



Tarvin Parish Council
ANNUAL REPORT

Year to
31 March 2014

Welcome to Tarvin Parish Council's Annual Report for 2013/14. The Council is now three quarters of the way through its term of four years. The following pages contain details of the Councils activities throughout the year, financial statements, other relevant Council information, and reports from the main local organisations who received grants from the Council during the year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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(by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Ted Lush)

1. The Public

The views, concerns and aspirations of the Tarvin parish area are at the very heart of Parish Council (PC) activity.

The PC has made it easier for the public to follow what is going on at its monthly meetings by displaying the agenda, minutes, and reports on the large screen in the Edna Rose Room at the Community Centre. The PC has also enthusiastically embraced the new Tarvinonline website as it provides another means for the Council of telling residents what it has been doing and the decisions it has taken.

The public's contribution at the Open Forum which begins each meeting continues to be very important. Over the year the issues raised can be divided into two broad categories:

- a) Transport – including the impact of the Tarporley Road closure, changes to school transport arrangements proposed for September 2015 by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC), bus stops, possible changes to the 82 and 84 bus destinations, damaged railings where Broomheath Lane meets the A51 and inadequate street signs;
- b) Environment – including litter in the Co-op car park, overgrown hedges, the state of the Millennium Garden, overflowing dog waste bins, and access for the disabled to the War Memorial.

The PC will always take every public comment seriously and gives it due consideration.

2. Parish Councillors

The PC welcomed two new councillors: Clare Jones of Tarvin and Matthew Pochin of Oscroft. Both have already begun to make an important contribution to the work of the PC, with the added bonus that they have reduced the average age of parish councillors! This is not a trivial point as the PC needs to better reflect the population it serves. Tarvin is fortunate to have a full complement of 11 councillors who give up their time not just to attend meetings and represent residents but also to undertake practical tasks such as litter picking, inspections, tree work and site visits.

3. What we did during the year

As usual, a number of planning applications were considered and comments passed to CWaC which decides planning matters. Two potential developments are worthy of specific comment because they demonstrate that the PC treats each proposal on its merits and applies its considerable local knowledge. Proposals for Broomheath Lane, adjacent to Laburnum Cottage, and for Top Farm, behind Well Cottages off the High

Street, were each felt to be a too intensive use of their respective sites. In the case of Broomheath Lane, a more appropriate revised scheme was submitted. In the case of Top Farm the PC has not yet been notified of the outcome.

As part of its commitment to listening to residents, the PC undertook two targeted surveys during the year: one on making the informal gap in the hedge between the A54 and the Ridgeway safer and more permanent; the other on possible changes to bus stops. In the case of the hedge gap it was agreed not to pursue a permanent access. Regarding bus stops, the PC changed its view about the removal of the stop outside the chemist. More generally, improvements to bus stops in the village were agreed by CWaC but have been delayed due to a lack of money; however the PC is confident some work will be done in 2014.

The PC's relationship with CWaC is very important because CWaC is responsible for so many services which impact on the quality of life within the parish. Unfortunately the PC is often frustrated in its dealings with CWaC, as the following example illustrates. In May 2013 a 'walkabout' involving CWaC officers and one councillor identified many issues, including flooding on the footpath between Manor Court and Langford Court, failure to empty bins in accordance with agreed standard, the state of the footpaths alongside the A54, parking, traffic congestion and a lack of pedestrian crossing points on the High Street, and damaged grass verges on Church Street, Tarporley Road and Hockenhull Avenue. Apart from bin emptying, the frequency and consistency of which has improved, none of these matters has yet been dealt with. The PC has tried to exercise more influence by working more closely with other neighbouring PCs, although this collaboration is still at an early stage. Other frustrations with CWaC include problems with the new arrangements for vehicles turning off the A51 from the Tarporley direction into Tarporley Road, the failure to move the 40 mph sign on Tarporley Road and the delay in repainting the white lines on Shay Lane.

CWaC completed its Corporate Governance Review of the Tarvin parish area. As a result and as very much as proposed by the PC, Bruen Stapleford, Hockenhull and Prior's Heys will become part of the Tarvin parish area from April 2015. There will still be 11 councillors but the electoral division into an Outer and a Village Ward will be scrapped.

During the year the PC raised the issue of access to health facilities, first with Health England and subsequently with the local GP practice. The PC felt that Tarvin Health Centre should be used more intensively, given the ageing population and population growth due to the new housing developments. Parish Councillor Miles is now a member of the Patients Participation Group which liaises with the GP practice and has a say on developments.

The PC began discussions on allocation policy with Muir Housing, which is responsible for the rental and low-cost housing on the Taylor Wimpey development. The PC hopes to ensure that Tarvin residents who both need and want to secure a home on the site are given every opportunity to do so.

4. Looking ahead

The PC's priorities continue to be to reduce congestion by getting a car park in Tarvin village, ideally on the Garden Field site, and to obtain more land for recreation. The PC believes the case for both the above is very strong. Its own 2013 study of on-street parking in High Street and Church Street provided clear and comprehensive evidence of the need for a car park. Now that CWaC in its Local Plan has designated Tarvin as a Key Service Centre, the PC will continue to lobby for these investments in the community infrastructure. It will also continue to press United Utilities to carry out flood prevention work on Tarporley Road and Hockenhull Lane.

KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

(by the Chairman of the Management Committee Councillor Pet Twigg)

The Committee (see page 5 for members of the Committee) meet quarterly and oversee the management and maintenance of the playing field and its users.

The playing field, bowling and tennis club facilities – together with the play area continue to be well used by residents and visitors of the village alike.

Tarvin AFC would like to thank the Parish Council for allowing them to use the King George V Playing Field during the 2013/14 season. Tarvin Under 9's have used the field on Saturdays throughout the season, and the pitch has been playable most weekends despite the awful weather that we have had. In addition to this, the youngest age groups at Tarvin (Under 5 and Under 6's) have been training on the field most Sunday mornings. It has been a successful season for Tarvin as a club, with numbers increasing again. Both our U10 squads are in their respective League Semi Finals, and the Under 15's look likely to win Division 2. The aim for next season will be to continue to grow the club, allowing more local children to benefit from playing sport in a controlled, safe and organised setting.

Tarvin Rex FC opted to have a season out of the league this year, but hope to re-assess for next season.

The tennis club enjoyed an encouraging year with a modest increase in total membership and the number of juniors playing also increasing. The year however ended on a disappointing note with the club's grant application to help finance a new club house and floodlighting being rejected, but more positively the club was advised to apply again in June 2014.

The bowling club have had a good year and has a team in the Chester and District Bowling League playing on Monday and Thursday evenings. Also a team in the Norley and District Bowling League, playing on a Tuesday afternoon - with two teams playing in the Evening League on a Wednesday - with the Norley League A Team having won their league and gained promotion. In addition members play social bowls nearly every day of the week and members of the public are welcome to come and watch at any time. Anyone interested in learning or playing are very welcome to pop in and have a go.

The drainage works completed on the field last year have settled well and the drains, as planned, have successfully directed much water off the grassed area during the winter months ensuring the quality of the playing surface and its year round use.

Repairs and maintenance to the play area equipment are ongoing and this year has included a full hot wash to the play equipment and surfaces. The hedges have been cut and an independent body has recently been instructed to carry out the programmed Health and Safety checks on the trees and hedges. A silver birch tree situated between the tennis and bowling club has been removed in order to protect the playing surfaces, replacement trees will be planted elsewhere to mitigate the loss.

Altogether another enjoyable year for users of the King George V Playing Field, residents are reminded that the field is enjoyed by many and we can all play our part to keep it in order - if you see litter please don't walk by, bin it and if you see damage please report it immediately to the Clerk. All matters of antisocial behaviour should be reported to the police (101 if a non-emergency, 999 if an emergency). Dogs must not be let off their lead and dog fouling is an offence and threatens public health, bag it.

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS *Planning Committee – All Councillors*

The King George V Playing Field Management Committee

Councillors P Twigg (Chairman), S Hardacre, R Hones, C Jones, B Spruce, J W Shaw-Pollard, representatives of Tarvin Bowling Club, Tarvin Athletic Football Club, Tarvin Rex Football Club, Tarvin Tennis Club, Scout and Guide Management Committee

Finance Working Party

Councillors D H Cotgreave, E Lush, J W Shaw-Pollard, B Spruce, R Williams

Strategy Working Party – All Councillors

Parking Working Party

Councillors D H Cotgreave, S Hardacre, E Lush, B Spruce

Street Scene Working Party

Councillors S Hardacre, R Hones, P Miles

Advisory Working Party

(Working Party established to meet with the Clerk as and when called by the Clerk to examine issues that arise between meetings where the Clerk feels that support/back up would be helpful) Councillors D Cotgreave, R Hones, E Lush, P Miles

Future Land Use Masterplan Working Party

Councillors D Cotgreave (till Dec 13), S Hardacre, E Lush (from Dec 13), R Williams

PARISH COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Community Centre Management Committee

Councillor E Lush

Tarvin Educational Trust

Councillor D H Cotgreave

Youth Club Committee

Councillors J W Shaw-Pollard, P Twigg

Parish Plan Implementation Group

Councillors S Hardacre, E Lush, P Miles, M Pochin

CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

(Chester Area Meetings) Councillors S Hardacre, E Lush, R Williams

GENERAL MATTERS

Financial Matters

How We Spend Your Money – The Statement of Accounts

	Year to 31st March 2014 £	Year to 31st March 2013 £	See Note No
Balances brought forward	22,994	19,422	1
Plus Annual Precept	31,124	28,240	2
Plus Other Receipts	12,830	36,577	3
Less Staff Costs	12,800	12,555	4
Less Other Payments	20,490	48,690	5
Balances carried forward	33,658	22,994	6

Notes

1. Balances brought forward means Cash in the Bank Accounts.
2. Precept is the money the Parish Council receives from the Council Tax to carry out its duties.
3. Other Receipts covers all other income received by the Council. It comprises of the New Homes Bonus £3,518, Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant £1,647, Bank Interest £20, VAT refunded by H M Customs and Excise £6,960, Churchyard Grant £685.
4. Staff Costs are the payroll costs of the two employees of the Council. (NB The Councillors are all volunteers and do not receive payment for their work).
5. Other Payments cover all other expenditure incurred by the Council. This includes the net cost of maintaining the King George V Playing Field, grass cutting, street lighting, hedge works on the Playing Field, Christmas lights, insurance, hire of rooms for meetings, training, printing, and grants given to the Community Centre and Woodland Trust.
6. Balances carried forward means cash in the bank accounts. Parish Council Policy is to aim to hold between a minimum of three and a maximum of six months of the most recent precept plus an estimate of any known likely fluctuations. The restricted funds held in the bank account are not part of reserves. Of the £33,658 in the accounts at 31st March 2014 £10,160 is for New Play Equipment, £5,762 is restricted for youth work, £3,518 is the New Homes Bonus and £1,187 has been designated to the Duckers Well Project. The most recent precept amounted to £31,124. Council consider that reserves of £13,031 are adequate and acceptable at the present time and in line with the approved policy.

Newsletter

Our newsletter (Tarvin Times) is published four times a year – each February, May, August, and October. All Parish organisations are welcome to contribute to it. Contributions should be forwarded to the Clerk.

Parish Council Meetings

- All Parish Council meetings are open meetings and members of the public are most welcome to attend and listen to the debates.
- If you want to come along to a meeting but don't want to stay until the end that is not a problem. Come and join us and then leave when you wish to do so. All we ask is that you come and go quietly.
- Meetings are normally held on the 4th Monday evening each month in the Edna Rose Room in the Community Centre.
- The first 15 minutes of each meeting is a public forum where anyone can have his or her say on any local matter. The allocated time may be increased under certain circumstances.
- An agenda for each meeting is placed on the noticeboards by the Red Lion in Tarvin and by the Village Green in Oscroft.
- Informal notes of meetings are normally placed on the noticeboard by the Red Lion in Tarvin within seven days of the meeting being held.
- The most recent set of approved minutes are placed on the noticeboard in the Community Centre.
- All approved minutes can be found on the Parish Council website.

Websites

The Tarvinonline website was launched by the local community on 25th June 2013 and has proved very popular. The website includes daily news, a directory of over 100 Tarvin Businesses, Clubs and Services, an up-to-date calendar showcasing what is on and when, Gallery of photographs, Buy and Sell, Sudoku, and much more.

In August 2013 the Parish Council accepted an offer from Tarvinonline to run a parallel, but independent site within the structure of Tarvinonline. The old Parish Council website was shut down and the new one is now operational. There are two ways to reach the new site, either via the Tarvinonline site or via the usual address (www.tarvinparishcouncil.org.uk)

TARVIN COMMUNITY WOODLAND TRUST

(by Dr Stuart Exell, Chairman)

Our trust document states that the trustees must apply its funds in furthering the following objects:

“To conserve, restore and re-establish native trees, plants and all types of wildlife by provision of a community woodland area in Tarvin for the benefit of the public at large and with the view to improving the quality of life.”

In doing this our principal and enduring responsibility is the maintenance of the woodland for sustainability at affordable cost. Trustees believe we have achieved this level of equilibrium thanks to community support which includes volunteers, the parish council, fund raising and donations, for all of which the Trust is very grateful. However, rather than rest on its laurels the Trust, while continuing to manage the current facility, is very much looking to the future in terms of:

- Its own structure and constitution to ensure it can attract future trustees and volunteers over the longer term, as well as financial support.
- Extending the woodland to provide larger and more diverse opportunities for community use; as a next step we have an 'in principle' agreement to extend the woodland facility from Broomheath Lane to Austin's Hill as part of the Taylor Wimpey development - at little cost to the TCWT. This will take 2 to 3 years to complete before community access will become possible.
- Short and longer term development projects both existing and ongoing:
 - An extensive drainage project along the pathway behind the school has proved very successful but, seeing the result of prolonged heavy rain in recent months, it may be necessary to extend this drainage.
 - The success of the pathway refurbishment encourages the Trust to be ambitious in fund raising for further substantial development projects.
 - Our first bird hide and bird feeding station are soon to be followed by a second hide in the school grounds and reflect the Trust's commitment to supporting community and school educational interests.
 - Planning is underway for a number of water features called “scrapes” close to the school with the aim of attracting a wider range of wildlife species providing interest for users of the woodland but also added scientific opportunities for school studies.
 - In the longer term, if there is sufficient interest, we are also considering a more extensive pond development towards Townfield lane.

In all of these ventures the community should know that the Trust always has the health and safety implications in mind and when necessary seeks independent, professional external advice. We would welcome suggestions for other/alternative projects which could benefit/interest the wider Tarvin community.

In the past year a wider general issue has come to the fore, prompted by the Trust, through its PR activities in both the local and wider Cheshire media, viz ownership/attachment by individuals and families to particular trees, planted in some cases many years ago. The issue is that in several areas of the woodland trees have been planted in larger than sustainable numbers on the basis that once the survivors become established thinning out would be necessary. Unfortunately, the latter has been greatly delayed but will have to be addressed if we are to have an attractive managed woodland. The debate on how to manage this dichotomy has been started and while action is not urgent we need a plan to manage the thinning of trees or they will compete for space and light and start to destroy themselves - with unattractive consequences. So, all community members are invited to contact a Trustee, should they feel ownership of or affiliation to particular trees, to enable us to build a picture of the scale of the issue. However, nature is nature, so the Trust is conscious it will have to do the necessary to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the woodland while at the same time being sensitive to individuals' needs.

Finally, TCWT owes thanks to a number of people and organisations for their active support over the past year:

- Supporters at the annual plant sale and coffee morning who contribute so well to our financial health.
- The Tarvin Parish Council for their annual grant and wider support in woodland management issues and relationships with CWAC.
- WREN and CWAC for their generous support of our major path project; they should know we plan further requests of support.
- Broomheath Plantation for its forestry management support in particular felling and timber/brush management but also considerable practical advice. The Trust is pleased to have a very cost effective partner and indeed reliable friend in managing our woodland on your behalf.
- Our band of volunteers who turn out most Thursday mornings to make the practicalities all happen. They enjoy the work, the 'craic' and the coffee and would welcome new recruits.

While we are fortunate in having access to a wide mix of both management and practical skills at present, they will need to be replaced in the future by those of younger trustees and volunteers. I should be happy to meet with anyone interested in making a contribution to our shared community woodland enterprise.

TARVIN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

(by the Parish Council representative Councillor David H Cotgreave)

The Tarvin Educational Foundation manages the endowments of the Tarvin Grammar School and is able to make grants towards secondary and further education to students residing in the area of the Ancient Parish of Tarvin.

During the past year 14 students have received awards to a total of £4,800 whilst most of the grants were awarded to undergraduate students on university courses several were awarded to high school students for expeditions abroad to gain experience on community and environmental projects.

Assistance may also be given to young person's training for a profession or trade such as an apprenticeship.

The next meeting to consider grant applications will be in mid-September 2014. Such applications for grants may be made to the Clerk, D. H. Cotgreave at Brown Heath Farm, Tarvin.CH3 8NE.

TARVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(by the Chairman of the Management Committee Mr A Wilkinson)

I reported in March 2013 that the previous year had been a frustrating year of slow progress. 2013/14 turned out to be rather similar but significant progress has at last been made. In April 2011 the Committee submitted a formal application to Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) for a new lease, and negotiations have been on-going from that date. An initial draft lease was received on 8th March 2013 but some aspects of the draft were a cause for concern. The Committee decided to appoint a solicitor to ensure that the lease satisfied its aspirations and that the members of the Committee were protected from personal liabilities. A great deal of work was undertaken by both Jane Lush and Roy Brereton in briefing the solicitor. Finally a new lease was agreed and signed on 1 April 2014, which provides the Community Centre with secure occupancy of the building at a peppercorn rent for a further 25 years. We hope this will provide a springboard so that the Committee can now make progress in obtaining funding for the improvement of the Centre. All this, however, comes at a cost. The Committee will need to raise in excess of £24,000 per annum to pay the service charge (to cover caretaking and a proportion of the running costs of the building) to CWAC. The intention is that this sum will be met from rentals, with income from fundraising and functions being used for improvements and replacement of equipment.

The Parish Council gave the Community Centre a grant of £1,000 for the 2013/14 financial year. This grant came without strings, apart from the fact that the Committee must account for its use. In 2013/14 the money was used in two ways. First, the Committee has continued to put on live theatre for children through Cheshire Rural Touring Arts; ticket prices are kept low to ensure the events are accessible, and the grant enabled the Committee to subsidise one show which would otherwise have made a loss. The remainder of the grant was used to part-pay the legal costs incurred on the new lease.

A shrub bed adjoining the existing car park has been removed and replaced with 5 additional parking bays. This new car parking area was part-funded by a grant from our local councillors, for which we are most grateful.

CWAC has carried out improvements at the Centre, including replacement windows and doors and a modified heating control system, together with other minor works, all of which have helped to reduce energy usage and make the building more comfortable.

The Committee has also carried out improvements, including the installation of a Wi-Fi system, new Christmas decorations, a Facebook page dedicated to the Community Centre and a sound system linked to the overhead projector in the Edna Rose Room (the latter partly sponsored by the Civic Trust). The Committee has resurrected and is organising the much-missed Village Fete: it is hoped that the event on 28 June will be a success and will justify the financial risk taken.

This year saw the demise of the Silver Threads but Ashworth Time-bank stepped in and started a new Wednesday Club which is becoming increasingly popular. CWAC has started a twice-monthly Baby Weigh and Play Group and this together with its weekly Stay and Play group for toddlers is bringing an increasing number of parents and families to the Centre. The success story of the year is undoubtedly the Friday Film nights and Sunday Film Matinee: we have managed to screen some of the very latest films and in one instance Tarvin was the first Community Centre in the UK to show a film outside a designated cinema.

The Committee has been promised a grant of £1,200 from the Parish Council for 2014/15, which we hope to be able to use to help fund much-needed improvements to the Centre. The Committee is extremely grateful to the Parish Council for its sustained support.

The financial status of the Community Centre remains healthy with lettings for 2013/14 being 10.4% above the previous year. The closing balance showed an increase of £7,690 in the year giving reserves at the year-end of £33,313. These reserves will inevitably be reduced over the next few years as we carry out our proposed improvements.

The support both personal and financial from the Parish and Borough Councillors, as well as from groups in the village, local residents and businesses is very much appreciated and I hope this will continue into the future. The Co-op store has been particularly generous and we are very grateful for its support. 2014 will hopefully see a start on a proposed programme of significant improvements to the Centre. Usage is at a very high level and this together with the planning of the improvements will place further pressure on members of the Committee. My personal time commitment to the Community Centre is not sustainable in the long term and new committee members must be encouraged and cajoled into taking on more responsibility for the running of the Centre for the benefit of the whole community. We do urgently need further active members of the Committee to help take on some of the many tasks involved.

Could I thank all Committee members and their respective partners and friends for their support during the last 12 months, for without them the progress made would not have been achieved. I would particularly wish to express my sincere appreciation of the work undertaken by Jane Lush and Roy Brereton in connection with the new lease, and to Ted Lush for agreeing to take on the role of Treasurer from our long-serving Treasurer Richard Orfanelli. My thanks to Richard are very sincere as in June 2008 Richard was the only remaining Committee member after all of the other members stood down. We have come a long way since then, to our present flourishing situation.

Thank you all for your support and let's together progress Tarvin Community Centre into a facility that the Parish can be justly proud of.

Parish Councillors and their Contact Details (at 31st March 2014)

Tarvin Parish Council is comprised of the following 11 Councillors – their contact telephone numbers, all dial code 01829, are in brackets

Cllr Edward Lush (Chairman) (741468)

Cllr Phillip Miles (Vice Chairman) (741207)

Cllr David Cotgreave (Chairman) (740231), Cllr Susan Hardacre (741962),
Cllr Roger Hones (741580), Cllr Clare Jones (740186)

Cllr Matthew Pochin (741136), Cllr Andy Shaw-Pollard (740180)

Cllr Brian Spruce (740393), Cllr Pet Twigg (740509),

Cllr Ray Williams (740486)

Cheshire West and Chester Councillors and their Contact Details

Cllr Hugo Deynem (01829 751830) Cllr John Leather (01829 752558)

To Contact Us In Writing:

Write to: Mike Hassall, Clerk to Tarvin Parish Council, Roy Cottage, Townfield Lane,
Tarvin CH3 8EG by e-mail Miketarvinparish@aol.com

The Clerk can be contacted by telephone on 01829 741075

Tarvin Parish Council