

Upwell Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

This report, to be presented at the annual Parish Assembly on April 11th, marks the end of the 4 year tenure of the Parish Council in its present membership. It is pleasing to report that, in the 4 year period, there has been only one change in the personnel serving on the Council. David Barnard resigned from the Council and Brian Carr was co-opted onto the Council to fill the vacancy created. The fact that 12 councillors remained in continuous service over the whole period meant that there was continuity in all the numerous discussions and deliberations undertaken, and attendance at meetings was in the main extremely regular. Interestingly, where it had in the past sometimes proved difficult to recruit people willing to give up the time and effort necessary to serve, no fewer than 7 applicants put themselves forward for this one vacancy. This is obviously an indication of a growing interest in parish and community affairs, but it is also reassuring in that we now know that 3 of the present councillors have decided not to put themselves forward for election this time around. It is all the more important that parishioners participate in the election on May 5th, and that proper consideration is given to the choices to be made on that day. Equally important in terms of continuity and uninterrupted service is the ongoing presence of both the Parish Clerk, Kate Copley, and our Assistant Clerk, Kate Bennett. Both have given sterling service to the Council, having established a sound and confident knowledge of the tasks to be undertaken, and the many contacts which need to be made in order for proper and efficient co-operation can be established with the principal councils and the numerous agencies and companies with which the Council does business.

The Council's meeting structure of one full council meeting plus 3 committee meetings per month has proved to be sound and contacts necessary between meetings are normally facilitated by e-mails and or telephone. All meetings are carefully minuted and careful records are kept of correspondence, and contacts with the agencies mentioned above. All financial transactions are recorded in appropriate detail, and are subject to a full external audit. This has always been fully approved. These matters, together with the quarterly production of our popular newsletter, have contributed to our retaining our status as a Quality Council, which is an indication to our parishioners that this Council's business and conduct are all that they should be, as certified by the National Association of Town and Parish Councils.

The currently serving councillors are well aware of the need to keep abreast of community affairs and concerns, and for this reason various members of the Council are also involved with many local groups, societies and clubs. Much additional voluntary work has been carried out on, for instance the War Memorial garden, the Community Garden at the back of the hall and the flower beds at the front. Volunteers have been out gritting difficult areas during the really cold weather, and two of our councillors have given of their own time and effort to repair the railings along Town Street, so that these are once again safe and attractive as a village feature. Likewise bus shelters have been repaired and restored to acceptable standards. Excellent use has been made of the Community service teams, under the guidance of the designated councillor who is highly experienced in this area and who knows the supervisors on a friendly and productive level.

The Council owns this village hall, and is particularly grateful to the volunteers who form the Village Hall Management Committee, for their continuing work in ensuring that the hall and its contents are maintained to a high standard, and for directing, through the Hall

manager, a highly varied and pleasing programme of activities, events and hirings. The Council's declared wish is for the hall to be at the centre of village and community activities and a glance through the list of hall usage contained in the current Council newsletter will provide a good working idea of the pattern of use in any given week. The Council also actively supports the Playing Field Committee in its endeavours and we retain the hope that that committee will one day achieve its cherished ambition to replace the old pavilion with a purpose built new building.

Communication with our parishioners is most important, and the aforementioned newsletter has done much to enhance the knowledge of what the Council does and how it works. We also have a Council website, and the three Council notice boards are kept up to date with dates of meetings, minutes and other relevant information. It may be for this reason that public attendance at Council meetings is rare, but it is worth underlining that these are public meetings, with a time slot allocated for members of the public to ask questions or speak on any relevant matter. The forthcoming elections will be something of a test of the level of interest in and support for your new Parish Council, and I cannot underline too strongly the importance of registering your vote on May 5th, and thus offering those who volunteer for these unpaid duties a clear token of that support.

Neil Morgan
Council Chair 2005-11