

## TICKNALL PARISH COUNCIL

### ANNUAL REPORT

24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005

The Parish Council would like to thank Richard Parker for the immense contribution he has made during his time as Chairman of the Parish Council. His commonsense approach and lifetime's knowledge of Ticknall have made him a very able Chairman. The Council is extremely pleased that Richard wishes to stay on as a councillor as his experience will be greatly used.

2004/2005 has been another busy year for the Parish Council, and if the last 2 or 3 months are an indication of what the future is going to be like then the Council is going to be even busier this next year.

On the Planning front there have been around 30 planning applications, the majority of which the Council has supported, though sometimes with reservations. The most contentious ones are those, which are in prominent positions and/or seek to fundamentally change the character of the immediate area. However, with the new directives from Whitehall now beginning to make an impact, the balance of planning influence does seem to be shifting to the views of the District Planning Department. Having said that your Council will still look at each planning application on its own merits and try to respond objectively, although if there is significant public opinion, for or against, then the Council will take this into account when it responds. Also there is another Whitehall directive to get Parish Councils more involved in developing the planning framework for its area, so it will be interesting to see whether this pro-active approach has a positive impact on how planning applications are viewed. Unless the Parish members tell us otherwise, we will endeavour to ensure that the nature of Ticknall is largely preserved.

We were disappointed in the developments, which resulted in the Post Office being closed, and our attempt to support it being resited in the Village Hall was unsuccessful. The Village Hall Committee were prepared to house the post office in the Village Hall but unfortunately a postmaster could not be found to run the post office. If there is a local person willing to take this role on then the situation still could be reversed. In these matters the Parish Council does not have any executive role; it can only try and influence the outcome.

As explained in the recent Newsletter, we have had to spend quite a lot of time examining our finances and making decisions with regard to the level of Precept levied. We are very much happier now that we have improved our financial position, and that the improvements we have made to our budgeting process should enable us to absorb unexpected costs in the future.

During this year, your Clerk and Councillors have started to participate in the training, education, workshop and briefing sessions organised in the main by South Derbyshire District Council and the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils. Also your Clerk is undertaking an education course leading to the Clerks' formal qualification. This involvement is bringing benefits from making us less insular, enabling us to learn from other councils' experiences, and to make us more professional. There are costs associated with these activities and also time demands on both Clerk and Councillors. But it is our view that this involvement is overdue and should, in the long run, make your Parish Council a much more effective body.

Enlarging on this subject, it is now becoming clear that the Government is intent on enhancing the image of parish councils and transforming them into an effective first tier of Local Government. Of course, not all Parish Councils will make the grade, and so there is a real risk that the survival of the fittest will apply and that we may well see the merging of parish councils. Where this entails a larger parish absorbing a smaller parish, inevitably the smaller parish will feel that it has lost out, as the number of councillors allowed is not a simple arithmetic relationship. It is with this in mind that we have embarked on a journey to become a Quality Parish Council over the next 2 years. The first impact that parishioners have seen of this was the newsletter published in March. Every house should have had one and we intend to issue a new one approximately every quarter. There are other changes and initiatives, which we need to undertake and these will be communicated at the appropriate time.

### **Chairman's overview**

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their work and involvement throughout the year. As we mentioned earlier in the report many changes are planned for Parish Councils, and in the last year we have all worked very hard to modernise and the council is evolving into a more efficient body. In the coming two years the work load will increase but we are committed to serving the community of Ticknall and I am sure that we will rise to the challenge. You can now contact the Parish Council on the Clerk's email address if you would like a copy of the agendas and minutes or if you want to bring any matter to the attention of the Parish Council.

### **Summary of Accounts 2004/05**

Balance brought forward: 01.04.04		£4,029.68
Precept (local rate)	£2,550	
Other income	£5,742.92	
		£8,292.92
		<hr/>
		£12,322.60
Payments	£6,936.49	<hr/>
Balance at 31.03.05		£5,386.11

## Parish Councillors and Clerk's contact details

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