

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

Welcome

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish of Mancetter for the year 2009/2010 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	£40319.27
Balance of Reserves at the end of the year	£47007.26

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 this financial year by the Parish Council's Auditor, as recommended by current legislation. The accounts for the year 2008/2009 were formally adopted after their external audit and copies of these can be made available upon request from 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 set at £24,100.00. This is the first rise for three years, and considering that the Parish has increased its commitment to keeping the Parish clean and tidy by entering upon a maintenance programme, still represents excellent value.

I will mention now that The Clerk, at her personal request, has declined to take any incremental increase in salary for the coming year. This has yet to be fully agreed by the full Council in the following Annual Parish

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

Council Meeting. The request was made during a regular meeting of The Clerk and Chairman.

B Traffic Issues and Police Matters

Police issues are still dealt with at Area Forum level and I would urge Parishioners to attend the Area Forum East Meeting and make use of the consultation facility.

At our last meeting the Council had a positive discussion with PCSO Wynder and the Council look forward to his attending Parish Council Meetings on a regular basis.

The Parish Council has invited the police to attend the Annual Parish Council Meetings so that issues raised by Parishioners may be formally recorded in the Parish Records.

There are still concerns about the movement of traffic along Manor Road, particularly at the start and end of the school day. There is also concern about the way in which vehicles are parked at Wathen Grange School, making it difficult for vehicles to safely negotiate the road junction.

It is quite apparent that many vehicles are ignoring the 30 mph speed limit along Nuneaton/Mancetter Road. Traffic along Harpers Lane also tends to speed and almost ignore the crossroads junction by Wathen Grange School.

It is understood that a revised traffic calming system will be developed for the Witherley Road area which is on the Parish boundary. A faint hope exists that adjoining roads will not continue to be a 'speeding up zone' and will be considered in the overall development. Taking into account the comments I made on this issue in my report last year, I hope that on future issues the County Council takes great interest in submissions made by local people and the Parish Council during consultation periods. In this instance a large quantity of the public's money was used, which was not 'instant access cash' and could have been more wisely spent.

There is still an ongoing concern over the number of HGV lorries using Steppey Lane and also ignoring weight restrictions through the Ridge Lane/Birchley Heath area. Although raised at the Area Forum level the problem continues and I urge the police to give some time to this issue.

C Cemetery

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

The maintenance of the Cemetery/Churchyard is in the hands of the same Contractor and at the last full Parish Council Meeting a decision was made to extend the contract by a further year. The ongoing working relationship with the Contractor remains excellent and the trust the Parish Council has in his work has no doubters.

At long last, in November, the Council found a second Contractor to undertake the many minor works required in the Parish, and particularly in the Cemetery. He has started his preliminary work and submits his weekly return of work done to The Clerk.

The Risk Assessment documents have been completed and some elements of potential difficulty already addressed.

I would ask visitors to the Cemetery to take note of the rules for the area, as in the coming year the new Contractor is required to support the Council in safety issues relating to the care of monuments.

D Allotments

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

It is understood that the Borough Council still cannot confirm a potential site in Mancetter. The Parish Council fully supports the need for a site in Mancetter, but Parishioners must increase their activity in raising awareness of the need. More than six residents of the Parish must submit a letter of request for such provision. Remember that six is only the minimum requirement.

For the first time in a number of years the Parish Council has issued a warning letter about the state of an allotment at Ridge Lane. Allotment holders have been supportive in the care of the road verges at the Ridge Lane Allotment site and to this end the Parish Council awarded its third Environmental Care Certificate to Mr F Hands for his supportive work. An environmental code has been approved by the Parish Council for the site.

E Environment

Part of the new Contractor's work will be to clean the Parish bus shelters on a monthly basis and to clean, and if necessary, repaint the benches. At the time of writing this report a bench at Ridge Lane is in a poor state of repair after some vandalism.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

Fly tipping has been reported throughout the year. Most of this has been in the Purley Chase Lane/Steppey Lane area. I am pleased that the NWBC act quite quickly to clear the problem. I still urge them to install notices and CCTV at the most commonly used sites. Most of the dumping would appear to be done by itinerant trades people – this judgment is made by the quantity and type of rubbish dumped each time.

The Action Group at Ridge Lane can now see the fruits of their active campaigning with the new play area taking shape on the Ridge Lane Recreation Ground. Perhaps they now need to push forward the re-surfacing and care of the car parking area for dual usage by the older children of the village.

I will ask John Arrowsmith, our Footpaths Representative, to give his report on Footpaths and Footpath literature.

We are about to enter our second year of the two year agreement with the County Council for footpath maintenance. Our Contractor keeps these footways open along with the volunteer workers at very little real cost to the Parish. I hope that the County does not decide to withdraw from such agreements for works as this actually saves the County a considerable cost should they try to reach the same high standard.

At this moment in time the County seems reluctant to release monies agreed with Tarmac/Tilcon in a 106 Agreement. I feel that the County does not have the right to dictate how such monies should be spent. That money has, to this point in time, been prudently spent in this Parish and adjoining Parishes and the remainder needs to be released.

I mentioned in my report last year that grit bins ran out of salt. With the more severe winter weather experienced this year it happened again. If the Parish is investing in its care of Parishioners by financing bins then I feel it is the County's duty to keep to its part of the agreement and not to just proffer excuses – their service level agreement is to replenish bins if the Parish provides them.

The Parish Council is conscious that a report on the Ridge Lane aerials issue is nearing completion.

F Amenities

The Community Schoolroom has continued to be used for all Parish Council Meetings, but the Quarry Liaison Group now meet at the Tarmac quarry offices.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

The provision of the storage facility at Ridge Lane has brought about greater community activity, including a youth activity evening.

G Grants

The Parish Council agreed with the Ridge Lane Action Group to help fund the replacement of a perimeter fence near to the White Hart Public House car park to ensure that small children could play in safety. It is anticipated that the sum of £2,000 will be used for this fencing in the coming financial year.

H Planning

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

The old school playing field remains an unresolved issue and now raises issues relating to misuse and litter. This is something that the County Council needs to address before it gets out of hand.

There is still no resolution to the misuse of a site within the Parish. Also at the time of writing this report another nearby site has made an appeal against a planning refusal for residential provision.

I Future Targets

- i) The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish.
- ii) Community Hall provision will continue to be supported when necessary.
- iii) Youth support will continue when and where appropriate is available.
- iv) Inspection, following the new guide lines, of monuments in the cemetery and graveyard will continue in the coming year.
- v) Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths/rights of way.
- vi) To work with other agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision.
- vii) To work with the Residents' Association towards the development of a Parish Plan for Mancetter. This target is now five years old and requires the formation of a group to progress it. This group must be outside the limits of the Parish Council.
- viii) To continue to work towards a Quality Status Council.
- ix) To continue to support The Clerk on her training programme and the ongoing personal development of all Councillors.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

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) de Mulder Liaison Group Meetings
- g) Standards Committee Meetings
- h) Warwickshire Rural Community Council Meetings
- i) The North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Councils Meetings
- j) Mancetter Residents' Group Meetings

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

The Parish Council would like to formally recognize the support given by Richard Grant who served as our County Councillor for a number of years. Although agreement was not always reached he was willing to 'put his head above the parapet'. I hope that our new County Councillor will come to meet with us more regularly.

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.

The public question time remains on our Parish Agenda and has been used during the past year.

The Parish Council has formally welcomed the new vicar, Tony Tooby, and look forward to working with him.

Sincere thanks are offered to the Vice Chair, Jean Marshall, and the other Councillors who give unstinting support to the Parish. This year many hours have been spent updating documents relating to our risk assessments etc. This remains a very positive and forward looking Council – no-one could ask more of a group of people who are working for Mancetter, Ridge Lane and the outlying parts of the Parish.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009/2010

I would also thank Karen Evans for her ongoing effort and support for the Parish Council in her capacity as our Clerk and Proper Officer.

This Council remains on course to Quality Status. With a very small increase in precept it means that we are able to increase our commitment to providing services in the Parish and not cut them back. Remember, as a tier of Government, Parish Council Members are not paid. If, as *we* are, a non-political group, we are not worried about personal payment or expenses – we as a Council give an unequalled service.

This ends my report for 2009/2010.

Trevor Hopkins, Chairman