

Notes from The Strategy Working Group (SWG), 3 May 2016

Present: John Millington, Gordon Pearson, Nigel Taylor, Peter Tavernor

The SWG has been formed by the Tarporley Parish Council (TPC) to “initially identify and prioritise areas where the PC can support or deliver achievement of the vision, objectives and policies set out in the Tarporley Neighbourhood Plan”.

A working premise was that whilst the TPC had had another busy year, progress on many projects had been slow and difficult. With the actions and policies to be added to the agenda from the Neighbourhood Plan, it would now be necessary to track and achieve substantially more. Furthermore the change-out of the Clerk would necessitate a review of how the TPC worked, with the opportunity to lessen the burden on the Clerk and evolve the role such that Councillors took more responsibility for the management system and progressing agreed items.

In discussion the following key points emerged:

- It would be essential to have an inventory and track progress on key items. Realistically this would be a 3-year plan with a few (3-5) items prioritised each year. This would include items from the Neighbourhood plan together with key projects, issues and risks. Each item would have a Councillor owner, who may have a working group/team assisting. Each month the PC would review progress on priority items in a standing item on the agenda. A sample spreadsheet is included.
- Having successfully updated the website, it could now be helpful to document a simple Management System. This would involve embellishing some descriptions of how the TPC worked, but adding some pieces that were not known or visible to all eg. Contracts, Records Management, Standing Orders etc. With the change-out of the Clerk, documenting how things were done would be particularly valuable.
- Some shared folder for Councillors might be helpful so that all documents and communications were visible as drafts/working documents. This could be administered by the Clerk, but would allow Councillors to own and progress items without having too many emails exchanged. The aim is to reduce the burden on the Clerk to follow through on agreed action items.

Currently it was felt too easy in a busy environment for items to drop off the radar (eg Community Benefits list, S106 status) and also difficult to keep any strategic focus on community priorities for delivery (eg substantially increased car parking).

Proposal: The SWG facilitate a working group session of the full Council aimed at reviewing further how the Council works, focusing how best to deliver its projects for community benefit and considering some new ways of working based on some of the above. Ideally this event should take place before a new Clerk is appointed.