

Tarvin Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report – 2025/26

I am pleased to deliver the Chairman's Annual Report for Tarvin Parish Council ('the Council'), covering the year ended 31st March 2026.

The Council's finances continue to be in a reasonable shape. Close budgetary control during 25/26 has allowed the Council to set a modest precept increase of 3.9% for the forthcoming year, which represents less than £1 a week for a Band D property. The aim of Council is to hold the recommended minimum of 25% of precept as a reserve against future years' unexpected costs. "Precept" is the term applied to the amount of funding provided by residents through their Council Tax to fund the Council's obligations.

The Council has a normal compliment of eleven councillors who take part in meetings and the various working parties set up to manage its various responsibilities. One councillor resigned during the year, and so a vacancy exists which is in the process of being advertised. The Council is keen to encourage greater involvement in the local democratic process and the forthcoming review and update of the Tarvin Neighbourhood Plan, to which I refer later in my report, will provide an excellent opportunity for residents to get involved in determining how the Parish evolves over the forthcoming years.

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 makes additional contributions to build up the reserve which will be used to replace items as they reach the end of their serviceable life. The Council is also exploring the possibility of funding a number of 'kissing gates' to improve the accessibility of local public footpaths.

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 it is considered necessary. A significant development in the wider planning environment is the government's plans to significantly increase the nation's housing stock over the next several years. This will inevitably have an impact on Tarvin Parish and as a result, the Council has engaged with an expert planning organisation to assist in the redevelopment of our Neighbourhood Plan.

This will require a parish-wide initiative with involvement from all relevant stakeholders. It will be an important document which will help shape the evolution of the parish over the next twenty years and plans are underway to ensure residents have every opportunity to shape the document's content.

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 the Community Woodland Trust, the Community Centre, Tarvinonline, Tarvin Athletic FC and the Tarvin Pre School and Day Nursery.

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, with a very good turnout of volunteers at the Spring litter pick. Parking issues continue to be regularly raised by residents, primarily on the High Street and Lower High Street, particularly during the day when they can be a deterrent to visitors to local shops and businesses. Some respite may arise should the proposal for housing off Church Street, which includes a car park near the village centre be approved.

One initiative during the year was to regularise ownership of the land surrounding the War Memorial on Church Street as being under the Council's domain. This land is currently regarded as common land, but the Parish Council has recently been advised by our solicitors that this proposal would likely to be rejected by the Land Registry and as such will not be progressed.

Where issues arise that are the responsibility of the Borough Council, the Council's efforts to achieve results have met with limited success. After many years of complaining over the state of the road surface on Church Street, this has now finally been addressed. However, requests to consider reviewing speed limits are constrained by a backlog of requests in the Borough generally and a move to push the cost of any changes onto parish council budgets. Planning enforcement is also slow due to limited resources at CWaC and all residents will be painfully aware of how long it takes to get action on filling in potholes. Where we have sought action on perceived road safety issues, progress is frustrated by national guidelines on speed restrictions and what constitutes obstructive parking.

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.

Robert Ford
14th May 2026