

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2006/2007

Welcome

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish of Mancetter for the year 2006/2007 under the following headings:-

- A Financial Statement
- B Traffic Issues and Police
- 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 start of the year	£40738.85
Balance of Reserves at the end of the year	£40840.83

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 Parishioner's but will not be audited externally until later in the year. The accounts have been audited during the year by the Parish Council's auditor, as recommended by current legislation.

The precept for the coming year has been set at the minimum necessary for the Council to carry out its development in the coming year. The precept was set at £23,500.00. This appears to be a substantial rise but the increase is below the average percentage increase for Parishes in the Northern Area. This increase is required to finance the Parish Council contribution to the local elections and the formal introduction of a properly constructed pension scheme for the Clerk to the Council.

B Traffic Issues and Police

Police issues are now dealt with at Area Forum level and there is no longer attendance by a police officer or community support officer at Parish Meetings.

The Area Forum select police issues which they feel are a priority in the area and the top three gain police focus until the next Forum meeting.

Recent reports made at Forum meetings indicate that crime levels within the Parish remain fairly static with some reduction in specific crime types.

Traffic issues have featured as a Forum issue and the use of hand held speed monitoring gun with the Parish should bring about more caution by drivers within the Parish boundaries. Therefore, Parishioners 'beware' you do not want to be the victim of a speed camera check and have to pay the pending fine.

Traffic control/regulation within the Mancetter Parish boundaries are subject of a county wide survey, instigated by central government, and any recommendations for change are unlikely to be reported upon for perhaps two years.

The movement of quarry lorries continues to cause concern, but in fairness to the quarry they will act if vehicles are reported to them when any infringement occurs.

There does not appear to be an increase in H G V movements on Steppey Lane which are not quarry related.

C Cemetery

The contract for the maintenance of the Cemetery/Churchyard was the subject of tender at the end of this financial year. Tenders were considered at the March meeting of the Council and after discussion and consideration a two year contract was awarded to the same contractor, subject to him submitting a valid certificate of insurance.

During this year the format and procedure for the testing of monuments in the cemetery has been agreed. The initial draft was given to the Church and the undertaker who uses the cemetery most frequently for their structured observations.

Taking the views of Councillors and the other parties into consideration a second and final draft was agreed. Further paperwork will be devised in the coming year and it is hoped that some preliminary testing will take place by the end of the next year.

The first new pathway is now complete and has received positive comments about the overall appearance, particularly compared to the other pathways.

Although it may prove to be an expensive exercise the Parish Council is eager to preserve an element of Parish history by using the fence which was formally the perimeter fence/gateway to the Salvation Army centre which has closed and been redeveloped. It will be restructured to form the boundary of the new cemetery next to the scout centre.

Burial charges have been reviewed and fixed for a two year period.

D Allotments

All allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let and for the first time in a number of years there is a short waiting list of prospective tenants.

Rents were raised at the March meeting by 50p. The new charge is to be fixed for two years.

E Environment

The bus shelter at Ridge Lane was erected at the end of May and has been used and, hopefully not chancing providence has remained clean and free of graffiti. As reported the second site in Mancetter was initially refused permission and the Council did decide to submit an appeal. The services of a voluntary outside agent were sought and a successful appeal submitted. It is hoped that the new shelter will be installed by the end of June. Applications for grants have been made to the Borough Council and County Council to support the ongoing upgrading of bus shelters in the Parish.

Fly tipping continues to be a nuisance, particularly in Purley Chase Lane and Steppey Lane.

I will ask John Arrowsmith to give a report on footpaths and footpath literature. Initial discussion has taken place with the Council and interested parties concerning Mancetter's contribution to the new Heritage Route. It is yet early days for this project and much has to be debated and agreed not only with Mancetter but many other parishes.

F Amenities

The Community/School Room has continued to be used for all Parish Council meetings and some special meetings such as the Quarry Liaison Group are held here.

The Parish Council were greatly upset at the closure of the Starfish/Surestart nursery provision.

As this closure is the subject of legal procedure between the company owner and the Trustees of the Memorial Hall it is difficult for me to raise any further comment but at the risk of being controversial I wish to make a brief statement which relates to my personal views.

At a public meeting I attended it would appear that the company had changed its name mainly because of failing to submit proper financial reports to Companies House, a basic requirement of a public liability company. If this is the case then proper accounts cannot have been presented to the County Education Authority. The County have been making financial contribution to the running of the nursery and should have had an active role in monitoring the proper financial operation of the nursery as well as welfare and provision for the children which was excellent. I therefore urge the County to take proper action to avoid similar situations occurring with other nursery provision providers. The disaster here in Mancetter should not have happened.

F Grants

The Parish Council continues to fund and support the Memorial Hall and the Ridge Lane Community Hall as appropriate, to the value of £4500.00 per annum. Joint funding of a project at Ridge Lane is still to take place and so the Parish hold £9000.00 as delegated funds for that work.

The Council were able to support activities for young people during February half-term which took place in the Memorial Hall.

H Planning

Planning issues in the Parish have been commented on when appropriate. The Parish Council, along with Parishioners await the report which was promised in January on the likely use of the old school playing fields.

We are pleased that some progress has been made with the old school site. The Parish Council is concerned that N W B C seems to fail to apply its enforcement notices and there are still outstanding issues in the Parish.

During this year and following complaints from residents, approaches were made to the Scouts about the condition of their Scout headquarters site. Hopefully after a joint meeting with all parties the matters will be resolved.

I Future Targets

- 1 The Parish Council will continue to pressure for the improvement of services within the Parish.
- 2 Support for Community Hall provision to the value of £4500.00 per year will continue.
- 3 Youth support will continue when and where appropriate staff are available.
- 4 Development of the cemetery with the upgrading of pathways and the provision of a second cremation plot area.
- 5 The new paperwork for the testing of monuments will continue to be developed and hopefully testing will begin before the end of the financial year.
- 6 Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths and new Heritage Way.
- 7 To complete bus shelter provision in the Parish.
- 8 To work with the Residents Association towards the development of a Parish Plan for Mancetter.

J Close

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

- 1 Area Forum East Meetings
- 2 Warwickshire Association of Parish Council Meetings and Training Sessions.
- 3 Annual meeting of the Parish Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council.
- 4 Quarry Liaison Group.
- 5 Standards Committee.
- 6 Mancetter Residents Group.
- 7 The reformed Northern Association of Parish Councils.

The Parish Council continue to be pleased with the active support of the Borough Councillors and it is hoped that this will continue after the election.

The County Councillor has also been supportive to the Parish Councillor and has made regular e-mail contact.

To this end the Parish Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of meetings for discussions with these agencies and other groups. Public requests to discuss matters have been treated in a similar way. To achieve this, the agenda is adjusted at short notice to accommodate positive dialogue.

At the time of writing this report I am aware that two councillors are not to stand for re-election. I would like to personally thank Marilyn and Jim for their service to the Parish and the positive support given in all aspects of Parish Council business. With a strong element of 'arm twisting' Jim is to remain the Parish Council representative for the Gramer Charity and will continue to attend Quarry Liaison meetings.

Sincere thanks are offered to Vice Chair Jean Marshall and the other Councillors who give unstinting support to the Parish.

Our new clerk has had an eventful learning curve for her first year in office and the contribution to the proper functioning of the Council has been excellent despite British Telecom's failure to install a line to the new parish 'office' at Sibson within a reasonable time scale.

Since writing this report I have become aware that June will not be standing for re-election and I should like to thank her for her service to the Parish and the positive support given in all aspects of Parish Council business.