

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-2011

Welcome

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish Council of Mancetter for the year 2010-2011 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

Balance of Reserves at the start of the year £47,007.26

Balance of Reserves at the end of the year £49,204.31

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 2009-2010 were formally adopted after their external audit and copies of these can be made available upon request from The Clerk 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 £24,100.00. This is the same as the previous year and considering that for five years there has only been one single rise of £600.00 in 2009-2010 still represents excellent value. The rise was triggered by the necessary maintenance programme for the bus shelters, cemetery, etc.

The Clerk, at her personal request, has declined to take any incremental increase in salary for the second year in a row. This has yet to be fully agreed by the full Council in the following Annual Parish Council Meeting. The request was made during a regular meeting of The Clerk and the Chairman.

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 Meeting and make use of the consultation facility.

At our last meeting the Council had a positive discussion with PC575 Mark Jackson, PC382 Leon Carter and PCSO Ashleigh Wynder. In support of our new beat officer, Leon Carter, I would emphasize to Parishioners that to me he has an almost impossible task to police such a large area effectively and it is imperative that as much information and dialogue takes place with the PCSO so that crime levels remain low.

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.

The speed limit for Nuneaton/Mancetter Road continues to be ignored by many vehicles and the Harpers Lane junction gives cause for concern on many occasions.

Most recent information would indicate that in the current financial climate the proposed traffic calming alterations on Witherley Road will remain as they are. To those who regularly see vehicles zig-zagging in order to avoid the speed cushions it causes great concern.

There are still many instances of HGV lorries using Steppey Lane and also ignoring weight restrictions through the Ridge Lane/Birchley Heath area. In one case this year a car driver approaching Mancetter from Ridge Lane was faced with a low loader lorry coming up Steppey Lane. This driver had, therefore, ignored the preferred traffic route for HGV's.

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 trust the Parish Council has in his work has no doubters.

The second Contractor has also proved to be a great asset to the Parish and has carried out regular cleaning duties in the cemetery, as well as steadily working through the list of maintenance work necessary to keep the state of the cemetery and churchyard in good order. At this point in time refurbishment of the churchyard gate post

Cemetery Continued

is underway. This has involved the rebuilding of seriously corroded ironwork which is unique to that particular post. Installation is imminent.

The Risk Assessment documents have been updated and elements revised as necessary.

I would again ask visitors to the Cemetery to take note of the rules for the area. Potential dispute over ornamentation that does not comply needs to be avoided, but cannot be ignored.

D Allotments

All the allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let, and again, there is a waiting list of prospective tenants. There are indications that the Allotment Association for Ridge Lane is likely to be revived, thus showing the increased impetus to 'grow your own'.

The Parish Council would urge the Borough Council to progress the provision of allotments in Mancetter.

The warning letter concerning the state of an allotment at Ridge Lane was enforced and that allotment now has a new tenant. The environmental code for the site has been breached by one or more tenants because bonfires have caused nuisance to the village. Constructive dialogue took place between the Borough Council and the Parish Council.

The 'handyman' Contractor will now maintain the road verges at the site, due to Mr Hands becoming more ill due to a back injury.

E Environment

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

Fly tipping has been reported throughout the year. Most of this has been in the Purley Chase Lane/Steppey Lane area. I am pleased that North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) act quite quickly to clear the problem. I still continue to urge them to install notices and CCTV at the most commonly used sites as I am sure that in the long term it would prove to be cost effective.

Environment Continued

The Ridge Lane Action Group of parents has a children's play area to be proud of and the car parking area has been resurfaced to afford an additional hard surface which is also now safe to play other games on.

Gating of the area, together with re-fencing it, has greatly enhanced the children's safety.

I will ask John Arrowsmith, our Footpaths Representative, to give his report on Footpaths and the spending of the remaining 106 monies.

At this point in time the Parish does not know the position regarding shared funding with the County Council. The sum of money involved is low when compared with the enhanced support the Parish gives to maintain the footpaths to a high standard. This is reflected by the number of people seen walking our Rights of Way.

The County was better prepared this year and kept the majority of grit bins replenished with salt during the severe winter. The Parish Council has replaced damaged bins and a further two requests have been granted for grit bin provision.

The Parish Council is conscious that the report on the Ridge Lane aerials issue is now in a validation process and has been extended in its content.

F Amenities

The Community Schoolroom has continued to be used for all Parish Council Meetings, but the Quarry Liaison Group now meet at the Quarry Offices.

Youth activity at Ridge Lane goes from strength to strength with grateful thanks to the group of volunteer workers, especially the new group Leader.

The Community facility at Ridge Lane has also helped the formation of a new ladies WI group, a group I addressed in March about the work carried out by Mancetter Parish Council.

G Grants

At the present time the Parish Council has not issued any grants. Grants are normally allocated and based upon any interest earned from the Parish Council accounts. At current interest rates this is virtually nil.

H Planning

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

The Parish Council has asked NWBC for some clarification on planning consents/refusals for one particular site in the Parish and now await a possible meeting with planning officers.

It is believed that the quarry will appeal against the refusal of extended weekend operations.

I Future Targets

- i) The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish
- ii) Community Hall provision will continue to be supported when necessary
- iii) Youth support will continue when and where activity takes place
- iv) Inspection of monuments in the cemetery and graveyard will continue in the coming year
- v) Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths/rights of way
- vi) To work with other agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision.
- vii) To work with the Residents' Association towards the development of a Parish Plan for Mancetter. This target is now six years old and requires the formation of a group to progress it. This group must be outside the limits of the Parish Council
- viii) It is believed a new group has been identified to work with the Parish for the Ridge Lane element of a Parish Plan to be formulated
- ix) To continue to work towards a Quality Status Council
- x) To continue to support The Clerk on her training programme and the on-going personal development of all Councillors.

J Close

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

- a) Area Forum East Meetings
- b) County Area Meetings
- c) Warwickshire Association of Local Parish Council Meetings
- d) Annual Meeting of the Parish Council with North Warwickshire Borough Council

Close (Continued)

- e) Quarry Liaison Group Meetings
- f) de Mulder Liaison Group Meetings
- g) Standards Committee Meetings (under Central Government changes this is due to be disbanded)
- h) Warwickshire Rural Community Council Meetings

- i) Emergency Volunteer Groups for Warwickshire
- j) The North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Councils Meetings
- k) Mancetter Residents' Group Meetings.

The Parish Council continues to be very pleased with the support of our two Borough Councillors and it is hoped that this will continue in the future (the elections will tell!)

I believe that our County Councillor now understands the quiriness of our Parish Council a little better and has contributed to most of our meetings.

To this end the Parish Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of meetings for discussion with these agencies, as well as other 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 unstinting voluntary support to the Parish. I know that Parish elections are imminent but I hope to continue to work to improve and enhance the Parish, along with the other members of the Parish Council. John Arrowsmith has informed me that he is going to retire from working as a Parish Councillor and at this point I would like to thank him for the time he has given to the general works of the Council, but particularly his input to the Rights of Way – not only with the paperwork – but as a 'hands-on volunteer'.

He has also been our computer expert and established the web site for Mancetter Parish Council. Thank you John and I personally wish you a healthy, happy future outside the rigours of being a Parish Councillor.

I would also thank Karen Evans for her on-going effort and support for the Parish Council in her capacity as our Clerk and Proper Officer.

Close (Continued)

The Parish Council is a team of volunteers employing contractors 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.

This ends my report for 2010-2011.

Trevor Hopkins, Chairman
24th May 2011