

A year ago I gave my first report to this meeting. Then, as a councillor of just a few months' standing, I could claim credit for small achievements, whilst glossing over failures. No such luck this year; I have been Chair for the year and whatever has happened, has happened on my watch. The failures are, of course, all mine and the successes a result of the hard work of others, and I must, first and foremost, thank my three co-councillors, without whom nothing much at all would have happened. I must also say a huge thank you to Vivienne Dennis who, as she has before, stepped up to the breach and took our minutes whilst we were between clerks.

We have spent time learning how to do what needs doing, who to contact when we can't do things ourselves, and some, just some, of the myriad rules and regulations that bind us. I have attended two courses – a playground inspection course, run by RoSPA, and a chairmanship skills course run by NALC (the Norfolk Association of Local Councils), and Pam has attended initial councillor training, also run by NALC. We had hoped for more training but some courses run by NRCC (the Norfolk Rural Communities Council) were, unfortunately, cancelled. Along with other councillors, I attended the AGMs of both the NRCC and NALC, as well as a Waveney Valley Neighbourhood Board meeting. Through these and other events, we try to keep abreast of what is happening in the world of local government.

In November we took on a new clerk, Sally Chapman. Some of you will already know her, and, for those of you who don't, she is now performing one of her many duties: taking our minutes. Sally is now first point of contact for the council should you wish to ask anything of us, or report anything to us.

Over the year we have looked at various situations. We have, thus far, been unable to do anything about the dangerous exit from Hales Street, but we have not forgotten it. With help from Norfolk County Council, we have had a motion-sensitive light installed by the bus stop on the A140, something that I, personally, have wanted to see ever since my children first used the bus, and we still hope to get some footpaths on the most dangerous bends through the village.

Late last year, we managed to get the overgrown hedging on the edge of the play area cut back, and the play pit, and other areas, cleared of weeds. Since then we have had new bark laid in the play pit to keep it safe for our children to play in. We are in the process of getting all the woodwork in and around the play area treated and brought back up to a standard that we hope to maintain through a programme of regular maintenance. Although not actually from Tivetshall, a local football team has expressed interest in using our field on a regular basis next season and it will be good to see it used regularly.

The one thing that seems to concern local people the most is rubbish: dog waste, and fly tipping in particular. To try to address the first of these, the local dog warden has now added Tivetshall to his patrols, and to the second, we recently organised a 'litter pick' in the villages. Although turnout was disappointing, we are grateful to those few who gave a couple of hours of their time, and collected, between them, more than 15 bags of discarded rubbish from our streets.

One of the biggest problems we have had this year was something that should not have been a problem at all: the building of new affordable homes. Rarely can one small development project have caused so many complaints. Development work has now been completed, and South Norfolk council are advertising to find qualifying local people who wish to rent them.

I cannot end without a plea for help, the same one I put in every issue of *The Grapevine*: please, please, please, if you can spare a few hours a month, do consider becoming a parish councillor; we are but four people, and there are three vacancies to be filled. If you can help in any way, please get in touch with any of your councillors.

*Tony Jollans, 13 May 2014*