

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2005/2006**

### **Welcome**

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish Council of Mancetter for the year 2005/2006 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 the start of the year	£31,177.16
Balance of reserves at the end of the year	£40,738.85

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 year by the Parish Council's auditor, as recommended by current legislation. The precept for the coming year has again been held to the minimum necessary for the Council to competitively carry out its development in the incoming year. This was fixed at £21,500.00.

### **B Traffic Issues and Police**

The Parish has had a 'mixed' year of contact and working relationship with the police and feel that the area is again subject to a lack of a regular beat office who knows the area well. As a long serving Parish Councillor I fail to understand why this Parish has constantly been an area with poor police contact.

Despite previous comments, crime levels within the Parish remain fairly static with a small reduction of some specific crime types.

At long last there does appear to be some movement by the County to consider some element of stricter traffic regulation/control within the Mancetter Parish boundaries, albeit

perhaps only one road either within Mancetter or Ridge Lane which appears to be inadequate.

The movement of quarry lorries particularly in the area of the Green has caused concern amongst the residents in that area- again it is an issue that the County is looking at with the possible consideration of the 'short route' at the Green being weight restricted.

The quarry has become more pro-active in the recording of vehicles which fail to follow routes or infringe other agreements and this list is now available at Quarry Liaison Meetings.

## **C Cemetery**

The contractor holding responsibility for the mowing of the cemetery/churchyard continues the second year of a two year contract. In addition to this a further contract has been awarded for the sweeping of pathways and general tidying. Letters have been sent to some Deed holders of graves requesting that the 'decoration' with personal memorabilia be reduced. The reasons for this relate to Health and Safety and in some instances the possible causing of offence to other visitors to the cemetery.

The dateline to commence the testing of monuments in the cemetery and churchyard has moved a stage further with the purchase of the testing equipment. The actual procedure and paperwork has yet to be agreed and is currently being discussed. The Council are anxious to enlist the help of volunteer members of the Parish to be involved and anyone interested should contact the Clerk. Those who carry out the testing have to be formally qualified in the correct use of the equipment.

The Council would formally like to thank Gerald Guild for his general day-to-day tidying duties. He has finally put his shovel and brush away and will be much missed. If anyone knows of someone with a few hours to spare for general tidying please let the Council know.

The first new pathway is expected to be laid in the next few weeks and forms part of the upgrading of the existing pathways and development of the extension. The choice of using what appears to be expensive block-paving technique has been much discussed but in the light of the way in which tarmac pathways are breaking up after only a relatively short lifespan should in the long term prove to be a positive decision.

Again Health and Safety issues and disabled access have now become important considerations.

## **D Allotments**

All allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let. Rents remain at the 'two year' agreement rate. Considerations of restoring some of the roadway will have to be made in the coming year. Perhaps as in the past reclaimed road stone will be used – even the old tarmac from the rebuilt cemetery pathways will be considered a 'green' re-use.

## **E Environment**

As promised in last years report planning permission has been sought for the reinstatement of two further bus shelters within the Parish. The shelter at Ridge Lane is expected to be installed by the end of May in the coming year. The second site was refused by the Planning Authority which somewhat perplexes the Council in that it was a previously used site. Consideration is being given to appealing against the decision as such action does not promote the action of a greener transport usage.

Fly tipping continues to be a nuisance and now occurs regularly in Steppey Lane and Monks Park Lane – it may be time to ask for surveillance cameras to be used occasionally.

I will ask John Arrowsmith to give a brief report on footpaths and footpath literature.

## **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. For the first time the Parish Council were able to use the Chapel Community Room at Ridge Lane – a positive experience for all Councillors involved.

## **G Grants**

The Parish Council continue to fund and support the Memorial Hall and the Ridge Lane Community Hall as appropriate to the value of £4,500.00. A total of £9,000.00 is at present waiting 'joint funding' for the next stage in the development of Ridge Lane Community Hall.

No further approach to support youth activity in the Parish was made during this year although an appropriate amount has been set aside.

## **H Planning**

Planning issues in the Parish have been commented on when appropriate. Those controversial applications mentioned in last years report have been granted consent but with specific limitations. A formal plan has been submitted for the final development of the hotel at Ridge Lane Golf Club but work has not yet commenced.

The former school site in Mancetter has been granted permission to develop as a special provision for an education centre. The actual future of the playing field remains a total mystery to the Parish Council.

## **I Future Targets**

- 1) The Parish Council will continue to pressure for the improvement of services within the Parish.
- 2) Support for Community Hall provisions to the value of £4,500.00 per year will continue.
- 3) Youth support will continue when and where appropriate staff is available.
- 4) Development of the cemetery with the up grading of pathways and the provision of a second cremation plot area.
- 5) The testing of monuments in the cemetery and churchyard will be started in the next financial year and continue thereafter.
- 6) Support for the maintenance of footpaths.
- 7) To seek an alternative site for a second bus shelter in Mancetter (an appeal to use the previous site may still happen).
- 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 meetings of the Parish Council and N.W.B.C.
- 4) Quarry Liaison Group
- 5) Standards Committee
- 6) Mancetter Residents Group
- 7) Sure Start
- 8) Other appropriate training sessions

The Parish Council continues to be pleased with the contact with Borough Councillors but police representation at meetings has diminished. The County Councillors have been more supportive to the Council this year and the Council hopes that the trend continues.

To this end the Parish Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of meetings for discussions with these agencies or public requests to raise matters. To achieve this, the agenda is adjusted at short notice to accommodate positive dialogue.

Sincere thanks are offered to the Vice Chair Jean Marshall – in the past year we appear to have supported more meetings together (Ridge Lane must be a ‘hot bed’ of rumour). I would also thank all the other Councillors who fulfil their own personal slots to help the

Council function with Jim Aldred remaining our representative for the Gramer Cottages Charity and Harold Blackstone our link to the Residents Association.

It is at this point I have to formally thank Julie Lester for her hard work as Clerk to the Council and her agreement to remain in post until a successor has been found. At the same time I would formally welcome Karen Evans who was appointed Clerk- in -Waiting starting on 1st April for the new financial year. Julie will remain in post until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006 to assist with a smooth changeover. Thank you once more Julie your 'ready' welcome will be missed and certainly I can now disclaim any possibility that I may be a secret alcoholic who visits the Black Horse at Sheepy. Let us hope that I do not become a trainee undertaker – because this is the second clerk to be linked to the 'burial business'.

This concludes my report for my fourteenth year in office as Chairman.