

Our year, unfortunately, started badly. This time last year I was introducing our new clerk to you, hoping that her appointment would help us to move forward, but no sooner had I done this than she abruptly resigned. This was followed by the resignations, each for their own reasons, of two councillors and, once again, we found ourselves in a state of disarray: with just two councillors we could not continue. With the help of South Norfolk council, and some very kind volunteers from neighbouring parishes, we were able to co-opt two parishioners to become quorate again, although we remain very short of people.

I must, before saying more, thank Christopher Miller and Rita Land for stepping up to the breach, as it were, and welcome them to our happy band. I must also say that we, once again, owe a huge debt of gratitude to Vivienne Dennis, who has stood in and taken our minutes for most of the year.

This year has seen the construction of the path at the edge of the Village Green. This has not been as successful as we hoped, and is a little rough for prams and pushchairs. People have been seen walking along the road beside it which is not what we wanted, but we hope at least that its presence alerts drivers to the possible presence of pedestrians. The response has made us wary of considering further similar paths, and the Parish Partnership scheme, under which it was installed, although still in existence, is not as generous as it was. Improvements to the path may not be easy or cheap, but can be investigated.

Planning concerns are often contentious, and we seem to have had more than our share of these this year. Representing the council, I, along with parishioners, have attended several meetings of South Norfolk council's planning committee, to try to stop unwelcome development, unfortunately meeting with little success.

The program of maintenance, started a couple of years ago, continues. Norse did cut back the worst of the brambles for us, but the trees and hedging around the bottle bank are still in need of attention. When we are free of the long term contract we have with Norse we will be able to consider including more work in a new contract, whether with Norse or some other provider. We are also looking at some TLC for various woodwork around the parishes: benches, notice boards, and the like, continuing the fine work done by Tim Playford to the fences and the play equipment.

One enhancement to village life has been the arrival of a football club playing on the field. They are from Tasburgh, but they are keen – they have made the improvements themselves – and would welcome local players.

The issues raised most often remain seem to remain the same: speeding, dog waste and refuse. Most of the problems are, unfortunately, caused by parishioners themselves: of course outsiders speed, but so do parishioners! Of course some waste is dropped by outsiders, but much of it is dropped by parishioners. I'm sure we can all be a little forgetful at times, I know I can, but I would urge all parishioners to respect their local environment, and to keep it more pleasant for everyone.

Mundane matters continue to occupy much of the council's time between meetings and, with so few councillors, leave little time for anything else. I know I am always asking for volunteers, as is every other organisation, but without them, nothing much can get done. If you, as parishioners, want action, some of you must do some of it. If you, as parishioners, don't like what your council does, join us and promote what you want. Maybe I could stop making mistakes if more people were watching and catching me before I fall instead of having to pick me up afterwards!