



Tivetshall Parish Council Report for the Annual Parish Meeting, May 2013

The big event of the past year has to have been the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Entertainment for our children, who were each given a commemorative mug, was complemented by a wandering magician to confound the adults. Tea and coffee were served all day, and everybody had a chance to try some of the many, many, cakes baked by parishioners. The cake judged the winner was entered by Vince, of whom more in a moment, although he refused to take any credit, or any prize. A bar was available for those who wanted it, as was a barbecue and a chocolate fountain, both outdoors in the June sunshine. Finally, musical entertainment late into the evening capped off a wonderful day. Our thanks must go to the small group of parishioners, ultimately led by David Evans, who put it all together – and spent much of the next day clearing up! Not flotillas or fireworks but an appropriate village event to mark a special national occasion.

The festivities were, sadly, followed by tragedy. Councillor Paul Vincent, Vince as he liked to be called, was unfortunately killed in a motorcycle accident. His partner, Maria, was also seriously injured but after some months in hospital, and the enormous kindness shown by Doreen Gray in caring for her, she is slowly recovering.

Regrettably, this year has seen several resignations from the council, mostly for personal reasons. Being a councillor is a significant commitment and people do find it difficult to fit in with personal lives, especially when they are ill, or are caring for others, as many of us are. I would like to personally thank all of those who have served this year, without whom there probably would not have been a council at all.

Whilst not wishing to dwell on them, no report on the year can ignore our failures. There have been differences of opinion, differences of perception, and differing recollections of what has happened at council meetings. It is a matter of some regret that this has led to bitterness amongst councillors and parishioners. Your councillors will be working hard to avoid similar issues arising in the future.

This year has, to some extent, been occupied with mundane matters. Legislative changes over the past few years have led to a seemingly interminable process of change, which has, at times, appeared revolutionary rather than evolutionary. Politics being what it is, there will undoubtedly be more changes and, when necessary, your council will take appropriate action. Moving forward, however, the council wish to focus their attention on the maintenance and improvement of facilities within the villages.

There has been discussion throughout the year on what needs to be done and what can be done, based on ideas from councillors and suggestions from parishioners. Maintenance of the playground is overdue, and will be underway soon, and upgrading of the pavilion has been considered though no decision has yet been made. Your council has, of late, been occupied, dare I say over-occupied,

investigating safety concerns for pedestrians in the village centre, and for vehicles exiting Hales Street. We hope to be able to obtain funding from Norfolk County Council, and maybe other sources, for some improvements in one or both of these areas. We also hope to be able to provide a motion-sensitive light for pedestrians crossing the A140 after alighting from buses on dark winter evenings. As best we can tell, parishioners do not feel the provision of a bus shelter to be worthwhile expenditure. The benefit, whilst real, is considered small and it was felt that the upkeep of what would be an easy target for vandalism could land the council with a liability rather than an asset.

Love it or loathe it, renewable energy is changing our rural landscape. In a saga to rival Beowulf, the planning application for giant turbines on the Patten Lane site has been withdrawn whilst a new application for the Semere Green site in Pulham has been submitted. So called micro-turbines are popping up all around the local area, and there are now plans in the wind, so to speak, for a hundred-acre solar farm north of Station Road. In all these developments your council will continue to represent your views to the appropriate authorities.

More immediate, and somewhat smaller in scale, is the expected building of four new houses on, or just off, The Street. Work on this project is expected to be completed this year.

Village finances have taken a bit of a hit this year with the Jubilee celebrations but such relatively rare events are part of the glue that holds us together and celebrating them is the right thing to do: we hope you agree that this was a good use of what was, ultimately, your money.

To finish on a personal note, I have not been a councillor long, and finding myself in the Chair has been a surprise. I have much to learn and I hope that you will bear with me while I do this, and endeavour to do my best for the villages and for you. I have been very heartened by the many kind words I have received from parishioners to date.

Tony Jollans
May 2013