

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012-2013

WELCOME

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish Council of Mancetter for the year 2012-2013 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

The Balance of Reserves at the start of the year £47,469.41

The Balance of Reserves at the end of the year £42,321.51

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 2011-2012 were formally adopted after their external audit and copies of these can be made available upon request from The Clerk and Proper Officer 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 for the next 12 months. The precept was set at £24,500.00. This is a small rise when compared to the last two years and represents a total rise of only £1,000 over the last seven years. The Council will continue to try to maintain a quality service at a good value cost for the Electorate.

Due to the way in which Central Government makes payments to Local Authorities the final precept settlement has had complexity added to it and the Clerk will briefly explain this in her report.

The reason for the rise in the Precept will become apparent at the end of my report.

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 Meetings and make use of the consultation facility.

I still feel that policing levels are stretched to the extreme in the rural areas of the Borough and there have certainly been expressions of public concern about street lighting being switched off for a large part of darkness.

On a positive note thanks to the efforts of Mrs Mawson, a new Neighbourhood Watch Group has been set up in Ridge Lane, but it is interesting that despite the various expressions of concern the attendance for the new group was thought to be low. The strength of the group can only be improved by Parishioners being willing to make an effort and not just leave things to the few!

The new Warwickshire Police Crime Commissioner, Ron Ball, spoke at the WALC Briefing Day and in his talk outlined that he had appointed a deputy commissioner and was in the process of preparing an advertisement to appoint a number of ambassadors to attend meetings, as a direct question from myself he confirmed that this would include Parish Council meetings. As a Parish Council we look forward to such support.

C Cemetery

The maintenance of the Cemetery/Churchyard is in the hands of the same Contractor. At all times public comments have been most positive and the on-going working relationship with the Contractor remains excellent.

The second Contractor is about to start the second year of a two year appointment and one of his additional tasks during the late autumn was the planting of some 3000 bulbs throughout the Parish as part of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.

The grave digger employed by the undertaker who most frequently uses the cemetery has signed a policy document for grave digging procedure and submitted a copy of his liability insurance. This brings a close to concerns about Health and Safety issues relating to such works.

In the autumn, again as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, six trees were planted in the new cemetery area and the new cremation area was officially shown to the Parish. Again the "Big Society" helped this celebration to a conclusion by support from members of Girlguiding Atherstone who prepared and delivered the refreshments which were appreciated by all those attending. Thanks are also due to Mr David Meads who compiled a short dvd of the evening which was presented to the Council at a later meeting – something for the Parish archives.

D Allotments

All the allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let, and now, with only one additional name on the waiting list, the Council is eager to add further names to that list.

Warning letters were issued to three tenants for failing to maintain cultivation to a reasonable standard and I am pleased to report that the letters have been the needed stimulus for a surge in activity on all three lettings.

The tenants have had to replace a padlock which disappeared from the main gate. An Allotment Watch sign has been attached to the gate.

It was necessary to hire a skip to remove a quantity of asbestos cement roofing sheet from the allotments of a former tenant and this was consigned to a registered disposal site for such material.

E Environment

The Contractor has maintained the bus shelters on a monthly basis and has at the same time cleared the areas of any litter so as to support the Streetscape Teams.

There are still instances of fly tipping but the North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) has responded to clear the problem. This even included fly tipping at the Ridge Lane / Purley Chase Lane junction during the closure of the road for sewage improvements at Ridge Lane.

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

I will report to the meeting that the County Council have stated that there will be no matched funding available for footpath maintenance in the Parish. I can however confirm that the Parish Council have appointed our existing contractor for a further two years to retain the high standard of maintenance for the footpaths in the Parish. At the same time the second edition of the walks map has been issued and well received.

Hopefully in the coming year the nucleus of a new walk with information boards, under development by the Civic Society will come to completion. More of this later!

Some new grit bins have been provided in the Parish and I am pleased to report that the County Highways Department have been very supportive in the refilling of the bins. Again during the partial closure of Ridge Lane a grit bin was stolen from the Purley Chase/ Ridge Lane junction.

The Council are grateful to our County Councillor Carol Fox for providing funding for a dog waste bin near to Mr Twinings farm site.

F Amenities

The Community Schoolroom has continued to be used for all Parish Council Meetings.

Youth activity at Ridge Lane continues to have a high attendance record, with an increased variation in activities. There is a need to thank the group of volunteer workers, including the qualified (retired) Youth Leader.

There is a need for more volunteers to come forward to support such activity in the Parish.

The Parish website remains an active communication medium along with the monthly page submitted by the Clerk for publication in Mancetter Matters.

G Grants

The Parish Council will continue to give an annual grant to the Mancetter Matters publication. This is in recognition of the Parish Council information page.

For the Jubilee Celebration the Parish Council made available, with support from the Mancetter Village Residents Association, a medal to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee for each child in the Parish. Some medals were also presented to attendees at the cemetery commemorative evening.

H Planning

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

It was reported that the quarry was considering extending its working area. At this time I can report that the new company operating the quarry have imposed a three month freeze on any new developments for the whole of its business.

It is anticipated that following public consultation, the school field site development will be submitted in the coming year. It is also thought that the shops / garages site will be considered for redevelopment in the coming year.

I Future Targets

- a) The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish.
- b) Community Hall provision will continue to be supported when necessary.
- c) Youth support will continue when and where activity takes place.
- d) Maintenance of footpaths / Rights of Way will continue.
- e) To work with other agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision.
- f) To continue dialogue with the Borough Council and other groups in the Parish as the Localism Bill takes greater effect.
- g) To continue to work towards a Quality Status Council – something that is currently being re developed.
- h) To support the personal development of all Councillors including our new Councillor Mr C Tooby who was co-opted on 26th March 2013

J Close

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

- ❖ Area Forum East Meetings
- ❖ Warwickshire Association of Local Parish Council Meetings
- ❖ Annual Meeting of the Parish Councils with North Warwickshire Borough Council
- ❖ Quarry Liaison Group Meetings
- ❖ De Mulder Liaison Group Meetings
- ❖ The North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Councils
- ❖ Mancetter Village Residents Group Meetings
- ❖ Mancetter Tenants Group Meetings
- ❖ WALC training day events.

One of our Councillors also played a very active role at the Queen Elizabeth School as Vice Chair of the governors and is a representative on the Patient Participation Group at the Ratcliffe Road Surgery. He is also a representative on the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This group represents patients and has a say on how new funding will be allocated.

The Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of our meetings for discussion with Borough Councillors, our County Councillor and other active groups.

The public question time is always on our Parish Agendas.

Sincere thanks are offered to the Vice Chair, Jean Marshall, and the other Councillors who give continuous voluntary support to the Parish. John Arrowsmith has continued to help as our footpaths consultant and web site expert.

Despite having filled our vacancy for a Parish Councillor there still exists a space for a new face.

The Parish Council is a team of volunteers employing contractors, at a local level, who that take great pride in the Parish – much of the work is over and above the minimum required and agreed, which is given without worry for personal payment or expenses.

We aim to keep such attitudes and standards for the future – as long as our Parishioners allow us to – we answer to the Parish.

At the onset of my delivery I mentioned a need to raise the Precept requirement. A part of the consideration for such a small rise can be attributed to the tremendous effort of our Clerk and Proper Officer, Karen, who has exceeded her efforts of the previous year.

I am pleased to close my report by announcing to the Parish that Karen has completed her CiLCA qualification within the last year. This is the first time that Mancetter has been the proud employer of a fully qualified Clerk and Proper Officer.

This ends my report for 2012-2013.

Trevor Hopkins, Chairman
21st May 2013.