

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008/2009

Welcome

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish of Mancetter for the year 2008/2009 under the following headings:-

- A Financial Statement
- B Traffic Issues and Police matters
- C Cemetery
- D Allotments
- E Environment, including Footpaths
- F Amenities
- G Grants
- H Planning
- I Future Targets
- J Close

A Financial Statement

Balance of Reserves at the start of the year	£44917.20
Balance of Reserves at the end of the year	£40319.27

These figures have been reached after accounting for creditors and debtors, as shown in the annual accounts.

The accounts are available for inspection by interested Parishioners, but will not be audited externally until later in the year. The accounts have been audited during the financial year by the Parish Council's auditor, as recommended by current legislation. The accounts for the year 2007/2008 were formally adopted after external audit and copies of these can be made available upon request to the Clerk of the Parish Council.

The precept for the coming year has been set at the minimum necessary to allow the Council to carry out its development programme in the coming year. The precept was again set at £23,500.00. This is the same amount as for the previous two years, and therefore is a nil percentage rise which represents excellent value for the continuing works to be undertaken in the Parish. The lack of an increase has been achieved by again not putting aside any further reserves for Community Hall support, as current reserves were thought to be adequate.

B Traffic Issues and Police Matters

Police issues are now dealt with at Area Forum level and there is no longer a police attendance or representation at our Parish Council Meetings. The Parish Council have invited the police to

attend the Annual Parish Council Meetings so that issues raised by Parishioners may be formally recorded in the Parish Records. I would urge Parishioners to attend Area Forum Meetings to raise any issues of concern to them, or for that matter praise, but be aware that questions need to be submitted in writing by Parishioners before the date of the meeting. If you just wish to raise any policing issues, then you only need to arrive half an hour before the meeting starts in order to speak with a Police Officer.

As you are aware, new speed limits are now in force through and outside the conurbation area near to Mancetter. This is a welcome step forward for Parishioners safety.

Reports and inspections made of the Manor Road speed cushions declare them to be successful, but this is not the opinion of many of the residents in the area.

Although largely outside the Parish, the speed cushions installed along the Witherley Road and the wedge at the Blue Boar junction has received much criticism for its effectiveness as a traffic calming development. Many local residents gave considered and knowledgeable views on ideas and expectations during the consultation period. The end result to these submissions and the subsequent installation of these traffic calming measures, is that residents feel they were ignored and wasted their time. At the current time of writing this report there have been sightings of vehicles driving between the steep cushions and even driving on the wrong side of the wedge. The Council awaits the outcome of an evaluation of the development to be conducted at a later date.

There is an ongoing concern for the number of HGV vehicles using Steppey Lane and also ignoring weight restrictions through the Ridge Lane/Birchley Heath area. Much of this traffic relates to the Archbold Transport Depot which is based at the old Coal Board Workshops site. Sat Nav presents problems in the Parish as well.

C Cemetery

The maintenance of the Cemetery/Churchyard is in the hands of the same Contractor and a further new two year contract has been approved. The ongoing working relationship with the Contractor remains excellent and the trust the Parish Council have in his work has no doubts.

New documentation has been received from Central Government about the testing of monuments, and in the light of this

publication, the Parish Council has amended their procedures. A preliminary inspection of monuments has been made and a draft Risk Assessment document prepared. Work on this will hopefully be completed in the coming year.

New Notice Boards have been installed displaying information relating to the cemetery area.

D Allotments

All allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let, and again, there is a short waiting list of prospective tenants.

It is understood that the Borough Council are still uncertain about the potential site for allotment provision in Mancetter itself.

The Contractor for the New Parish Notice Board was able to salvage some elements of the old Notice Board and was able to refurbish it for use by Ridge Lane allotment holders. Other allotment holders have subsequently installed the board using re-cycled concrete posts and timbers – again at no cost to the Parish.

Representatives from Ridge Lane allotment have attended the newly formed North Warwickshire Allotment Federation. It is to be noted that Ridge Lane allotments are owned by the Parish Council and have been fully functional for over 100 years. Yet again Mancetter Parish Council shows the way forward on sustainability.

E Environment

The Notice Board in Mancetter has been replaced by a new board manufactured by a local company. The Parish Council was pleased that the contract could be awarded locally and be Best Value as well, when compared to other quotations from nationally known companies. The same business also made the cemetery Notice Boards.

Fly tipping has been reported throughout the year and I am pleased to say that NWBC has, on most occasions, acted quickly in clearing up the mess. Unfortunately at the time of writing this report a large heap of tyres remains dumped on the edge of our Parish in Oldbury Lane.

An Action Group has been formally constituted in Ridge Lane to push forward the refurbishment of the play area in the Recreation Ground.

I will ask John Arrowsmith, our Footpaths Representative, to give his report on Footpaths and Footpath literature. I will pre-empt him by stating that with his help the Parish Council was able to formalize a two year £500.00 per annum agreement with the County Council for footpath maintenance.

On the Heritage Route the Parish sculpture has been installed and has received positive comments about its naturalness and historical reflections. I hope many Parishioners will visit the site because the distant views are still some of the best in Warwickshire.

The hard winter weather found many of our grit bins well used and running out of salt – something I hope the County Council will be able to address in the future. At least one bin 'disappeared' from its site and has not been found. This, and bins for other sites, will be ordered/replaced in September of the coming year.

Perhaps because of the more severe winter the County Council is about to conduct a total review of Emergency Procedures throughout the county. Each level of local government will contribute to this with Parish and Town Councils having an input at the first tier of action.

The aerials at Ridge Lane have been the subject of an ongoing investigation led by Bryan Hamson. I would like to personally thank him for his relentless pursuit of avenues of questioning but he has certainly now reached a point where the Parish Council will be unable to add further to this study. It is hoped in the very near future to get further help from the Area Health Authority.

F Amenities

The Community/Schoolroom has continued to be used for all Parish Council Meetings and also some special meetings, such as the Quarry Liaison Group, which is also held here.

The Community Hall/Church has been used at Ridge Lane for the North Warwickshire Association of Parish Council's meetings on two occasions, and is regularly used for other community activities.

Despite difficulties encountered with installation, the storage room at the Ridge Lane site has been completed, which will allow the SureStart activities Group to continue at that site. Because of these problems the Parish Council refused to settle

the account and the issues took some six months to resolve. Jean Marshall committed considerable time to resolving these issues.

G Grants

As previously reported, the Ridge Lane Community Hall storage facilities has now been completed and funded by the Parish Council.

H Planning

Planning issues in the Parish have been commented on where appropriate.

The Parish Council are aware that the future of the old school playing fields remains unresolved. Certainly the aspirations of those that attended the consultation will remain merely a wish list and any progress on the site is unlikely in the near future.

There is still no resolution to the misuse of a site within the Parish.

I Future Targets

- 1) The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish
- 2) Community Hall provision will continue to be supported
- 3) Youth support will continue when and where appropriate staffing is available
- 4) Inspection and any necessary testing of monuments will continue in the coming year
- 5) Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths and the Heritage Way
- 6) To work with other agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision
- 7) To work with the Residents' Association towards the development of a Parish Plan for Mancetter. This target is now four years old and requires the formation of a group to progress it. This group must be outside the limits of the Parish Council
- 8) To continue to work towards a Quality Status Council
- 9) To continue to support The Clerk on her training programme and the ongoing personal development of all Councillors.

J Close

The following functions/meetings have been attended by members of the Parish Council during the previous year:-

- a) Area Forum East Meetings
- b) County Area Meetings
- c) Warwickshire Association of Local Parish Council Meetings and Training Sessions
- d) Annual Meeting of the Parish Council with North Warwickshire Borough Council
- e) Quarry Liaison Group Meetings
- f) Standards Committee Meetings
- g) Warwickshire Rural Communities Council Meetings
- h) Mancetter Residents' Group Meetings
- i) The North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Council Meetings
- j) Agreement to send representation to a new De Mulder Liaison Group

The Parish Council continue to be pleased with the support of our Borough Councillors and it is hoped that this will continue in the future.

Our County Councillor has also been supportive to the Parish Council and has maintained regular e-mail contact with us, as well as attending our meetings.

To this end the Parish Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of meetings for discussions with these agencies, as well as other groups.

A public question time has been entered on all Parish Agendas. This facility has been used, but at such times the Council may not be able to give an immediate answer, but will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible.

During this year Dorothy Mairs retired from the Parish Council after over twenty years of service. Her very active support will be missed.

I also feel that the Parish will greatly miss Adrian Mairs, vicar to the Parish, who has also retired after a long and committed service to the Parish.

Dawn Teagles has agreed to fill the vacancy left by Dorothy's retirement.

Sincere thanks are offered to the Vice Chair, Jean Marshall, and the other Councillors who give unstinting support to the Parish. I would like to report to Parishioners a 75% attendance by Councillors at Seminar and Training Sessions organised by outside agencies during the year.

All Councillors are actively involved in the preparation of draft consultation papers and Risk Assessment documentation. This is a very positive and forward looking Council – no-one could ask more of a group of people who are working for Mancetter.

I would also thank Karen Evans for her on-going effort and support for the Parish council in her capacity as our Clerk and Proper Officer. Karen has now formally enrolled for her CiLCA qualification to be a fully qualified Clerk.

This Council is pressing forward to Quality Status. This does not mean that it is not - and was not in the past – one of the best Parish Councils in the Northern Area.

This ends my report for 2008/2009.

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