

Tarvin Parish Council Chairman's Report – 2022/23

I am pleased to deliver my Chairman's Report for Tarvin Parish Council ('the Council'), covering the year ended 31st March 2023.

The year was a challenging one financially for the Council. Each January, the Council sets a budget for the forthcoming year and applies for a Precept from the Borough Council (and ultimately from the council taxpayer) on that basis. However, the 2022/23 budget was set before rapidly accelerating inflation took hold. This, together with certain unforeseen costs, meant that an income shortfall arose, and the Council's reserves had to be used to make good the deficit. As particular examples, the electricity charge for the twenty-five council-owned streetlights increased by 180% compared to the previous year. The Council also incurred unbudgeted costs to clear and repair the drainage on the playing field. Consequently, the budget and the resulting precept for the forthcoming year has had to be set at a higher level to recognise this new reality.

During the year, one councillor resigned for business-related reasons and we welcomed two new councillors. In addition, three councillors intimated that they would not be standing for re-election at the May 4th council election and so there will be three vacancies on the council going forward. Residents are being encouraged to take this opportunity to join the Council and support our activities.

The responsibilities of the Council continued to be many and varied during the year, ranging from the routine (for example, maintenance of the King George V playing field and of certain parish infrastructure) to the one-off. An increasing number of items of play equipment were repaired or replaced and the Council was able to continue making grants to Tarvin-based charitable and volunteer-led organisations which contribute to the well-being of residents. Grants were made to Tarvin Community Woodland Trust, Tarvin Community Centre, TarvinOnline, Tarvin Village Fete, the Queens Platinum Jubilee Group, Tarvin Christmas Festival and St Andrews Painters Group.

Our relationship with Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (CWaC) can be frustrating at times, and we continue to negotiate with them on matters such as the implementation of speed warning signs and the delay in resolving the planning application for a travellers' site on Tarporley Road. The Parish Council continues to regularly remind CWaC on their grass cutting responsibilities.

Each year, the Council identifies one or more 'special projects' aimed at addressing a specific issue or improving facilities and 2022/23 was no exception. The quality of several parish footpaths is a cause for concern due to the encroachment of the grass verges. Agreement was therefore reached with CWaC to contribute to the cost of 'siding' the footpath along Tarporley Road as far as Okell's Garden Centre, although the work has yet to be completed at the time of writing. For 2023/24, the intention is to use the special project allocation to refurbish the war memorial stone and plaques.

The Council has a key role in helping to make the parish a pleasant place to live. Regular reminders regarding hedge maintenance and dog fouling are made via the Council Facebook page and the quarterly Tarvin Times newsletter. Litter picking is regularly performed on the playing field and two Parish Clean Ups were carried out during the year.

Another important aspect of the Council's work is commenting on planning applications. The majority of these are reviewed without further comment but objections or suggested changes are passed on to the local planning authority where necessary. Applications which did give rise to comments during the year included an application to construct houses on the former Frazer Chadwick site on ByPass Road and various applications for extensions to private homes.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow councillors and the Parish Clerk for their hard work and commitment to the Council during the past year. I look forward to working with them in 2023/24.

Robert Ford

Chairman