

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2007/2008

### Welcome

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish of Mancetter for the year 2007/2008 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	£40840.83
Balance of Reserves at the end of the year	£44917.20

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 accounts for the year 2006/2007 were formally adopted after external audit at the May 2006 Parish Council Meeting.

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 is the same amount as for the year 2006/2007, and therefore, is a nil percentage rise which represents excellent value for the continuing works to be undertaken in the Parish. The lack of an increase has been achieved by not putting aside any further reserves for community hall support, as current reserves were thought to be adequate.

### B Traffic Issues and Police

Police issues are now dealt with at Area Forum level as there is no longer a police attendance or representation at our Parish Council Meetings. The Parish Council have invited the police to attend the Annual Parish Meeting so that issues raised by Parishioners may be formally recorded in the Parish Records. It would appear that recorded

crime in the Parish remains relatively low when compared to some areas of the NWBC area. I will again reiterate, concerns over speeding vehicles in the Parish, and if you as a Parishioner continue to speed you will be paying a fine. This is the warning given at the last Area Forum Meeting.

Initial reports that relate to traffic speed limit signage have been made and would indicate an overall recommendation for a reduction of speeds through conurbation areas. This is by no means finalised and certainly does not address all local issues and concerns.

Safety at some road junctions is still poor, particularly in the Blue Boar area, and the Parish Council will continue in its efforts for a better method of traffic control in that particular area.

Despite the installation of the speed cushions in Manor Road, there are still issues relating to speeding vehicles and areas of loose grit along that road.

Closure of the bridge on Quarry Lane for modifications to the traffic light management gave cause for concern. Its overall effect on traffic movement in the area clearly demonstrated the 'fragile balance' of local traffic movements.

## **C Cemetery**

The maintenance of the Cemetery/Churchyard is in the hands of the same contractor and positive comments about his work are made by visitors to those areas.

Further paperwork relating to the testing of monuments still has to be devised and approved by the Council, and until this is done no preliminary testing of monuments can take place.

There is now an agreed set of recommendations and regulations for the installation of benches in the cemetery area. It is hoped that new notice boards will shortly be installed to display this information as well as the rest of the Cemetery Rules.

The Salvation Army Centre fencing has been preserved and re-erected along the Scout Centre boundary and during this work it became apparent that there was sufficient good steelwork to replace the line of fencing to the Charity Cottages. All this work has been carried out by the same contractor. It is hoped that a plaque can be attached to the railings explaining the origins of the fence.

A new cremation interment area has been agreed, but has yet to be marked out.

## **D Allotments**

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

Representatives from the allotment holders have attended Parish Council Meetings and have requested the installation of large water tanks to store surplus water against the inevitable dry spells. It is hoped that two such tanks will be provided in the coming year.

The sections of metal fencing removed from the cemetery, to continue the 'Salvation Army' fence have been stored and will be used to improve the perimeter fence at the turning area of the allotment site.

## **E Environment**

The third bus shelter has now been installed in the Parish and all three are regularly used. Unfortunately the first shelter suffered considerable vandalism to the polycarbonate sheeting and the Parish Council had to spend £500.00 replacing the damaged sheets.

The Notice Board at Ridge Lane has had to be repaired, but the one in Mancetter will require total replacement as the doors were sprayed with paint and subsequently completely broken off. Initial enquiries have been made about its replacement.

Fly tipping has been reported throughout the year and I am pleased to say that NWBC have, on most occasions, acted quickly to clear the mess.

Members of the SureStart group have met with a representative of NWBC to discuss the poor provision of play facilities for 'small people' at Ridge Lane.

After writing to the Parish Council, Ridge Lane Football Club has made a successful bid for financial support to allow them to repair the changing rooms on Ridge Lane Recreation Ground.

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

Meetings relating to the Heritage Route have been attended by members of the Parish Council and it would appear that the appointed sculptor has been given an approved design for a substantial bench to be made from local diorite stone. The Tarmac Company and quarry management have been extremely supportive of this project. Particular thanks must go to Graham Fyles, the Estates Manager, and Mike Gale, the Quarry Manager. I firmly believe that because of such co-operation the Parish will have one of the best sculptures on the route.

## **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, which are also held here.

The negative report of the Starfish Nursery provision has now been turned into a positive with a locally known team taking up the rebuilding of this provision which will greatly benefit the Parish. Assurances have also been made by the County that there are now mechanisms in place to prevent such a disaster ever occurring again – even though I have heard of a similar incident in the Northern Area.

Preliminary discussion with Complete Care (Warwickshire) Limited – the company operating Wathen Grange School (the old Mancetter School) may bring about positive provision for the Parish. I look forward to further discussion on this issue.

## **G Grants**

Although we are not setting aside any additional funding in the coming year, it would appear that at long last the storage provision at the Ridge Lane Community Hall will be completed in the coming year. Delegated funding to the value of £9,000.00 has been set aside for this work.

## **H Planning**

Planning issues in the Parish have been commented on where appropriated.

The old school playing fields site remains a total mystery and is now subject to inclusion in an overall strategy for provision in the County. What a waste of public money! The consultation that has not been reported back to the members of the public, that gave up so much time to take part in the consultation. This, after a full report on the results of the consultation had been promised.

There are still concerns over failed enforcement notices and the misuse of one site in the Parish.

## **I Future Targets**

- 1 The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish.

- 2 Community Hall provision will continue to be supported and it is anticipated that future precepts will contain such an element.
- 3 Youth support will continue when and where appropriate staffing is available.
- 4 The new cremation area will be developed in the coming year.
- 5 The new paperwork for the testing of monuments will continue to be developed.
- 6 Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths and the Heritage Way.
- 7 To work with other private agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision.
- 8 To work with the Residents' Association towards the development of a Parish Plan for Mancetter. This target is already three years old and needs active support from the residents.

## **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 County Area Meetings
- 3 Warwickshire Association of Parish Council Meetings and Training Sessions
- 4 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council with North Warwickshire Borough Council
- 5 Quarry Liaison Group
- 6 Standards Committee (historically but unfortunately, this Council was positively active in the first hearing relating to misconduct by a Councillor).
- 7 Mancetter Residents' Group
- 8 The Northern Association of Parish Councils

The Parish Council continue to be pleased with the support of the Borough Councillors and it is hoped that they will take on Parish matters and not busy themselves with just Borough Council matters.

Our County Councillor has also been supportive to the Parish Council and has maintained regular e-mail contact with us, as well as attending our meetings.

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.

A public question time has also now been formally entered on all future Parish Agendas. At such times the Council may not be able to give an immediate answer, but will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible.

The Council successfully co-opted two new members and both have made an ongoing positive contribution.

Sincere thanks are offered to Vice Chair, Jean Marshall, and the other Councillors who give unstinting support to the Parish. I would like to report to Parishioners that up to 75% of Councillors have attended outside agency meetings, and I believe that I am right in saying, that there has been a representative from the Parish Council at all meetings conducted by outside bodies.

I would also thank Karen Evans for her on-going effort and support for the Parish Council in her capacity as our Clerk. I look forward to her becoming fully qualified as a Clerk and helping to take this Council forward to Quality Status.