



Tarporley Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2008 ~ 2009

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Annual Report: Tarporley Parish Council 2008/2009

This is the Annual Report of the Tarporley Parish Council for the year April 2008 to March 2009. The report is based on presentations made at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 11th May 2009 that were subsequently received along with working group papers at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on the 11th May 2009

Chairman's Report - Heidi Dilliway-Nickson

It has been a busy year for Tarporley Parish Council, and in the main, councillors have worked well together with some worthwhile tangible results. Our clerk has continued to keep us in order, and to ensure that we comply with our hard earned "quality status". We have welcomed two new councillors (Cllr Mills and Cllr Whincup) to our number, and have said a fond goodbye to councillor Joyce and Cllr Sparks.

In 2008 the Parish Council working groups were re-organised into two distinct groups, with six councillors sitting on each group: Infrastructure (IWG) and Street Scene (SS). I feel this has helped to revitalise the Council and has led to the successful introduction of some very good village initiatives. The main goal of the groups was to help to interpret and move forward the objectives set down in the Parish Plan that was published in 2008.

- 1) The Business Alliance: The IWG helped to re-establish this worthwhile venture, and TPC funded the initial set up costs. The group is now well established, with an informative website: www.tarporleyba.co.uk, a growing membership, and a number of "events" scheduled for the coming year.
- 2) Country Market: TPC actively supported the formation of a Country Market Committee, and the first market was held in December 2008. These are now held monthly, have contributed to the Community Village spirit, are well supported, and there is a waiting list for stallholders.
- 3) The Christmas Lights Celebration: credit is due to the IWG who worked with local charities as well as Tarporley Silver Band and two local choirs to provide a very well attended Christmas Lights Switch On to mark the beginning of the Christmas period.
- 4) Youth Initiatives: the Parish Council has also been active in looking at ways to promote activities for the Tarporley village youth. Working with the local Police, our PCSO, teachers from the High School and Community Youth workers, a regular youth night held in a central location is nearing fruition. The village should see this project properly take shape during the Summer of 2009. My thanks to Cllr Mills & Cllr Lees for their dedication to this project.
- 5) Best Kept Village Award: We were thrilled to be awarded this fantastic prize in 2008. Cllr Brierley completed the application, and we were very chuffed to have taken this Award. I know that much is planned in the way of village planting to endeavour to keep this award next year.
- 6) Highways and Pathway Improvements: We continue to monitor the state of our roads and pathways, and an annual "walkabout" now takes place in the Spring with a member of CCC Highways to monitor trouble spots highlighted by ourselves, the clerk and the local villagers.
- 7) PCSO contract: On behalf of the village we contracted with the local police to obtain the services of PCSO Emily Benson for three years. This agreement draws to a close in May

2010, and the council is actively monitoring this service to ensure best value for the community and to determine whether to continue with the precept provision in the future.

The new Chester and Cheshire West Authority has now replaced Vale Royal Borough Council (May 2009), and we look forward with interest to see what implications this will have upon Tarporley as we are promised a more active involvement in making decisions that effect our day-to-day village lives.

There are many other community spirited ventures that the Council have in the pipeline, and these will come to fruition over the next 12 months, and reported upon in the fullness of time.

It is with great pleasure that I hand over the Chair in May to Cllr Brierley whom I am sure will do a sterling job of continuing to keep us working hard to preserve what I hope you will agree is an enviable way of village life.

Infrastructure Working Group Spokesperson Report - Heidi Dillway-Nickson

The Working Group comprises of six very hard working councillors. Newly established in early 2008, the group meets every 4 – 6 weeks, and has a number of working projects. Charged with interpreting many of the aspirations of the Parish Plan, the group targeted this village “wish list” as a priority.

Our successes for 2008/9:

Christmas Lights Festival – this was held on December 5th at the Chestnut Terrace. It was well publicised and well attended. The lights were “switched on” by local celebrity – Sister Stewart, and we were fortunate to have the support of Tarporley Silver Band, St Helens Choir, Eaton Village choir, and local charities – Inner Wheel, League of Friends and the Rotary. Father Christmas made his customary appearance, and the evening was generally felt to be a worthwhile event. Credit is due to Cllr Clough & Cllr Blackford for their work in organising and setting up the event.

Tarporley Business Association - The Business Alliance: The Parish Council appointed a Chairman to promote a Business Alliance for Tarporley Businesses, TPC helped with initial funding requirements (e.g. postage, surveys, mail etc). Our thanks go to a local businessman (David Carter) who started this organisation by canvassing local businesses and setting up a steering group. The group is now well established, meeting fortnightly, with an informative website: www.tarporleyba.com, 22 signed up members, and a number of “events” scheduled for the coming year.

Country Market – With the assistance of local villager – Karen Lamb and a dedicated Country Market Committee, the village saw its first Country Market in December 2008. These have now taken place on the first Saturday of each month and are well attended. We feel they have helped to contribute to our vibrant community spirit, which is very much in evidence on market days. The Parish Council provides storage facilities for the stalls, and a number of Councillors have helped with stall erection / dismantling, market publicity etc – especially during the early stages of the market.

Youth Initiatives: The IWG have also been active in looking at ways to promote activities for the Tarporley village youth. Cllr Mills has organised various meetings with children from the high school, and produced a survey of exactly what our village youth require. Working with the local Police, our PCSO, teachers from the High School and Community Youth workers, a regular youth night held in a central location is nearing fruition. The village should see this project properly take shape during the Summer of 2009. The police are also happy to assist in providing regular transport to the youths for excursions to local attractions such as the “bone yard”.

Bus Routes & Services: The IWG has promoted the weekly service that the parish council provides for the elderly to Rose Farm. It is also undertaking a survey to look at what bus routes are available for all people to get to Nantwich / Chester / other villages.

The PCSO Contract: This comes up for renewal in May 2010. Our working group has been in close contact with the Police Chief Inspector to ensure that we are able to get as much information as possible with regards to our PCSO's – Emily Benson – activities. We have also been in contact with our Parish Councils to look at how they are using their PCSO.

Transport & Highways: We have endeavoured to get a SID initiative operational (a community based speed initiative campaign to monitor the excessive speeding on routes in and out of the village). Unfortunately due to the changeover in our local authority the necessary training has not been forthcoming. However, we are hopeful that this project can be reactivated in 2009. We now have an annual village walkabout with an Inspector from Cheshire Highways, and we continue to monitor and to flag up the state of our roads (with valuable work being carried out in this regard by our clerk). We were pleased to see the resurfacing of Rode Street, for example.

On going Initiatives for 2009/10

Community Sports Facility: We are actively looking for land in the Central Tarporley area to develop for a community sports facility. We are confident that funding could be secured, however, the stumbling block remains that of location.

Tarporley Village Square: Discussions are underway with various bodies to explore the possibility of finding a location for a Village Square. This is a relatively new initiative and one that will require extensive public consultation to ensure that a majority view is secured in terms of location and facilities. A project that we hope to report back on in 2009/10.

The Infrastructure Working Group has had a busy and active year. I would like to thank all the Councillors that sit on this group for their very hard work. They have a dedication to the village that is very worthy. I have pleasure in handing over to Cllr Clough, whom will act as Spokesperson for 2009/10. I look forward to contributing to the continued success of this group.

Street Scene Working Group Spokesperson Report – Dr. Richard Brierley

The first major task of the year was to review the contracts for the Parish Council operatives and in particular those covering footpaths and litter-picking. These were seen to be too inflexible, leading to some inefficiency. For example, the terms of the street cleaning contract resulted in duplication of effort between our cleaner and those employed by VRBC. The review was completed and contracts agreed early in the year.

Several improvements to the street scene of the village are planned and several are in place. Following the opening of the new shops we were been able to install two new planters. After initial teething problems with the watering systems these are now a clear asset to the area and will soon be further enhanced by fitting the upper tiers. The location of further planters is now under discussion. The areas at the front and side of the Community Centre have also been transformed by additional planting and a scheme has also commenced to improve the village entrances. In all of these projects we are grateful for the sterling efforts of Cllr. Lees and his family, assisted at the Community Centre by Mr & Mrs Martin.

We had hoped to be able to install a new information board opposite the village sign during the year but this has been delayed to 2009/10 by the local government reorganisation. Provision of this board is in response to a need, identified in the Parish Plan, to link the sections of High Street either side of the bend.

Dog fouling is a perennial problem and the situation has not been helped by VRBC's inconsistent stance in the provision of disposal facilities. Dedicated bins have been refused, as have additional litterbins, which are the approved means of disposal. We now intend to approach CWAC regarding the problem. Chewing gum residue has also been noted as a growing problem, especially near to the Co-Op and Spar shops.

There is some concern that there is a gradual loss of mature indigenous trees without adequate replacement and we are attempting to track this situation and identify locations suitable for planting. It has also been observed that trees in certain locations are becoming overloaded with ivy, which could pose a threat to public safety as well as the integrity of the trees.

Other items concerning the group over the year have included the state of the telephone exchange, the area under the chestnut tree, footpaths and redundant sign poles. We had hoped that some repainting of street furniture and tidying of the Burton Square and Utkinton Road verges could be done under the Community Payback Scheme but cut-backs mean that we will probably have to either delay the work or fund it ourselves.

We again entered the Cheshire Community Action Community Pride (Best Kept Village) Competition and were very fortunate to be awarded Overall Winner. The judges were clearly impressed by the floral displays put on by the public houses and businesses in the village. Comments in most judging categories were favourable, although a few areas could be improved. We also entered the garden of Wilton Lodge, Walkers Lane in the Garden Awards Competition but, despite being praised by the judges, it lost out to a garden in Helsby. At the same ceremony the Community Centre refurbishment shared the area Community Project award with the Jesse Hughes Institute, Eaton.

Quality Parish Council report for the year – Ernest Boynes

Initiatives with regard to the delegation of service provision to the parish council from Vale Royal Borough Council were put on hold as a result of the imminent abolition of the authority.

Parish council members have, over the past year, attended a number of meetings and seminars arranged by the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils and members of the Shadow Cheshire West and Chester Council to be informed of the policies to be pursued by the new council, its organisational structure and contacts.

It is anticipated that as the policy of Cheshire West and Chester is stated to be the localisation of services that a number of initiatives related to service provision will be pursued throughout the coming year.

It will be necessary for Tarporley Parish Council to complete the Quality Council accreditation procedure by August of this year.

Affordable Housing Report for the year – Ernest Boynes

It has not been possible to initiate the provision of any additional affordable housing in the parish because of the lack of building land at a suitable price.

The decision to defer the move of the Primary School to the High School has also deferred the proposal that a number of affordable houses be built on the land that would have been release for house building.

Cheshire West and Chester council will be considering this situation during 2009/10.

Should there be a successful appeal against the refusal of the application for the provision of a care facility at Heatherways three affordable apartments would be included.

Should, as a result of the change in government housing policy, planning permission be granted for a housing development at Heatherways, then, provided the development was for more than 16 homes, it is understood that 30% would have to be affordable.

Cemetery Committee Chairman's Report for the year – Ernest Boynes

The Tarporley Parish Council Cemetery was required to open for burials on 29 February 2008 instead of April as the St. Helen's churchyard had no more space. Since that date there had been six full burials with exclusive rights, three pre purchases of full grave exclusive rights and one pre-purchase of cremated remains exclusive rights. One bench has been donated and installed and the cemetery is now being regularly mown and hedges trimmed. A fallen hornbeam tree at the lower end of the cemetery is being cut up and removed by a local person.

The current fees have been confirmed.

A water tap is to be installed at a cost of £500.

It has been decided to initiate the design and cost of a small garden area for the scattering of ashes, to include some seating and a footpath. The garden to be situated on unconsecrated land in the north east corner of the field and adjacent to the rectory garden.

Clerk's report on finances for the year - John Macdonald

The year opened with a bank balance of £20,700, an anticipated income of £54,000 from the precept and modest other income expected from grants and bank interest to fund a budget of £56,500. In practice additional income was accrued due to a refund on Christmas Lights electricity from ScottishPower and the growing income stream from the new cemetery raising other income sources to £11,700. The increased income plus a reduction in expenditure against budget to £49,800 due largely to a reduction in Christmas Lights costs resulted in a year-end bank balance of £36,600. Of the £36,600 bank balance £20,500 is allocated as reserves against specific accounts including replacement of the Council's £86,100 assets and £16,100 is available for allocation as expenditure plans in 2009-10 unfold.

Parish Councillor contact details

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Mrs L Burrows	23 Churchill Drive	733228
Mrs G Clough (Vice-Chair)*	18 Utkinton Rd	733545
Mr R Craven	36 Oathills Drive	732869
Mr T Hill	Salterswell House	732804
Mr G Lees	3 Birch Heath Bank	733832
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* as of May 2009