforde's house. The celebrated diarist Parson Woodforde lived in Ansford in the eighteenth century.

More modern additions to the settlement, catering for community needs, include Caryford Community Hall and Caryford Leisure and Fitness (the community sports centre).

Fairfield is a large green open space between Castle Cary and Ansford. This is a wonderful area for walking, cycling and keeping fit. There is a pump track, outdoor gym, sensory garden, wildflower meadow, community orchard and the beginnings of a small wood plus plenty of space for the fair to visit annually.

Wincanton, Yeovil, Wells, Glastonbury and Street are within easy reach by bus or car. London can be reached by train from Castle Cary or Templecombe and by Berry's coaches from Wincanton. Timetables may be obtained from the Market House Information Office.

We hope that you will enjoy living in Cary and come to love and respect it as we all do.

# What goes on at the Market House

## The Ground Floor:

**The Market House Local Information Centre (LIC)** on the ground floor is multi-purpose - our volunteers dispense information not only to tourists but to local people too. The Town Diary is in the office window providing information about forthcoming local events.

In summary, a visit to the Market House Local Information Centre will enable you to:-

- Bring children to visit the cell and see the well (and then go to the museum upstairs in the summer months - see below)
- Find out where to get the key to the Round House
- Collect a Castle Cary and Ansford leaflet (including a map) and leaflets on local attractions
- Find out "What's On" locally
- Make bookings for the Shambles and Undercroft and book the Sports Pavilion
- Put your events in the Town Diary
- Collect bus and train timetables and bus pass forms
- Find out about local walks, gardens, horse riding etc.
- Access general information on South West events
- Look at inspection copies of local interest books, for sale in the Book Shop
- Leave messages for the Town Clerk or her deputy
- Look at Council Minutes and Planning documents
- Find out about special support for people with disabilities.

The Local Information Centre opening times are:-

November to  
March:-

Monday to Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm

April to October:-

Saturday 9.00am - 12 noon

Morning sessions are extended to 2.00pm

The Local Information office telephone no. is 01963 351763.

## The Town Clerk's Office

This is also on the ground floor of the Market House and details of opening hours and contact details can be found on the separate Town Council page.

## The Shambles

A great meeting space, "The Shambles", previously open to the elements, is now resplendent with a glass roof and is warm and comfortable. It is used for meetings, special events, music, classes,

craft workshops and so on - keep a lookout for information about all the exciting things going on there. It is available for hire and has an alcohol licence.

### **The Undercroft and Cobbles**

A wonderful open air space at the front of the Market House. Most Saturdays there is a coffee morning in the Undercroft and on the Cobbles, arranged by one of our many local groups - do come along and join in. Often there is also a cake stall, or plant sale, or other activity, and everyone is welcome.

### **Tuesday Market**

On a Tuesday from 9am - 2pm we have our Market day in the Undercroft and on the Cobbles with stalls selling an assortment of vegetables, meat, fish, cheese, plants, clothes and more.

### **The First Floor**

#### **The Castle Cary Museum**

The Museum contains a range of exhibits connected to the town and rural life and it has a useful archive

The Museum exhibits change from year to year, so it is always worth a visit. The opening times are:-

April to October: - Monday to Friday	10.30am – 12.30pm 2.00 pm – 4.00pm
Saturdays	10.30am - 12.30pm

Also open on Bank Holidays. Entrance is free but donations are appreciated!

### **The Second Floor**

#### **The Dance Studio**

A Dance School which is run by Paul Parsons is located on the top floor.

Contact him on: - 01963 350687 or 07805571590.

This space can also be rented for events by contacting the Booking and Promotions Manager – 01963 351763

## **Castle Cary Town Council**

The Town Clerks' Office is in the Market House on the ground floor.

**Town Clerk:** Ms Zoe Godden  
**Deputy Town Clerk:** Mrs. Claire Craner-Buckley

The Town Clerks' Office is open for enquiries from the public on: -

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10.00 - 12.00 noon or by appointment at other times.

**Telephone:** 01963 359631

**Information available includes:**

- Council Meeting agendas and minutes
- Local Planning Applications
- Minutes of recent Area East (South Somerset District Council) meetings.
- Annual documents and reports of the District and County Councils

Much of this information and more is also available on the Town Council website [www.castle-cary.co.uk](http://www.castle-cary.co.uk) or on South Somerset District Council website or Somerset County Council website

It helps if you report directly worries about infrastructure matters - blocked drains, overgrown footpaths, etc. to the relevant authority. See enclosed information about "Who does What".