

Tarvin Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT

Year to

31 March 2015

Welcome to Tarvin Parish Council's Annual Report for 2014/15. The following pages contain details of the Council's activities throughout the year, financial statements, other relevant Council information, and reports the main local organisations who received grants from the Council during the year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

1. Overall

2014/15 was very much a normal year, although some important decisions which will affect the future were taken e.g. to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Apart from the proposed floodlighting scheme for the tennis courts, the level of public interest in our meetings was disappointingly low. This is possibly because the meetings can be quite long and formal and some of the topics may be of limited interest. There is not much the Parish Council can do about this but it is always willing to consider innovations to make the meeting experience more rewarding.

2. Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC)

The Parish Council's most important relationship is with CWaC. It would be fair to say that the Parish Council gets very frustrated with CWaC's responsiveness to specific legitimate issues and concerns raised by it. Particular examples during the year included:

- the length of time taken to manufacture and install brown "tourist" road signs which the Parish Council is paying for;
- dealing with what the Parish Council feels is a dangerous junction where traffic coming from the Crewe direction turns off the A51 onto Tarporley Road;
- implementing traffic orders on Shay Lane, Cross Lanes and Tarporley Road;
- litter-picking in the more rural parts of the parish area;
- informing the Parish Council how the school transport mitigation fund will work for Tarvin pupils transferring to Tarporley High School in September 2015;
- trimming hedges and clearing footways;
- the work it is undertaking (if any) with Cheshire East Council and the Highways Agency to address serious congestion on the A51;
- delivering the promised bus stop improvements: the improvements were scaled back drastically from what had been promised, but are still incomplete i.e. the road markings outside the chemist have not been extended, there are no road markings at all at the bus stop opposite the Post Office and the bike rack has not been reinstalled

3. Planning and the Environment

The Parish Council often makes comments on planning applications which reflect its members' local knowledge, even if it does support or object to a particular proposal. In the past year it has objected to three housing proposals which it felt had been proposed for an inappropriate rural setting. It has also objected to the floodlighting of the tennis courts as proposed which it felt would be over-intrusive (the Parish

Council is aware that discussions are taking place on this proposal which may lead to an alternative approach).

The application for Top Farm, off The Ridgeway, was approved, and following a meeting with the developer the Parish Council has ensured that there will be pedestrian access through the completed development for residents of The Ridgeway.

Community Clear-up Day was a great success and will be repeated. It is a pity that inconsiderate people were responsible for fresh litter after only a few hours.

4. A Neighbourhood Plan for Tarvin

The Parish Council has been aware for a number of years that CWaC (which owns land on Tarporley Road) and other neighbouring landowners wish to develop their land for housing. As far back as 2011 the Parish Council formulated a very clear view on what land could be developed and what community assets were needed to support any development. The Parish Council has tried to engage with the Diocese of Chester which owns the Garden Field (adjacent to the Old Rectory), because it believes that part of this land could be developed for a much-needed village car park. The Parish Council hoped that CWaC, working with the landowners in the area and understanding the Parish Council's aspirations, would develop a Master Plan for the area. Sadly this work did not come to any conclusion although the Parish Council still hopes that some joint working will be possible.

In order to try to ensure that any future development meets the needs of the local community, the Parish Council decided in 2014/15 to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. A public meeting was held in January 2015 and this led to a number of volunteers agreeing to join a Steering Group to produce a draft plan. The Steering Group has met twice but badly needs more volunteers, particularly aged 25 – 45.

5. Miscellaneous

The Parish Council has continued to work with Taylor Wimpey as their development at Saxon Heath has gathered pace. A number of matters are still outstanding, including access from the estate onto Broomheath Lane, pedestrian access onto Tarporley Road to the north of the pond (i.e. nearest to Broomheath Lane) and extending the acoustic fence along the whole length of the A51 boundary.

A defibrillator has been purchased and will be installed in the Community Centre porch. Once it is installed the gate to the playing field will be kept unlocked to allow ready access.

The Parish Council was delighted to provide grant support to the Summer Fete, Christmas Festival, Community Centre and Woodland Trust, all of which enjoyed a very successful year.

The Parish Council is grateful to ex-councillor Peter Maiden, who as Tree warden has planted many new and replacement trees in the grass verges. It is volunteer work like this that helps make Tarvin such a great place to live.

KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

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

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 2014 /15 season. Tarvin Under 10's have used the field on Saturdays, and the Under 12's have used it on Sundays throughout the season, and the pitch has been playable most weekends. 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. Tarvin Under 9's and Under 16's have reached the Chester League finals, the Under 11's reached the Cheshire League Final. Additionally, we have been awarded Fair Play awards at Under 7's and Under 14's. 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 Tennis Club enjoyed a successful 2014 season with membership numbers being maintained against a climate of falling numbers nationally. Particularly satisfying is the progress of one or two boys who are now playing for our adult teams.

In September the Tennis Club was notified by Sport England that its grant application had been successful and that the Club will receive £69K towards a new clubhouse and floodlights for two courts. Assuming the proposals are approved by both Cheshire West and Chester Council Planning Department and the Parish Council the improved facilities will help in attracting new members, provide more opportunities throughout the year for juniors and ensure that the Club's facilities overall match the expectations of an expanding village.

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.

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.

It has been 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 Parish Clerk. All matters of anti-social 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, please 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 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 S Hardacre, E Lush, R Williams

Home to School Transport Working Party

Councillors S Hardacre, E Lush, R Williams

PARISH COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Community Centre Management Committee

Councillor S Hardacre

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 2015 £	Year to 31st March 2014 £	See Note No
Balances brought forward	33,658	22,994	1
Plus Annual Precept	34,666	31,124	2
Plus Other Receipts	11,902	12,830	3
Less Staff Costs	12,982	12,800	4
Less Other Payments	22,290	20,490	5
Balances carried forward	44,954	33,658	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 £5,705, Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant £1,499, Bank Interest £27, VAT refunded by H M Customs and Excise £2,036, Churchyard Grant £685, donation of £50, compensation from Lloyds Bank £550, grant from Cheshire West and Chester Council £1,350.
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, Christmas lights, insurance, hire of rooms for meetings, training, printing, and grants given to local organisations.
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 £44,954 in the accounts at 31st March 2015 £12,160 is for New Play Equipment, £5,762 is restricted for youth work, £8,458 is the New Homes Bonus, £1,350 covers a grant received and awaiting an invoice for payment, and an amount of £3,935 is restricted. The most recent precept amounted to £34,666. Council consider that reserves of £13,289 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 Council's website and also 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 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)

The Tarvin Community Woodland (TCW) has become a very well used and much appreciated village asset. Anecdotally we hear from the housing developer and new residents that the woodland, as a leisure asset, has helped to convince people to move to Tarvin. It is also clear that we are attracting more users from neighbouring villages!

It is very important to the Trust that we continue to involve and communicate with all members of our Community. One of the ways we do this is via our twice yearly newsletter, which contains much information about our progress. Items mentioned this April included:-

1. At the end of 2014, the agreement to take over the woodland strip between the new Taylor Wimpey estate and the A51 road was lodged with the Land Registry. Once all building work is finished (no later than April 2017), the land will be handed over to us and soon thereafter, it should be possible to open the new footpath in order to extend the "woodland walk" right through to Austin's Hill. At the same time, we completed a deal with Cheshire West and Chester

Borough Council (CWaC) whereby we acquired the ownership of the existing woodland for a nominal sum. Obtaining the original 125 year lease on the woodland was a huge achievement but this now gives the community even greater security that the land will remain as amenity woodland in perpetuity. The changes do have implications. Legally, land has to be owned by someone and the 'someone' in this case is Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd – the Company Limited by Guarantee that we have set up. The Company has Directors (who are the former working' Trustees) and all of the legal rights and responsibilities attaching to the land are vested in those Directors. The Articles of the Company state clearly that the land can only be used as a public amenity woodland and the Directors must operate it on behalf of the community – hence it can be considered to be owned on behalf of the Tarvin community. Because it is no longer subject to a 125 year lease, it is also fair to say that, in a very real sense, it will be owned on behalf of the village for ever!

The decision to become a company, rather than remain as a Trust, was made because, legally, Trustees carry personal liability for all the commitments of a Trust. We have always purchased insurance for most foreseeable circumstances, but we wanted future recruits to feel comfortable with the level of their exposure and the Company Limited by Guarantee will achieve this because, should the Company fail, the Directors (as with all of the members of the Company) will be exposed to a financial guarantee of only £10 (and also have the protection of Directors & Officers Insurance, which will cover any liability in ordinary trading except for dishonest and illegal actions). The Company has no shares, can NEVER give a dividend and the Directors cannot make a personal gain. All monies must be re-invested for the benefit of the woodland, and hence the community.

The Company will still be referred to as "The Trust". The same 'working' Trustees have become the Directors of the Company, we will still hold our meetings on the first Monday of each month and we will continue to be out in the woodland doing maintenance every Thursday morning. However, unlike the original Trust, the Company is based on its group of members, from whom the Directors are drawn. The members are people from within the community who have the best interests of the woodland at heart and it is through the annual meeting of these members that the community will be able, across the years, to influence the way that its woodland is run.

2. We have submitted bids for grants to enable us to install water scrapes to the rear of Tarvin Primary School, with the dual aim of providing additional environments for wildlife within the woodland and of enabling pupils to conduct studies of aquatic life.
3. After soliciting the community's opinion, we have now removed alternate trees in the avenue of commemorative oaks and, as they begin to grow this year, we should begin to see an improvement – not only to the trees themselves but also to the growth of plants beneath them.
4. Recently, the disabled access (RADAR) gate at Townfield Lane was moved, all of the hedges have been trimmed and now look very smart, rails in the fence are replaced as they rot, maintenance has been done to the path and a great deal of coppicing has been undertaken. All of the work is done by our band of volunteers, who work so hard to keep the woodland in top condition and, last year, their time donated amounted to well over a thousand hours – worth more than £6,500 if paid at UK minimum rate. However, we could do with a good deal

more help and we invite folk to make contact with us if they would like to become involved.

5. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has produced further information, which says that the spread of Ash Die-back, a fungal disease of Ash trees, is now inevitable. We have a number of ash trees, of various sizes, and so we must be vigilant. However, should the disease strike, it is by no means clear what we should do. DEFRA recommend removal and burning of all infected trees but there are other experts who suggest that, if ALL the above-ground material is removed, the roots (which are not infected) will throw up new coppice stems which would, at least initially, be uninfected. We plan to seek the best advice available.
6. The woodland now contains sufficient apple trees to qualify as an orchard. Any fruit which had set was removed over the last two years, so that the trees could establish themselves, but we intend to allow them to develop some apples this year. Once they are mature, villagers are welcome to pick and eat them. Has anyone noticed how much fruit - especially apples - is left to rot beneath the trees of the village? Apples in particular will make good over-winter food for birds and so they are not really wasted. Even so, we have decided that we will hold a Tarvin Apple Pressing event in the autumn for families to come along and make their own apple juice. We hope this may become an annual event.

Financially, TCWT is in a sound condition thanks to the generosity of Community residents at fund raising events, the Parish Council, grant funders for particular projects and tax receipts from charitable donations. Thank you – the Trustees are appreciative and grateful.

Looking forward to this year and next, as we take over ownership and responsibility for the woodland extension to Austin's Hill, our running costs will rise but this has been taken care of for the foreseeable future in the land acquisition agreement. However, more maintenance/development man-hours will be required each week from volunteers and trustees. Recently we have had a working party of around six on our regular Thursday morning but we are keen to enlarge our cadre of volunteers for the future.

We are particularly proud of our association with the school (annual wildlife award, hides and bird feeders) and plan further joint initiatives, the next being the water scrapes in the woodland adjacent to the school grounds for which grant funding has been applied. We remain cautiously optimistic!

Finally, we thank the Parish Council for its support and through it the Community for their generosity. Politicians speak of the future of the "big society" – we believe in Tarvin it is already healthy and growing!

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 Ancient Parish of Tarvin.

During the past year 21 students have received awards to a total of £7850. Most of the grants were awarded to undergraduate students on University courses. A former recipient was given a grant towards research for a PhD in field of cancer therapy.

Another award was given to a ballet student to assist her travel to a top Ballet Company in the North of England.

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 held in mid-September 2014. Such applications may be made to the Clerk- D. H. Cotgreave at Brown Heath Farm, Tarvin CH3 8NE. e-mail applications are acceptable but should show the full local postal address and a contact number. e-mail to- dhcotgreave@btinternet.com

TARVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

The year started with a significant achievement when the new 25 year lease was signed with Cheshire West and Chester Council. 4 years of careful and detailed negotiation preceded this event but I'm delighted to say that the Community Centre now has a legally binding occupancy of the building and an agreement which will secure this vital asset for the community in the future. It also means that funding bodies can be approached with some confidence for improvement grants.

The cost of this security is high however with the Committee having to find £25,500 per annum, quarterly and in advance, to pay their share of the utilities and caretaking costs. I am delighted to report that this amount is being met out of regular lettings, a key policy of the Committee. The revenue raised from other events is placed in a reserve fund to finance improvements in the future.

I am delighted to report that the overall financial position of the Community Centre remains healthy with a closing balance of £38,488. However, the financial demands on that money are unending and the prospect of greater spending in the future as the improvement plans become a reality is a constant reminder to the Committee to be careful and prudent with their spending.

The grant from the Parish Council, a most welcome £1,200, was used partly to fund the costs associated with professional fees for Architects and Quantity Surveyors in the production of high quality plans to present to potential funders. The Committee is determined that the improvement plans should be totally robust, fully costed and sustainable, and has used the expertise of professionals accordingly. This sensible approach was used when the Committee was offered the recently vacated Children's Centre rooms, as it was conscious that extra floor space would increase the annual service charge but might not contribute much in income. An agreement has therefore been reached with CWaC to use the three rooms free of charge for a year to determine the potential for income generation. A room suitable for small meetings is now available for a modest charge and it is hoped that organisations, such as the Parish Council perhaps, will be able to make use of them.

Another use for the Parish Council grant was to underwrite the live children's theatre performances, enabling ticket prices to be kept low and to encourage audiences. This is proving very successful and there is a growing group of young theatre goers in the village. The Community Centre's involvement with Cheshire Rural Touring Arts continues with a Committee member now on both their Advisory and Programming boards.

The intensive use of the Community Centre has caused certain parts to look a little shabby and a series of improvements has been carried out during the year. Wherever possible this has meant accessing new, or at least matched, funding from other places:

Suspended ceiling and new LED Lighting in the Edna Rose Room – CWaC Members' Fund

Training Mats and Ballet Barre – Health and Well-being Grants Fund + Donation from the School of Dance

Decorating the foyer – Voluntary labour

“Welcome to Tarvin Village” leaflet – sponsorship from village shops and businesses

Curtains/decorating Edna Rose Room – response to grant application awaited from Cheshire Community Foundation

The Community Centre continues to reach out to village residents of all ages. The Family Film Nights continue to bring a large cross-section of young families through the door, while the following adult – or should that be grown-up? - film has proved increasingly popular. The new website and Facebook page have many followers especially among the younger residents and use is made of Tarvinonline to publicise events. Support from the Post Office as a Box Office is much appreciated. Last year the Village Fete was sponsored by the Community Centre and organised by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who worked tirelessly to revive a much-loved village event. It was a good day and many lessons have been learned which will make this year's Fete, on June 27th, even better. This event reaches young children and it is their involvement and that of their families that is vital for the long term future of the Centre. For the Community Centre to remain at the heart of the village there have to be people prepared to shoulder the burden of the work involved. This the current Committee has done with much enthusiasm and I thank them for their efforts. My own involvement was however becoming excessive and I contemplated resigning as Chairman, but a thorough re-organisation of the workload has meant that I am able to remain on the Committee. We do need new members of the community to come forward and to learn the processes involved. They are not difficult, and, as the present Committee can attest, they bring much satisfaction. Our recruiting efforts have not been in vain and we have had a number of new people coming forwards to help.

The Tarvin Community Centre Committee of Management is an ambitious body. It has a clear plan of action and a vision for the future. It is run carefully and professionally by enthusiasts who welcome the support they receive from the Parish Council. With that support they will continue to strive, together with others, to make Tarvin a great place to live.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

During the year Cheshire West and Chester Council carried out a Community Governance Review across the Borough. As a result at 31st March 2015 the existing Tarvin Parish will cease to exist. A new Tarvin Parish Council will be established on 1 April 2015 comprising of the old Tarvin Parish area plus the Parishes of Bruen Stapleford, Hockenhull, and Prior's Heys.

Parish Councillors and their Contact Details (covering the full year to 31st March 2015)

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 the Parish Council:

Write to: Mike Hassall, Clerk to Tarvin Parish Council, Roy Cottage, Townfield Lane, Tarvin CH3 8EG

e-mail Miketarvinparish@aol.com

telephone 01829 741075

