

History Recorder's report for Gislingham, 2023.

Jean Archdeacon

A busy year for our community, the primary school now have an athletics track, the Carpet Bowls Club is proving popular, the Church Flower Festival was a great success and the Variety Club performed 'Sherlock Holmes' the panto to great acclaim.

Our local magazine the Messenger won Best Content and came 3rd in the A5 Magazine category in the National Parish Magazine Awards.

The fate of our local pub 'The Six Bells' is still in the balance, Mid-Suffolk District Council rejected the new owners' application to change the use to a veterinary practice, but although the owners appealed this was also rejected. There is a community group working to return the pub to a social hub at the heart of the village. In October and November the Village Hall held a 'Village Social Pop-up Bar which the community supported, and there was a wide age range of people attending.

This year saw the coronation of King Charles III in May, a picnic was held in the Church grounds on Sunday 7th May after a service celebrating the event. There were free refreshments and many activities in the church. An anonymous donor provided a Coronation Mug for each child at the primary school and playgroup.

We received notification that the National Grid intend to build 50 metre tall pylons from Norwich to Tilbury a distance of 110 miles. These pylons will cross our village, and all county and district councils have opposed the scheme, there will be a second public consultation. An action group the Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk Pylons Action Group has been formed and are organizing meetings.

In August we said goodbye to our Rector, the Rev. Canon Julia Lall who has moved to a benefice near Bury St. Edmunds so we will be looking for a new incumbent in the new year.

The autumn brought several major storms and there was extensive flooding in the area, the village had only one road open, cars got stuck in the floods and vehicles were diverted from A140 causing about 40 people to become stranded. The Village Hall was opened up, and local people provided refreshments for the stranded motorists. Several were offered accommodation for the night and bedding was provided in the hall for others. A real community effort.

Ending the year there were the usual Gislingham Band Concert, the Church Carol Service and the Christmas Eve Crib Service.