

Utkinton and Cotebrook Courier

The newsletter about the
community by the community

Issue 1
January 2017

Welcome to the 'Courier'

You may well ask why you are getting this newsletter when we have been publishing our newsletter in 'The Tarporley Talk'? In previous years we have used printed newsletters but they took an age to produce, were immediately out of date - like the song "Yesterdays Papers" and the technology to write and produce it had become onerous.

So the Parish Council decided to try the 'Talk' as it could be delivered to every household in the Parish along with news and events from other councils and organisations – but having taken soundings from quite a few residents, it wasn't widely read and some didn't even know that we put a page in it. It was also costly and in these days of austerity, the Parish Council had to 'count the pennies' – after all they are YOUR pennies.

As a result the Council took a decision to produce four quarterly editions and hand deliver them to every household and whilst some items may be up to 13 weeks old, some will be 'hot off the press'. Of course we would appreciate your input and if you have anything that is likely to be of interest to others in the community, or an event that you would like to publicise that will take place over the coming months then we would like to hear from you.

The aim is to offer every resident, organisation, club, business, team an opportunity regardless of their size – so please make the best of this.

In this issue we will take a look at:

- The Parish Council
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Our Village Halls
- St John and the Holy Cross in Cotebrook
- The decision by the Diocese of Chester to turn down a playground at Utkinton School
- Big planning issues
- The WI

Some will be in depth others less so – let us know what you would like to see.

Frank Tunney

Editor – utkintonpc@gmail.com

Parish Council News. - A look back and a step forward

Frank Tunney – Chair of the Parish Council

What a year it's been!

Well, at the beginning of a new year I thought I would take a look back at a pretty eventful and busy year in the Parish and some of the issues we have faced, some of the challenges we have worked on and some of the projects yet to come to fruition.

First though we had a disappointment over the school playing field, but more of that in a dedicated piece later in the newsletter.

The village of Utkinton united to persuade CWaC Planning Department to reject an application for up to 22 houses on Northgate field and we are still waiting for news. However CWaC have told us that it is likely that the developers may come forward with an alternative scheme – but for what, and when, we do not know. But your support during this year has been invaluable – thank you and thanks in particular to the 'Green Space Action Group' who put in so much effort to the comments about the application.

The Parish Council used some of the 'New Homes Bonus' money (sadly since discontinued by CWaC) from developments across the ward to pay for the installation of a flashing speed sign on Quarry Bank just above the school. The balance will be used in Cotebrook for a 40 mph flashing sign just above the 'Fox and Barrel' on the A49.

Thanks to a donation by Judith and Matthew Grant we now have a defibrillator installed at Rose Farm Shop.

We started to look at another of our goals n – a safe walking/cycling route between Utkinton and Tarporley. Right now we are looking at the feasibility with CWaC and a charity called 'Sustrans' and once we have a study done we will bring the results to the Parish for your views.

In a similar vein, the Parish Council approved proposals to move towards adopting a 'Neighbourhood Development Plan' – known simply as 'The Neighbourhood Plan' and this began in November and Councillor Priestner was asked to lead the project and Tony Dahill agreed to head up the steering group.

Finally, well almost, we are still seeking a willing resident from the whole of the parish to join the parish council – it only takes 11 evenings each year and can be very rewarding for what can be achieved. If you are interested please get in touch via the 'Feedback and Comments' page or email me direct.

WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING?

By Cllr Ian Priestner and Tony Dahill.

In 2010 the government introduced a new right for communities like ours to draw up a neighbourhood development plan which allows communities to come together to decide aspects of their own future.

The decisions are made by you, for you and relate to the natural and built environment, social and leisure activities, as well as what improvements or changes you think are needed.

Neighbourhood development plans can be simple or go into considerable detail.

Provided there is general conformity with local and national planning policy and other legal requirements, parishioners will be able to vote on whether to accept the Neighbourhood Plan or not. If a majority approve it,

Cheshire West and Chester Council will register it and it will influence all future decisions about Utkinton and Cotebrook made by local government, including planning.

In the next few weeks we will be circulating a flyer to all households that will lay it all out for you – and we will be asking members of the community to volunteer to join the Steering Committee to help ‘steer’ the process to the eventual adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the community evolves into the future.

One of the key aspects of NDP is that we need to be aware of any plots/parcels of land in the Parish that are capable of development and it would be of great assistance if you could let the team know.

During Spring the team will be putting together some public consultation meetings at which you can voice your opinion, put forward ideas and issues that you feel are relevant to the community’s future. In addition, if you have any parcel of land that you feel could be used for community purposes or even limited development it will be welcome.

Also if you are willing to put your name forward for the Steering Committee then you can do so at the meetings or please get in touch with us:

Ian Priestner 01829 752009 – ianpriestner@hotmail.com

Tony Dahill 01829 733701 - anthony.dahill@btinternet.com

DIOCESE OF CHESTER TURNS DOWN REQUEST FOR CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA ON UTKINTON SCHOOL FIELD

'A policy as part of the 2013 Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Plan, supported overwhelmingly by residents, was to provide a play area for children:

POLICIES FOR THE PARISH : -

> To develop proposals for a children's' playground and recreational facilities for further consideration by residents.

Of those households that responded to the 2013 Parish Plan's Household Survey, 67% wished to see a Play Area for children in the Parish.

On behalf of residents the Parish Council identified a number of possible locations. Most however, for a variety of reasons, were not entirely suitable; so it approached the school to see if its school field, not used a great deal, could be used. The Head Teacher, the Parents Teachers Association and parents with children were supportive; and a survey of parents took place to solicit their support and for them to consider types and styles of equipment preferred.

The intention was to place three small items of play facilities on the school field; a toddler's two-swing unit, a two-swing unit for older children and a small climbing tower with a slide. It was possible to place these on the field so as not to cause a conflict with existing facilities - the football pitch and running track and to minimise noise for residents. The Health and Safety team at Cheshire West and Chester Council that it would be safe to install this play area on the school playing field confirmed it.

Encouraged by this support, the Parish Council approached the landowners, the Diocese of Chester, to negotiate access and use of the playing field.

The Parish Council and the School hoped that a simple letter of request to the Church, seeking permission to place the play facilities on the field would be met by ... "what a good idea and a great benefit for local children please go ahead, you have the Diocese's full support." But it was not to be.

Unfortunately, a positive response from the Diocese was not forthcoming and resulted in the Parish Council being involved over the next eleven months in correspondence and discussion with the Church; involving, at various stages, the School, Parents Teachers Association, and our local Ward Councillor; the Member of Parliament Antoinette Sandbach and Cheshire West and Chester Council Education, Planning and Property departments.

We also wrote to the Bishop of Chester seeking his support, he declined to get involved and referred us to the Church Business and Finance Committee.

What surprised and disappointed us most in all these eleven months, despite frequent requests, that not once did the Diocese agree to meet the Parish Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council to discuss the issues in a round table discussion.

The Diocese raised many concerns over the play area, some seemed to be 'straw men' and the discussions became long and protracted. We believe that we attempted to answer all their concerns and were encouraged when the Church proposed a deed of variation to allow the use of the field as a play area. Accordingly, the Parish Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council drafted a deed of variation in good faith and sought agreement from the Diocese so we could press ahead.

At all times we had continued to communicate our intentions through the Parish Plan, updates on our website, the Parish Newsletter and Tarporley Talk, delivered free to all households in Utkinton and Cotebrook. At a late stage a small number of households (four) raised concerns around the use of the field by children and fears around their privacy security being disturbed. In order to assuage their concerns and answer their questions, the Parish Council, the Parents Teachers Association and the School Head organised a meeting. Unfortunately the mood of the meeting was hostile towards the project, the Parish Council and School. Such was the tone of the statements being made by the objectors that the representative of the PTA withdrew.

The residents wished to protect the lease, which limits use only to pupils at the School, and what they saw as 'protected space'. In addition the objecting residents were concerned about opening up the playing field to wider use in the village and that it should only be used by children attending the school and then only during school hours.

The Parish Council believes these fears were unfounded and were supported by the PTA and the Head Teacher, who reiterated that they were confident they could manage a more open potential use of the playing field without problems.

We also recognise that there have been issues in the past, but they were minor and dealt with effectively and there have been no recordable incidents over the last ten years at least, according to the records kept by the School. Nor could the Diocese produce any record of misuse over the many years they have been responsible as landowners. Nor has any resident or visitor to the Parish made any complaint on any grounds concerning the use by children of the play area. The rules governing use of the play area have been adhered to.

Despite there being no evidence of disturbance, the Diocese, in their rejection of our request, cited the risk of noise and affray as cause of their objection. Every village in the land has to accept a reasonable level of occasional disturbance to natural and welcome tranquillity. How else can our children expect to enjoy their childhoods, do we expect them to play in perfect silence? If so many of the noises we welcome in our countryside, including perhaps church bells, may themselves be outlawed by this injudicious and unreasonable response by the Diocese.

Next the Diocese suggested we should identify a further alternative site for the children's play area. Our response was that if we had an alternative that was feasible, we would already have gone there. This suggested that the Diocese were not acting in good faith, rather that they were placing their duties as landowners above their responsibilities to Parishioners. Then they were concerned about the site's charitable status and the financial impact and so it went on.

Finally, after eleven months of fruitless talking, we arrived at the conclusion that their real concerns were possibly about the potential future value of the site, especially from a planning point of view.

This comment, is an extract from an email sent by the CDBF to the Properties Team at CWaC "... *Can they [CWaC] assure the DBF that our agreement to allow this use would have no implications for any future planning application.*"

If at any stage, planning permission were obtained for housing or similar developments it would greatly enhance the value of the site in question.

It would also restrict any current use by children of the site.

It's just a great pity that the interests of our children seem to have been pushed aside for a possibility of gain in the future; and a great shame that a way could not be found through to allow children of the Parish to play safely.

Our reaction is, naturally, one of disappointment. As one Parishioner remarked: "I thought they were a Christian organisation!"

Postscript to the decision:

A parent has refused to accept this and has raised a petition to try and change the minds of the Diocese.

The petition was posted on the Parish Facebook page and has been read nearly 2000 times, a petition in Rose Farm Shop is beginning to gain signatures and the issue has been picked up by the Chester Chronicle and Tarporley News – so there are opportunities to express and convey your disappointment and concerns to a wider audience.

If you would like to sign the petition go to:

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/utkinton-village-childrens-playground> or you can sign when you are at the tills in Rose Farm Shop.

The petition can also be accessed through Parish Facebook pages at:

Utkinton and Cotebrook Community Page

In the meantime the Parish Council will not give up and is looking for suitable plots of land in Utkinton so if you know of somewhere that could be made available for a playground please get in touch.

Sadly, the Parish Council had to inform Bunbury Parish Council – who were kindly donating the equipment FREE OF CHARGE – that we would not be able to take it up. Hopefully it will go to another needy Parish in the area.

Breaking News:

VACANCY

PART-TIME CLERK and RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER (RFO)

Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Council, is seeking a part-time Clerk (average 4 hours per week). The Clerk manages the finances and correspondence of the Council and supports the 11 Parish Council meetings per year.

The Clerk is the official point of contact for the Council and is responsible for carrying out the Council's instructions, dealing with all correspondence (mainly e-mail plus some telephone and post), managing the council's finances and keeping the books of account. Applicants will also be required to manage aspects of the Parish Council's web site and can view the site at <http://www.utkintonandcotebrook.com> . The current precept is approximately £7,000 per year and the finances are quite simple and straightforward. In addition the Clerk will be responsible for managing the budgets and expenditure for the Utkinton and Cotebrook Neighbourhood Development Plan – this will be the subject of incremental reimbursement. The Clerk will be required to work from home, apart from attending Council meetings. Applicants will need their own computer and would ideally have relevant previous experience, but full training can be given. Full Job Description and List of Duties will be provided.

Pay is at the approved rates commensurate with experience, and expenses are reimbursed in full.

For an informal chat about this vacancy, telephone Frank Tunney (the Chairman) on 07860 917446 or e-mail utkintonpc@gmail.com .

To apply please send a letter highlighting your relevant qualifications, skills and experience to:

Mr Frank Tunney

Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Council

'Long Meadow', Tirley Lane, Utkinton

Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 0JZ.

Our Village Halls:

We are very lucky to have any village hall but to have two in the Parish is an abundance of riches. They are thriving and well used, available for hire for private events large or small and groups of up to 700.

Utkinton Village Hall, The hall has been recently renovated and is available for hire by organisations and individuals on a regular or “one off” basis. It has a capacity of up to 70. There is parking for about six cars on the small car park. And kitchen facilities are available with wheelchair access into the hall and disabled toilets. To book please phone 01829 733701 the hall has regular sessions in:

Toning and Yoga (Monday), Fitness and Pilates (Tuesday), Pilates (Wednesday and Thursday), Toddler Group and Line Dancing (Friday) and NIA Dance (Saturday)

Multi sport Court: The hall has a multi sport court with facilities available for: tennis, netball / basketball and five-a-side goals for football. If you wish to join please contact the secretary by [email](#)

Cotebrook Village Hall has rooms to hire that are ideal for Clubs or Societies on either short or long-term bases, and also excellent for social events and private or club functions. All enquiries are welcome.

Tel: 01829 760213 or 01829 760344

or e-mail Judith Walters judithmjones@hotmail.com

Cotebrook Orchestra - a small and informal group of instrumentalists who meet every Thursday from 8pm – 10pm , Contact: Neil Glendinning (conductor) 01244 375186 or Sarah Cooper 01829 760654

Mid-Cheshire Amateur Radio Society (MIDCARS): meets every Wednesday evening and has members interested in a wide variety of subjects. New members and anyone who wishes to come along and see what goes on:

Cotebrook Pre-school a rural pre-school, located within 5 minutes drive of Tarporley village and easy reach of the A49 and A51. Rated as ‘GOOD’ by Ofsted. We offer facilities for children to play, learn and develop in a safe environment, including an outdoor play area and have been established for over 30 years with an excellent reputation in the local area.

Opening Times: We have sessions available during school Term on the following days/times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 08:45 to 15:15

Friday – 08:45 to 12:15

Contact: **Email:** info@cotebrookpreschool.co.uk **Mobile:** 07849 642417

St John and the Holy Cross – Cotebrook

Reverend Georgina Watmore

Our annual candlelit carol service was as well attended as ever as we gathered once more to retell the Christmas Story through readings and much loved Christmas carols. It was a delight to be joined by so many members of Cotebrook Pre-School and other families and watch as the children bought up and placed the characters to build our crib scene. After blessing the crib those children who wished joined at the front to sing the first verse of Away in a Manger before everyone else joined in. This was a joyous occasion and thanks to the generosity of the organising committee we carried on our celebrations with refreshments in the Village Hall.



St John's holds a service once a month - the first Sunday at 11:15am so our upcoming services are on February 5th March 5th April 2nd and then Easter Day April 16th.

You are very welcome to join us for any service.

Utkinton WI

Utkinton WI was formed in 1919 at Tirley Garth, moving into the Village Hall in 1922, and they celebrated their 90th birthday there in 2009.

The Village Hall where we meet has been greatly renovated, inside and out, and our members are looking forward to having many meetings there.

Members of Utkinton Women's Institute would like to welcome you to our meetings held on the second Wednesday of every month, except January, at 7.30pm. See our notices at the village shop, and on the Village Hall notice board for more information on our meetings, or watch this website in future.

Talks and demonstrations are arranged, but there is time for socialising too, over refreshments. We also have trips and theatre visits, and involvement with other local WIs.

COME AND JOIN UTKINTON WI, THE MORE THE MERRIER

To join contact Liz Hannath (liz@jsbentley.co.uk) or phone her on 01829 733778 or simply turn up

They also have a page on the Parish website at

<https://utkintonandcotebrook.com/utkinton/utkinton-wi/>

Are you connected?

Broadband and mobile technology has changed so much of our lives and the parish and community has had a website for a number of years. But we took a decision to create a new site in February of 2016 taking advantage of a package called 'WordPress' (other packages are available) that was easy to update and edit. Thus far in the eleven months since it was created its had well over 13,000 'hits' and the reaction has been good. In concert with that we created a Facebook page and that too, is reaching a large number of people – one item reaching almost 2,000 readers!

Utkinton and Cotebrook Community Website



About the Website

Welcome to the community website for the village of Cotebrook and the hamlet of Utkinton, funded by the Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Council. In its pages you can find details of local activities; notices of events; news items; and much more.

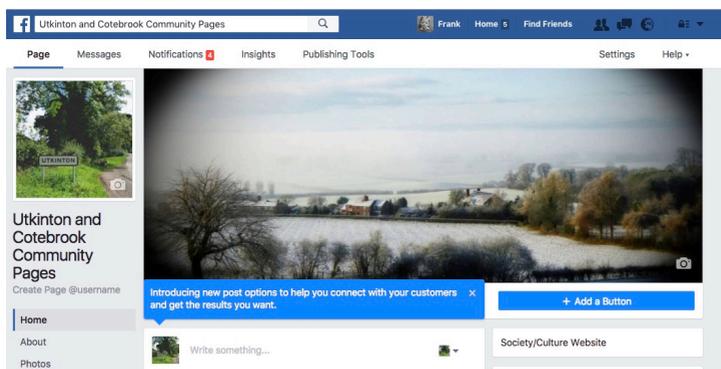
[Subscribe](#) to our Website, its free and we promise we will not bombard you with 'spam' but try to keep you informed. If you want to make any comments or suggestions, please do so using the [Contact and Feedback](#) form and we will respond as soon as we can. We will be very happy to hear from you.

 Search

Recent Posts

- Vacancy for part-time Parish Clerk January 12, 2017
- Wine Tasting Evening January 11, 2017
- A look back and a step forward January 1, 2017
- "It's Good News Week..." December 28, 2016
- Fishpool Lane – Better late than never ... December 20, 2016
- Post Office Consultation December 20, 2016

If you have a computer, tablet or phone simply type in: <http://www.utkintonandcotebrook.com> This is what it looks like:



You can navigate between pages very easily and even comment on each item and the Facebook page can be reached by typing 'Utkinton and Cotebrook Community Pages'

Dates for your diary

The Parish Council meets monthly at either Cotebrook or Utkinton Village Hall – below are the dates for the rest of 2017:

14 th February	-	Cotebrook Village Hall
14 th March	-	Utkinton Village Hall
11 th April	-	Cotebrook Village Hall
9 th May	-	Utkinton Village Hall
13 th June	-	Cotebrook Village Hall
11 th July	-	Utkinton Village Hall
12 th September	-	Cotebrook Village Hall
10 th October	-	Utkinton Village Hall
14 th November	-	Cotebrook Village Hall
12 th December	-	Utkinton Village Hall

Meetings normally commence at 7:30 pm and have a 15 minute public session at the start (Except for December which starts at 7:00)

Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Council

- Francis Tunney (Chair) 07860 917446
- Graham Stewart (Vice Chair) 01829 733216
- Trudy Boyle 07545 554780
- Andrew Needham 01829 732444
- Ian Priestner 01829 752009
- Nick Parker 07850 930095
- Roger Barnes 07861 312534
- Tony Burford
- Our Parish Clerk can be contacted at utkintonandcotebrookclerk@gmail.com

Our Website – www.utkintonandcotebrook.com

Facebook – **Utkinton and Cotebrook Community Page**

WI – Utkinton Village Hall – 2nd Wednesday of every Month (except January)

STOP PRESS:

This article reached us just after the copy deadline and the presses were already rolling so we are including it here (our apologies to the school and pupils):

Utkinton St Paul's Primary School was delighted to be given the opportunity to contribute to this quarterly parish newsletter. We see this as an excellent opportunity to keep the local community in touch with school life and the many exciting experiences and successes our children enjoy.



Over the past three years the school has seen a significant period of growth – increasing in numbers by nearly a third. We currently have 60 children on roll, with most year groups now full. This period has also seen us increase from a three class to four class structure, enabling us to now teach Reception

children separately when they arrive with us at the age of 5. With a curriculum very much based on imagination and play, children are given the best possible start to their education – preparing them for when formal learning begins at Year 1.

An influx of young families moving into the village has played a significant role in this increase in numbers. Families moving into the village take great pride in our school and community, going out of their way to volunteer their help and support in the best interests of both. We have also been fortunate that families from outside our catchment have also chosen to join us, with our morning bus run being a key factor in transporting children into the village and keeping traffic to a minimum around school.

In a time of great change, where communities are growing larger and schools being forced to expand, we have continued to hold on to our unique selling point of small class sizes and a genuine family feel. These factors mean that our children receive high levels of attention and support, whilst their parents receive more personalised feedback through both formal and informal dialogue.

Results as children leave for high school have continued to remain strong. Children of all abilities are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in a supportive, nurturing environment. Many of our children go on to achieve outstanding outcomes at high school and feedback is always positive, not

only about their ability but also about them as positive citizens. This reflects well on our approach to not only developing children academically but also to developing them as young people – providing them with the skills to survive and thrive in modern life.

Over the past 18 months we have been developing our teaching and learning policies in conjunction with the new National Curriculum, which came into force in September 2014. We wanted our policies to be based on the best approaches currently available, providing our children with an outstanding curriculum both inside and outside of the classroom. Outcomes from this have seen us introduce a thematic curriculum, where all learning each term is based around a common theme. Our literacy approach has seen us inspire children to read and write through high quality books related to these themes, whilst our maths curriculum is based on the Singapore approach. In fact we were one of the first schools in the area to introduce this way of working, with teachers from as far away as Liverpool coming to visit us to see how we have implemented this approach.

Physical Education is at the heart of daily life at our school. In April 2016 we introduced the Daily Mile concept, where children have the opportunity to run a mile a day. This has seen a significant improvement in children's physical and mental wellbeing. Alongside this we



enter weekly competitions at Tarporley High School, where children compete in a range of different sports against other local schools. In fact, over the course of this academic year so far, our children in Year 5 and 6 have won every small school competition they have entered!

We have been delighted to play a key role in establishing the Toddler Group that runs at Utkinton Village Hall from 9.30 – 11 each Friday morning during term time. Founded and run by parents from our school, this has helped connect us with young families. Many of these children then go on to attend our Stay and Play sessions, which are free of charge and take place every Friday afternoon during term time. Children from the ages of 3-5 years old spend the day in our school, learning alongside our current Reception class. This has not only provided opportunity to increase our numbers coming in but has also improved the overall transition for these children when they then go on to join us in Reception.

Anyone wishing to visit the school can do so by contacting the school office on 01829 732322.