

Annual Report

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Tarporley Parish Council Chairman's Report 2019

Your Parish Council

Parish Councils start their annual cycle of meetings each May, with elections being held every 4 years. Here in Tarporley, the election on May 2nd was uncontested because only 11 people put their names forward for the 12 places. 10 of those people were Parish Councillors in the previous Council, which means that, once again, Tarporley will have an experienced and knowledgeable Council well able to take a whole series of projects forward.

Many thanks for their previous service to the 2 Councillors who decided not to stand for re-election, and we welcome one new Councillor to the team.

Our Parish Clerk, Delia Cox has decided to leave in May and our Deputy Clerk, Abigail Webb, will be returning at about the same time, from maternity leave following the birth of her daughter. Ann Wright has been appointed as our Parish Clerk. Ann has been standing in as Deputy Clerk to cover Abigail's maternity leave and she was previously the Clerk to Tarporley Parish Council.

Names of your Parish Councillors and Clerks, and how to contact them, are **at the end of this report.**

Please remember that Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers. I thank all our Councillors for their time, dedication and commitment over the last year.

Brook Road Outdoor Sports & Recreation Facility

By far the largest project to be undertaken by the Parish Council is the new Outdoor Sports & Recreation Facility at Brook Road. We are now entering a crucial phase, including work to relocate Great Crested Newts(GCN) and preliminary ground works to level the site. You will notice plastic newt barrier fencing going up around the site shortly (if not already) and this must not be disturbed, or it could delay commencement of the construction work. **Please do NOT enter the field or allow dogs to do so. This could disrupt critical ecology work, causing extra expense and/or delay to the project.**

The Parish Council has contracted licensed ecologists to clear the site of Great Crested Newts (GCN) in readiness for groundworks to commence on site this summer. We have also commissioned the Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWAC) Landscape Design and Built Environment team to project manage the delivery of the new facility as we approach the construction phase. The initial phases of the work will be funded by secured S106 monies. As part of their appointment, CWAC will also assist with grant applications for the additional funding needed for future phases.

It has taken a great deal of work to get the project to this stage. Planning permission and the GCN Mitigation Plans were approved in February 2018. This stipulated a requirement for a drainage scheme to be designed and approved by United Utilities and unfortunately by the time that was processed it was too late in the GCN calendar to get work going on site last year.

Oathills Lea

Weaver Vale Housing Trust have yet to announce their plans for the future of the Oathills Lea sheltered housing complex.

To inform decisions around the future of Oathills Lea, Tarporley, Rushton and Little Budworth Parish Councils worked with Cheshire West & Chester Council and Weaver Vale Housing Trust (WVHT) with assistance from Cheshire Community Action to undertake a Housing Needs Survey. The survey is complete, and the results are being analysed.

The Parish Council will continue to work with our Ward Councillor, Eveleigh Moore Dutton and CWAC Council to influence as far as possible that WVHT deliver a good outcome for the current and future residents of Oathills Lea.

Car Parking Update

All this activity has not removed our focus from the ongoing issue of parking. This has not been helped by the rather too frequent closure of all or long sections of the high street for a variety of works. This is outside Parish Council control and we have complained vigorously about these as well. New car parks are desperately needed to support the economy of the village and it is very sad to see a number of our High Street businesses closing.

Centenary Car Park on Poppy Lane - The latest update from the developers about the long-promised handover of the new car park on the former Royal British Legion site is that it should be available for public use by the middle of June. Let's hope this is correct as they have missed several indicated handover dates as far back as last August.

New Car Parks – CWAC have issued their Car Parking Strategy for Tarporley and have recognised the urgency of providing a new car park as and when land becomes available. Unfortunately, almost all the potential sites are already under option agreements with developers for future housing projects and they are prepared to wait a long time for that to happen. Other landowners refuse to consider allowing or selling their land for a car park.

Following consultation with Tarporley Residents and Businesses and in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council has indicated its support in principle to the proposal to build a care home and 88 space public car park off the High Street. A planning application has yet to be submitted for the scheme.

The Parish Council continues to work with CWAC Council to deliver new car parking but there are no quick or easy solutions and it is as frustrating for us as it is for you.

Finances

You will see from the Financial Report that 2018/19 expenditure was almost exactly on budget. A £52k Community Infrastructure Levy contribution added to our year-end predicted reserves of 127k should take our reserves to around £179k. Whilst we will take the opportunity to advance and identify minor projects (new benches and cemetery paths etc in 2019), these funds will not lessen our dependency on benefactors, individual and organisations, to contribute substantially to deliver improvements to our village infrastructure, in particular the Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facility at Brook Road.

Best Kept Village Campaign

Tarporley has been entered the Best Kept Village Competition this year and, by the time you read this, judging will have started and will continue throughout the Summer until sometime in September.

The community led Best Kept Village Campaign and their teams of volunteers, coordinated by Lisa Miller, have made a massive difference already, tidying up areas of the village that looked like they hadn't been done for years. The competition itself would be great to win but, just as importantly, it provides a focus for a number of activities to tidy up and refresh the appearance of the village. The visual impression of the village is important as much for all of us residents as it is for the visitors to the area who provide valuable income to our local businesses.

These days, Cheshire West and Chester Council only undertake work in the interests of public safety, and do not do this kind of deep clean. So please don't think you're already paying for someone to do this.

As well as generally supporting and assisting with the BKV Campaign, the Parish Council has been involved in some specific activities:

New Rose Bed Planted at Burton Square - After removal of the laurel hedge, excavating 9 buried concrete slabs plus an old flagpole foundation, repainting the flagpole base and turfing the bare ground, a rose bed has been planted around the flagpole. This should provide a colourful display throughout the summer and benches will be installed. BKV volunteers have also tidied up the woodland area at the back of Burton Square. If you're not familiar with this part of the village, it's well worth a visit.

New Benches – The Parish Council has bought 4 new wooden benches (in the style of those installed in front of St Helen's Church last year) and the BKV Campaign has bought 2 more of the same style of benches from money raised at their Bingo Night.

Phone Box - The Parish Council are to become the owners of the red phone box near the chemists, and it has already been re-painted to the correct colour. The most popular idea for its use is to host a defibrillator. Another favoured idea is to have a book exchange there. Watch this space or shall I say - the phone box's! More ideas welcome.

Milestone – The old milestone on the High Street has had all the flaky paint removed to reveal the lettering as originally carved and has been repainted. There were dots on all the I's afterall.

A lot more needs to be done and it's not all about litter picking and tidying – although that is very important. We wish to encourage everyone to be involved. Just keeping the area near where you live tidy and weed and litter free would make a great difference. If you would like to get involved or if you know of something or an area that needs attention and you can't do it yourself then please contact Lisa Miller, Best Kept Village Campaign Coordinator via the Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/tarporleybestkeptvillage

Community Transport

Further to a recent survey by CW&C, the Parish Council continues to work with neighbouring Parishes and CW&C regarding possible options to improve community transport services in the Tarporley area.

Community Speed Watch

Speeding in parts of the village continues to be a problem and the PCSO for Tarporley, Kenneth Williamson, has done quite a lot of speed monitoring and interventions. Unfortunately, despite several residents volunteering to assist with a "Speed Watch" scheme, not enough people came forward to make the scheme work. If you are concerned about speeding in the village and would like to help, then please email the Parish Council Clerk at clerk@tarporley.org.uk or call 07943 382 493.

TarpFest 2019

TarpFest was an enormous success last year and a team has formed to do it again this year. Debbie Jowett, who helped Emma and Victoria coordinate things last year, volunteered to coordinate a community steering committee to run the event, with support from businesses, community organisations and the Parish Council. If you would like to know more about TarpFest or to help organise it or to run your own event as part of TarpFest, then please contact Debbie via the TarpFest Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tarpfest

Christmas event

Following the massive turnout at last year's event and lots of helpful feedback from those attending, the Parish Council will be reviewing arrangements for this year's event. What we have decided so far is that it will be on Saturday 30th November with Santa, Santa's grotto and reindeer again but with the reindeer located in the woodland area beside St Helen's Church. The Parish Council is coordinating with High Street businesses with a view to extending event activities along more of the High Street and from earlier in the day. More lights and Christmas trees are planned too.

Looking Ahead

A lot has been achieved and delivered, but the Best Kept Village Campaign has shown how more volunteers can make a big impact. Delivery of major projects and maintaining momentum on BKV etc. will be helped with more support and volunteering across the community.

Planning.

Tarporley Parish Council has been notified of 55 planning applications during the Council year from May 1st, 2018 until May 1st 2019.

Of these 55, 5 were applications related to listed buildings (LBC), 9 related to Tree Preservations Orders (TPO) or Conservation Area Trees (CAT).

The LBC applications included an application relating to changes at The Swan, although this application was approved the corresponding FUL or normal planning application was withdrawn.

13 Applications related to extensions of existing buildings, while 5 related to new garages or car ports.

2 applications related to discharge or change of planning conditions which had been set when the applications had been approved during previous years.

Another 2 applications related to change of use of buildings into beauty clinics.

8 applications proposed new dwellings, 5 of which were to create or convert buildings into a single new dwelling. One application proposed 4 starter homes while another proposed 13 new dwellings on land at the junction of Brook Road and Eaton Lane, an application was also received to convert the former NatWest bank building into 2 dwellings. At the time of writing the 13 new dwellings and former bank conversion have not been decided by CW&C.

Other applications of interest included an application to replace the Tarporley Community Centre Roof and an application to create additional parking spaces on the car park behind the Rising Sun by Jones Homes.

The Parish Council commented on all the planning applications received.

It is important to note the Parish Council does not decide planning applications but has can seek to influence planning decisions by submitting comments to CW&C and also by influencing developers before they submit planning applications particularly for larger developments.

The Parish Council takes this role very seriously and encourages developers to engage with the Council and Community before submitting a planning application, all meetings that Councillors have with developers or landowners are noted and these notes are made public. The Council uses these meetings to encourage developers to comply with the Tarporley Neighbourhood Plan which has had a significant impact on shaping planning in Tarporley since its adoption.

The Council's planning orders and planning protocol can be viewed on the Council's website under Regulatory Publications at <http://www.tarporley.org.uk/tarporley-parish-council/publications/>

Council Attendance 2018-2019.

Tarporley Parish Council held 12 Parish Council meetings between May 2018-2019, one of which was an extraordinary meeting in August 2018 which attracted over 50 members of the public due to the discussion of planning application 18/02222/OUT, for 13 dwellings at land adjoining the junction of Brook Road and Eaton Lane (at the time of writing this application has not been decided by CW&C).

Over the year an average of just over 9 members of the public attended each Council meeting.

CW&C Councillor Eveleigh Moore Dutton attend all but one of the Council meetings having sent her apologies for the June 2018 meeting.

An average of 9 councillors attend each council meeting, however it should be noted that between July and August the Council was two councillors short due to councillor resignations.

Two new Councillors were co-opted and joined the Council in September 2018, Toni Burke and Mark Ravenscroft.

Moving forward 11 councillors have been elected through an uncontested election to form the new council as such the Parish Council will be looking to co-opt one further Councillor to fill the one vacant seat.

Meeting Dates for 2019-2019

Monday 20th May 2019 - First Meeting or Annual Parish Council Meeting

10th June 2019

8th June 2019

8th July 2019
9th September 2019
14th October 2019
11th November 2019
9th December 2019
13th January 2020
10th February 2020
9th March 2020
13th April 2020
11th May 2020 - First Meeting or Annual Parish Council Meeting

Did you know?

All our meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to attend meetings and residents have the opportunity to raise any matter of concern relating to the Parish during public participation.

However, the Council can only make decisions and discuss matters which are included on the agenda as such the Council may not be able to discuss the issue you raise at that meeting but may agree to include it on a future agenda.

As such if you have an item you want raise and feel it is something the Council needs to discuss and make a decision on please contact the Clerk in advance of the meeting to discuss whether the matter can be included on the agenda, noting the agenda is published a week before the meeting.

Finances & Precept

The Council's finances are in a healthy state. Total running costs for 2018/19 look very much as budgeted (predicted only £136 over budget, ie. only 0.16% adrift) and reserves are predicted to rise to 127k.

In proposing the 2019/20 budget, the Finance Working group anticipated inflation around 3% overall on total costs and revised each cost centre through discussion. Two significant increases should be noted: salaries rise reflecting individual higher rates and should provide for the current staffing arrangements to continue in budget terms at least (+6k on budget, +3k actual); Garden areas has to reflect the significantly increased scope for a full year (4 to 8k on budget, actual projected 7.2k current year). The proposed budget benefits from dropping the Community transport provision (3k) and removing capital expenditure from Xmas events (5k; the running costs we still uplift by 1k to 7k, but may need to vote more at the time if sponsorship isn't forthcoming for what many want as an even bigger event).

Regarding income, receipts were much lower on the cemetery (predicted 3.7k, down from 7.4k) and so we have planned on the lower level income for the coming year. Similarly we know the grant further reduces, by half, to £656. However, the precept benefits from the increased number of properties and, using the national guidance of a 3% increase, would now raise 81.8k. So, with our other income from grants and the cemetery (5.2k), it means we can cover our total projected running costs at 87k.

Turning to Reserves and Earmarking, these look to be settling at a higher level (127k) from the c.100k that we used in the past for splitting on a broadly 40/40/20 basis across Car Parking/Outdoor Sports & Recreation/Other minor projects. Earmarking doesn't prevent the PC from directing it's reserves to where it wishes should the need/project arise that justifies at the time, so to that extent

earmarking is simply an indication of our priorities. Rather than finesse the 40/40/20 split across the 127k, we propose to have a Revenue reserve/contingency of 27k which could be directed to whatever priority or need is justified, noting that there are several uncertainties/opportunities that may arise requiring this (eg. any car parking opportunity; resolving an alternative to the Hearse House store; playground renovation). We have already included 5k for more Xmas lights.

Finally, the precept raised will rise from 72k in 2017/18 to 82k in 2019/20. This is of course a sizeable rise, but it reflects the increased number of households we serve and only increases in the rate as per national guidance. Previously we have noted how our asset base (with the accompanying responsibilities) is also rising substantially such that the additional funds and budgets are necessary. All told though it means our cost to the average Band D household rises from £52.08 to £53.64 (a 3% increase) but remains a little over a modest £1 a week.

Summary of Accounts 2018-2019

Balance Carried Forward **£121,760**
(from 2017-18)

Receipts (Money Received)	
Precept	77,412
Grants (CW&C; Housing Needs Survey)	1,856
Interest & VAT Rebate	6,041
Cemetery	5,590
Misc - insurance claim/refunds/final community bus	534
Lychgate Lane resurfacing project contributions*	6,500
HMRC (Maternity Funding)	6,004
S106 developer funding (benches; Brook Rd ecology)	8,105
Community Infrastructure Levy - Daffodil Field site	52,579
Total Receipts	£164,621

Payments Made	
Staff costs (Salaries, HMRC, Payroll, Pension)	24,463
Administration/Misc	5,014
Room hire	1,817
Insurance	1,302
Cemetery maintenance incl. emptying bin	3,808
Village maintenance incl. car park gritting	15,322
Play area inspections and repairs	2,602
Brook Road sports field development	508
Events (Xmas, Carnival, Remembrance Day, art plaques)	13,611
Grants to Church & Chapel (graveyard)	1,750
Grant to War Memorial Hospital	2,000
Grant to Tarporley Community Centre	2,000
Grants to Groups	4,250
Projects - Ex RBL site costs including Clerk of Works	2,278
Projects - Lychgate Lane costs	11,682
Projects - Benches and noticeboards (balance/repairs)	7,773
Projects - High Street Traffic Regulation Order	1,750

Projects - Red Fox related speed limit change - contribution	500
Projects - Housing Needs Survey	1,087
VAT	8,888
Total Payments	£112,405
Balance carried forward (to 2019-20)	£173,976

Tarporley Parish Council – Grant Awarding Scheme

Tarporley Parish Council has a grant awarding scheme in place where grants are awarded to community groups that serve Tarporley.

The Parish Council considers large grants around April and considers smaller grants of up to £250 (£500 in exceptional circumstances) around October each year, having advertised for grant applications during September, all applications must be submitted on the Council's grant application form.

The Council's grant policy can be found at <http://www.tarporley.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Grants-Awarding-Policy-October-2018.pdf>

The following is a list of grants awarded over the last year:

Date	Recipient	Amount
1st Round - Apr 18	Tarporley Community Centre	£2,000
1st Round - Apr 18	Tarporley War Memorial Hospital	£2,000
1st Round - Apr 18	St Helen's Church - Graveyard	£1,000
1st Round - Apr 18	Bap & Meth Church - Graveyard	£750
Additional - Aug 18	Tarporley Remembers - print costs	£230
2nd Round - Oct 18	Cotebrook Pre-School	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	NCT Mid Cheshire Branch	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	St Helen's Bellringers	£120
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Allotment Holders	£170
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Badminton Club	£150
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarp. B&M Church (Holiday Club)	£200
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Bowling Club	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley 2nd Guides	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Decibellas Choir	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Primary PTA	£380
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Scouts	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Silver Band	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Twinning Association	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley & District U3A	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Park Run	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	OPAL	£250
2nd Round - Oct 18	Tarporley Done Room Pre School	£250
	Total grants	£10,000