

Jim Parsons

Jim was truly a remarkable man and I feel privileged to be asked to speak this afternoon. You have heard from Mark, the Leader of the Cotswold District Council how hard he worked and the massive amount of time he took on the Parish Council here in Avening and overseeing others' needs.....filling every day with working for the community. It is fitting that the Parish Council created the 'Jim Parsons Trophy' in his honour this year, and it will be awarded annually to 'The Volunteer of the Village'.

Jim was essentially an Avening Boy. He was actually born in Kingscote but moved to Avening at 2 days old where his parents went to live with his Grandparents, the Inds.

He grew up in the village, going to school here and then to the grammar school in Tetbury. He and Jim Hill became friends from an early age and had many an adventure together. They got into trouble often and one day when they were messing around in the stream..... Jim Hill caught an eel and threw it straight at Jim's head. Unfortunately for them Jim's mother was down the hill in no time and gave Jim Hill the telling off of a lifetime! They had the fun of going down the chute into the basement of the Church Rooms where everyone threw away their newspapers..... and spent Saturday morningsout of sight..... reading comics and magazines. The boys of the village at that time were expected to fetch the home supply of water from the water pumps installed by Mr Calcot. Not surprisingly, Jim has

recently been very influential in the Parish Council's plans to protect them for perpetuity.

From an early age, Jim loved music and he was given piano lessons in the village which he gained from for the rest of his life. He had the remarkable gift of not having to look at the music to remember a tune and you could request any song by humming the first few notes badly and away he would go making so many people happy.

Both the Jim's talents lead to them to get a band together in the year the musical 'Kismet' hit the West End.....1953.....and their first booking was the Coronation Ball in the Hall! Derek Matthews and George Tudor joined them and they were booked almost every weekend in pubs and clubs as far away as Gloucester and Cheltenham. They called themselves the 'Kismet Band'. The Jim's empathy and banter both verbally and with their musical instruments meant that they were immensely popular.....they went on to call themselves the 'Cosmonauts' after the Russian Space programme and then, in later years, even thought of the name the 'Geriatrics' but, to most of us they were the Two Jims who gave us all such pleasure.

When he left school, Jim went off to work with Mr Arundel along West end, feeding the pigs and then later moved on to work for Mr Basil Ross. However, his real career started when he got a job with the MOD at Aston Down Aerodrome from where he studied seriously. Jim was a very clever man and especially brilliant with figures. Not only did he work in

London but all over the Country and then travelled to Cyprus, Spain and France and spent some time in America. The downside to all this was that he never wanted to go on holiday!!

Before this, as a young man, Jim helped out the Powell family with the milk round through the villages. This is how he met Mary Cook who lived in Cherington. They were married from Grove Farm, in Cherington Church, fifty years ago in March.....and it was Jim Hill who drove them down to Weston Super Mare, in his car, for their honeymoon.

Jim bought a plot of land on Tetbury Hill into which, remarkably, he and Mary dug the bank themselves to make the foundations of their house. Being a man of many talents and with a little help from their friends, Jim and Mary built the bungalow in which they were to live for the rest of their lives. This was where their son Keith and daughter, Bridget, were born.

Many years later, they were refused planning permission to build the Cattery at the back of the house for Bridget to run. Not to be thwarted, Jim approached my husband Stewart Carter who, at that time, was serving as District Councillor. Between them they found a way forward and this led to Jim taking over as our District Councillor, when Stewart retired.

With music taking up much of his time it is difficult to believe he had time for anything else but Jim, with his limitless energy found time to play Cricket which was another passion of his.

To say that we will miss all that he brought to the village and the area, is an understatement. He was an integral part of so much and gave us all fun and laughter. There was the famous occasion when he and Jim went up to Westonbirt Arboretum to play for the lit up trees night and somehow when plugging in his keyboard he managed to fuse the lot leaving those in charge in an utter panic.

Jim was an optimist..... and that was so much of his charm and empathy to his constituents and his audiences. Right up to the end he believed he would get better. Just a few days before he died, he received a telephone call from the District Council asking him if he was going to stand at the next Election....."Most Certainly" he replied.

We will all remember he and Mary's crazy Christmas lights that lit up the whole of Tetbury Hill and more....his playing at partiesespecially at Christmas..... when his banter and empathy with Jim shone out.....standing in as the organist in this Church.....at the village pantomimes.....and the dances. Whenever there was something to celebrate the 'Two Jims' were there..... accompanying our sing songs and playing so no one could resist getting up to dance.

Jim.....very talented.....very special.....much loved.....

You will be sorely missed.

God Bless you and Thank you.