

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2011-2012

WELCOME

I would like to present my report as Chairman of the Parish Council of Mancetter for the year 2011-2012 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 Jubilee Celebrations
- K Close

A Financial Statement

The Balance of Reserves at the start of the year £49,204.31
The Balance of Reserves at the end of the year £47,469.41

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 2010-2011 were formally adopted after their external audit and copies of these can be made available upon request from The Clerk and Proper Officer 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 two years and considering that for six years there has only been one single rise of £600.00 in 2009-2010, still represents excellent value. In real terms because of a slight increase in the number of electors there has been a percentage decrease of 1.6% (for a typical Band B property).

The number of hours required for The Clerk to be able to carry out her proper and increased duties has had to be extended by two hours as from the start of the new financial year.

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 Meetings and make use of the consultation facility.

In my report last year I expressed concerns about the almost impossible task for police to effectively deal with changes that had been proposed. I feel that I must place it on public record that many people in the Parish feel vulnerable at all levels and this appears to be the feeling in other parishes.

The Chairman of the Warwickshire Police Authority reports the past eleven months (to March 2012) as having been challenging but having plans to improve future performance. He also indicates a challenge to reduce policing budgets and to continue to operate effectively within communities. In contrast I see contradictions of these views. I see a 3.9% increase in taxes for policing (a band B property) – the only council tax element to show a rise. I see increases in crimes at local level, including graffiti, vehicles continuing to ignore speed limits, weight restrictions and preferred traffic routes 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 been re-appointed for a further two years after submitting a successful bid following an advertisement of the need for various minor task within the Parish to be offered as a combined package. This includes regular clearing duties in the cemetery and cleaning bus shelters and allotment roadway maintenance.

The churchyard gatepost has been replaced. The Risk Assessment documents have been updated and elements revised as necessary. A new document relating to procedures for digging graves has been prepared and submitted for signing by the undertakers that use the cemetery. This document will be binding unless an equivalent document is submitted to the Council by the undertakers.

Central Government talks about the Big Society and voluntary input. Mancetter Parish Council has always been a leader in such activity and the new cremation and burial area is an absolute example of this.

The development of the new area has taken place since September and the Council is most grateful; not only for efforts from the two Contractors and The Clerk; but also individual mention should be made of the following contributions and support:-

- i) A half tonne block of diorite stone donated by Tarmac following a letter sent to Mike Gale.
- ii) A memorial plaque manufactured by Peter Savage Ltd of Nuneaton. Consultation took place between staff at the company and me. A second company, unknown to the Parish Council, completed the engraving. When finished the Parish Council requested an invoice to be submitted by Peter Savage Limited, who then kindly donated the plaque to the Parish.
- iii) The stone was moved by a local business,

A & R Rothen & Sons Ltd, to their farm so that the stone could be prepared for the plaque and then it was craned into the cemetery.

- iv) The Mancetter Scouts allowed access into the cemetery via their grounds.

All of this has allowed rapid progress of the new area.

Visitors to the Cemetery are asked to take note of the rules for this area. Such guidance helps to keep costs to a minimum. Potential dispute over ornamentation that does not comply with these rules needs to be avoided, but cannot be ignored.

D Allotments

All the allotments at the Ridge Lane site are let, and now the Council is eager to add new names to the waiting list. Seven new tenants took up allotments this year.

During the year I met a representative from the Borough Council to discuss the possible need for vermin control at a particular site and constructive dialogue took place. Tragically that tenant has since died, and although considerable work has been required to tidy the site the new tenants are well under way with cultivation.

The 'handyman' Contractor now maintains the road verges at the side and is due to repaint the gate and renew some fencing with railing recovered from the Cemetery.

E Environment

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

There are still instances of fly tipping but the North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) has responded to clear the problem.

I will ask John Arrowsmith, our Footpaths Representative, to give his report on Footpaths and the progress on the new walks map.

At this point in time the Parish still does not know the position regarding funding from the County Council, but indications are that it will be almost a nil contribution. Despite the County effectively reneging on a long term working relationship, the Parish Council has resolved to continue to maintain the footpaths to a high standard and not allow them to decline as they did some years ago.

An inventory of the grit bins has taken place and some bins will be replaced in the coming year. Previous requests for bins have been fulfilled.

There is no further update on the Ridge Lane aerials issue.

F Amenities

The Community Schoolroom has continued to be used for all Parish Council Meetings.

Youth activity at Ridge Lane continues to have a high attendance record. There is a need to thank the group of volunteer works, including the qualified (retired) Youth Leader.

I am pleased that Mancetter now also has its own youth group and I hope that volunteers come forward to keep it active when funding ends.

Within this heading I will record the new progress made for communication of Parish Council activity and issues affecting the Parish. As well as the web site a one page contribution is made to the Mancetter Matters publication. This in conjunction with the Parish Council Meeting Summary on the web site keeps a regular update of information, which is largely the reason for The Clerk's extended hours of work.

G Grants

The Parish Council has agreed to give an annual grant to the Mancetter Matters publication. This is in recognition of the Parish Council information page.

The Mancetter Village Residents' Association has requested support for the Jubilee celebration. To this end the Parish Council has agreed to fund travel to/from Ridge Lane on the celebration day and to provide a commemorative medal to every child in the Parish.

H Planning

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

It is anticipated that the quarry will be applying to extend its working area.

The development of the school field site/shops area has raised some concerns, but should in the end be positive for Mancetter.

I Future Targets

- a) The Parish Council will continue to press for the improvement of services within the Parish.
- b) Community Hall provision will continue to be supported when necessary.
- c) Youth support will continue when and where activity takes place.
- d) Inspection of monuments in the cemetery and graveyard will continue in the coming year.
- e) Support will continue for the maintenance of footpaths/rights of way.
- f) To work with other agencies in the Parish to bring about enhanced Parish provision.
- g) To continue dialogue with the Borough Council and other groups in the Parish concerning the new legislation relating to the Localism Bill.
- h) To continue to work towards a Quality Status Council.

- i) To support our new Clerk on her training programme and the on-going personal development of all Councillors.

J Jubilee Celebrations

As already reported a commemorative medal will be issued to each child living in the Parish Council boundaries.

It is proposed to plant a row of specimen trees along the cemetery boundary. Each active group in the Parish will be invited to take part in a planting ceremony.

It is also hoped to plant many more spring bulbs within the Parish, but this has yet to be approved.

Something yet to be considered would be to compile a DVD providing a visual archive of the Jubilee activities for future parishioners to see.

J Close

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

- ❖ Area Forum East Meetings
- ❖ County Area Meetings
- ❖ Warwickshire Association of Local Parish Council Meetings
- ❖ Annual Meeting of the Parish Councils with North Warwickshire Borough Council
- ❖ Quarry Liaison Group Meetings
- ❖ Standards Committee Meetings (to be disbanded July 2012)
- ❖ Emergency Volunteer Groups for Warwickshire
- ❖ The North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Councils
- ❖ Mancetter Village Residents Group Meetings
- ❖ Mancetter Tenants Group Meetings
- ❖ WALC training day events.

The Parish Council continues to be very pleased with the support of our two Borough Councillors – congratulations on their re-election.

Our County Councillor contributes to our meetings at an improved level.

To this end the Parish Council has continued to afford quality time at the start of our 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 unbelievable voluntary support to the Parish. Although John Arrowsmith retired from the Council he has continued to pursue footpath issues.

We still have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor and would welcome a new face on the Council.

I would like to thank Karen Evans who resigned as Clerk and Proper Officer, for helping to develop Mancetter Parish Council during her six years in office.

I welcome our new Karen as Clerk and Proper Officer, who has settled into the demanding job with unbelievable efficiency and speed. I am sure that she will keep all of us, especially me, on our proverbial toes.

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 is a time of many changes but Mancetter Parish Council has stood the test of time for over 100 years.

This ends my report for 2011-2012.

Trevor Hopkins, Chairman
22nd May 2012