

Tiffield & Caldecote Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report 2025-2026

I took on the role of Chair, mid-year as a result of the resignation of Louise James. As such I have been helped in preparing this report by our Clerk, Mr Andy Tennet.

Firstly, your parish council decided that with a larger area and ever-increasing demands, that we needed to add another full council meeting into the diary. As such the council now meets in December of every year. This will bring the number of parish councils to 11 per year.

In addition to this, it was agreed that our meetings will start at 7.30pm rather than 8.00pm.

We gained four new councillors this year, Cllr John Tapley replaced Cllr Laura Cook and Cllr Georgina Wincott, replaced Cllr Louise James. Cllr Bob German and Cllr James Taylor (both of Caldecote) replaced Cllrs Stephen Jowers and Graham Ferrie, both of whom stood down at the May elections. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Councillors who served the parish well before deciding to stand down.

Our new Councillors bring fresh and different experiences, backgrounds and outlooks to the team. I thank you for joining the Parish Council, your input is invaluable. We are a small village community so recruiting new members is very difficult and I appreciate the time all councillors commit to volunteer for our Parish Council. I take this opportunity to thank all of you.

The village magazine, The Thunderbolt is going strong, and I have joined with the Clerk to act as editor. This is a valuable means of communicating with all the residents in our parish and contributions from residents are always welcome.

Our annual in-depth external audit went well due to the continuing excellent hard work of our Clerk Andy Tennet. The audit process itself was challenged, reviewed and feedback given to the audit body by Mr Tennet. I am proud that as a council we are protecting our community and fighting for continuous improvement in how we deliver services for the parish.

One of the changes brought in at the last election was the inclusion of Caldecote in the parish. An early issue that was highlighted was the speed limit through that village was 60mph. It was agreed that this was not appropriate for such a rural area and with help from the Road Safety Team at Northamptonshire Police, made an application to have the speed limit lowered to 30mph. I am pleased to report that the application was approved. We now wait for the new road speed signs to be erected.

In August last year, the parish council took on the responsibility for organising the village BBQ. Mr Holloway had run this event for a number of years but wanted to step back from the event. I am pleased to say that the afternoon and evening were a great success and a date has already been set for the event for this year. On behalf of the parish council, I would like to thank Mr Holloway for all his work and enthusiasm for this event over the years.

During 2025, we witnessed the building and development of the new SEND school at St Johns. The school opened in September last year and despite concerns regarding the school traffic crossing the A43 at the St John's junction, it appears that this route is being taken. The school is not yet at full capacity and whilst supporting the school, the parish council concerns regarding the use of this junction remain.

Whilst slightly scaled back from previous years, the annual Bonfire and Fireworks display proved yet again to be a fantastic success. We had amazing support from the Friends of Tiffield School and other

villagers all of whom came along to help run this wonderful event. We had an incredible turnout and a wonderful display once again provided by village resident Alex Brown backed by music coordinated Cllr Paul Holdridge. A heartfelt thankyou to everyone involved, it shows what a small village can do.

At the January meeting, the Parish Council took the difficult decision this year to raise the precept for the village. Thankfully, it was agreed that with the finances of the parish as they are, we only needed a minimal increase of 5% to ensure that your parish council would be able to fund all of the services that it is required to provide as well as ensure various parish events would take place and leave some money in the reserves.

I am pleased to say that the annual litter pick in March was a resounding success with lots of our community coming out to make the parish a much cleaner and tidier place to live. This was a lovely example of the community getting involved and making a difference.

On March 5th, the parish council received official notification that the public right of way which crossed the IM Properties development has been closed (stopped up). This is a sad end to one of the final objections mounted by your parish council, the Save Towcester Now action group, the British Horse Riders Association and a number of other groups and individuals.

The matter was considered by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at a lengthy hearing held at West Northants Council chamber in early December last year and she has ruled in favour of the application from IM Properties. We anticipate that development of the site and the new roundabout at the Hulcote Turn on the A43 will start shortly and the parish council will continue to monitor this development.

Over Winter, we yet again experienced some heavy rainfall and significant flooding. A few households that were severely impacted by the floods were provided with interim flood defences, whilst the Parish Council continues to apply for funding to provide a permanent solution to control the water flow on Claydon field and other flood defence issues within the parish. The council have recently signed up to be part of a Community Resilience Project co-ordinated by West Northamptonshire Council.

Every year, as part of our insurance requirements, the facilities on Claydon Field must be inspected by a representative from ROSPA. This year, the inspection highlighted a few issues that require some attention. In many cases this is just to keep us up to date with the current legislation regarding play equipment and its use.

I am pleased to report that following a rigorous application process, the parish council has secured a grant which will help to pay for the necessary work to be completed. There has been a delay in commencing this due to the very wet weather but it is anticipated that the work will be undertaken shortly.

I have enjoyed my initial months in the role of Chair, supporting the views of the residents and striving to make our community a better, safer place to live, a place we can be proud to call home.

Michelle Nichols, Chairman Tiffield Parish Council.