

Chair's Report

East Tuddenham Parish Council has had a successful past year. During our time we have managed to get our team up to full strength with Jackie Painting joining us and not wishing to deter the support of David Cator, James Howells stepped down as a councillor to enable David to join us. Having new people allows for diversity of thought and ideas and already the Council and our Parish has benefited from their work and contributions. At this point I would like to extend our sincere thanks to James Howells who has been a fantastic support to the Council and our Parish. James has brought great insights into many of the issues that we have managed and has also been a great mentor to me in my role of Chair as well as others. He is a very balanced and positive person and whilst he may not be formally on the Council, I know that he will continue to be a great support to us all.

We have also had a change in our Clerk, and we welcomed Rory Skepelhorn to the team in October. Again, it should be noted that our past Clerk Lorraine Trueman was fundamental in assisting us to set up processes and practices to ensure we operate as a fully functioning compliant council and it is great to see that continuing with our new Clerk in place. As a result over this past year, we have managed to stay within our budgets and are finally starting to build some reserves.

The main priority for the Council over this past year has been the focus on the proposed housing development. This has been challenging for the Council to navigate due to difference of opinions in our Parish. I have been extremely grateful to my teams time and commitment in ensuring that our communications and responses have been timely and also non-biased. Our role is to represent all our views of the Parish and I hope we have given confidence to you all that this is what we have done.

We have all enjoyed various events that have been held in our Parish this past year – from walks to the open days at the Community Allotment, in particular the work put in at the Easter Event, the Village Fete and Fireworks, the re-vamp at the Village Hall and even the Litter Picks. All of these events have involved members of our community giving up their time for the benefit of others. I therefore find it unhelpful when I hear points of negativity and criticism at the work that has been completed. I may add, that whilst we might not always get it right, we must note that this is people giving up their time and therefore I would advocate for people to just be kind to one another as the negativity is extremely disheartening.

In 2023 our resident and leader of the Community Allotment Ann Keen led the way for East Tuddenham to be awarded the status of being a Mindful Village. A small group of residents spent time being trained to become mental health community champions through the Breckland Mindful Towns and Villages programme. This means that if you are a resident in need, you can speak to local volunteers who can help signpost and provide support and intervention.

Communications within our Parish has been an area we have wanted to focus on, and we are pleased that Tom Bland continues to publish a super Parish Pump, and also leads the way with the community Facebook page. We are also undergoing work on the website and are currently in the process of the Village Hall joining so we create a specific site for our

news and events. We hope this will be easier for everyone to navigate what is happening in East Tuddenham.

It has been super to see the new planters in our village which does make a nice welcome every day driving home, so thank you to the Community Allotment team for helping to make this happen. If everyone can help keep the village clean and tidy, even if it involves extending your lawn mower or strimmer to a small part that would make a difference outside your boundary, it does make a difference.

The wider projects for the Norwich Western Link and also the A47 Dualling are still underway, and the Parish Council will remain abreast of any impacts on our village. We have also seen the departure of our local vicar Mark McCaghrey and whilst the Church has been at risk of closure it has been positive that a small team is in place to help gain footfall – and I would particularly note the Christmas Service last year, which was absolutely fantastic, finishing with mulled wine and mince pies kindly organised by Eleanor Redmund and Chris Rose. That event to me is what our community is all about and I look forward to many more.

To close my report, I would personally like to thank my Council Team for supporting me and you and who I find an absolute pleasure to work with. Getting to know my team has enabled some lovely friendships to happen, and I would urge everyone in our community to spend time getting to know their neighbours. We have new people who have joined our village who perhaps don't know the best walks, or the history, or places to visit, so wouldn't that be a nice conversation to have.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank you – our parishioners for attending our meetings and for your continued support and communication with us.

The Parish Council wish to be a continued and valued voice of the community.