

**MANCETTER PARISH COUNCIL**  
Chairman's Report -April 2016 to March 2017

This year has possibly been the year of greatest change for Mancetter since the Romans decided to create their military camp here!

Whilst all the usual day to day business of a Parish Council has progressed, the issues and changes have been far from usual!

The general administration of Mancetter Parish Council has been moved from the "home base" of the Clerk and Proper Officer to a Parish Office based in Mancetter Memorial Hall, with the possibility of public access to the Clerk or Assistant Clerk at set opening hours. This all sounds very simple but it has consumed many hours of work to transfer, archive material and secure it for future reference together with all the basic changes of telephone line, office address etc. etc. There is still more work to do to complete this.

The planning issues have been many and varied. The major one has involved the public hearing for the broiler house application which took up some two days, much of which seemed biased to the applicant and it would appear that some of the advice offered to those wishing to speak was incorrect to the point that if a copy had been submitted to the Inspector, the speaker could not convey that statement or really add to it. At the end of March, we were awaiting the Inspector's report.

The Laurel Gardens Development has been completed much to the relief of residents, but it seems likely that traffic issues will become a problem yet again with the development of the shop/garages site. Work on the Post office site has been completed but traffic issues there have not really improved.

The Traveller site, although on the Parish Boundary has caused considerable concern for the likely outcomes with its future use. To this end, Mancetter Parish Council pressed for the setting up of a Liaison Group to progress a way forward. At an initial meeting of interested parties, County Council Hayfield asked what would be the purpose and functions / structure of such a group. I was able to give him guidance and likely structure based on Mancetter's experience of the Quarry and Sarval groups. The first full liaison meeting raised a number of issues, not least of which was the overall cost of this project. One very sad element relating to this application is what appears to have been the "black balling" of County Councillor, Chris Clarke because he was willing to fight and defend the views of the residents in the area rather than follow party directive. I hope that in the coming elections the County Councillor who is elected will be able to give the same support to the residents of Mancetter Parish.

The A5 cross council and county group has continued to meet and as a result continued pressure is put upon Highways England to consider changes along the A5 corridor between the Red Gate junction and the dual carriageway of the Atherstone bypass. Improvement to the Mancetter traffic island along with Woodford Lane and the other road junctions in that length are an ongoing concern.

Neighbourhood Plan has progressed to the point where it is to be passed to an independent Inspector for comment and possible alteration, at worst rejection for non-compliance. ***The Inspector's report has been received and the recommended changes will be discussed by Councillors.***

It was felt that NWBC could have been able to further the plan more quickly but it is hoped that the position of Referendum will be reached before the autumn. I would ask that as much support be given so that the Plan and the residents of Mancetter Parish share in the future planning for the Parish. I would like to thank our Consultant, Clive Keble who has been most supportive in the way he has advised us on the Neighbourhood Plan and other issues raised by the working group.

I did not want to go on too long on the day to day issues in running the Parish but it would not operate without the team that makes the Parish Workforce.

Rob Drakeford and Barry Stevenson remain the power behind the immaculate Graveyard, Cemetery and The Green.

I cannot thank Karen, the Clerk and Proper Office enough for the hours she has committed to the Neighbourhood Plan and the endless grant application paperwork. Elane who is Assistant Clerk has stepped up to the mark and has attacked her training programme to become a second CiLCA qualified member of staff and I know that she has also worked extra hours without reward to support the Council.

Martin Bryner has been our Volunteer Footpaths Officer and submitted reports to the Parish as to the general condition. We still employ the same contractor to carry out any essential clearance work over and above any County Support.

Many thanks also go to the team of Parish Councillors who have attended training courses and events. I particularly thank John Arrowsmith for his work relating to Rights of Way and the Parish Website.

Finally, what about the Parish Precept? As you can see from what has been mentioned in my report, the workload and changes cannot be achieved at no cost and although it seems a great % increase, as explained in a letter that was circulated, the actual sums involved are small compared to the value given.

This year has been like the new hill created by the quarry work “a bit of a steep climb” but the Parish has nearly achieved the big change!

I thank the whole team again including all active support from parishioners and I must not fail to mention Tony Tooby and our Borough and County Councillors.

This ends my 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive report as Chairman of Mancetter Parish Council.