

Annual Parish Report for Grange Park Parish Council 2006 – 2007

Introduction

Considerable progress has been made since the last Annual report. The Parish Council has now been established for 4 years since it was set up by decree of Secretary of State. In May there were Local Council elections and 11 persons volunteered to become Parish Councillors. Twelve is the full compliment that meant that no physical election needed to take place. There is a vacancy for one Councillor. The submission of your name to the Parish Clerk would be welcome.

Parish Council

The Parish Clerk, David Hoier, resigned in December 2005 and we were fortunate to secure the services of Tracy Sampson, on a part time basis, to fill the post. Between then and now considerable progress has been made in clearing the backlog that had to be dealt with as only urgent matters had been covered in the preceding period. The Clerk has been greatly assisted in the task by Sara Ramsey, also part time. Proof of the progress made has been the successful audit of our account to date and as further proof of this the external auditor is examining the Accounts for this year now. Copies of the audited accounts will be displayed on the Parish Notice Board and are available for inspection in the Parish Office. Please contact the Parish Clerk and make a prior appointment if you wish to do so.

The setting up of Lead Councillors to handle certain aspects of the Councils work, as opposed to handling everything via sub committees, is working well. Any Parishioner can put their name forward and volunteer to join with Lead Councillors, contributing their ideas. The Lead Councillor puts any recommendations to full Council for approval.

All Councillors are volunteers, and do not receive any payment and the majority fit their Parish duties around their full time occupations and families. We give our time and commitment because we are residents of Grange Park and wish to see it grow and prosper as a fully-fledged Quality Parish.

I am pleased to advise that Tracy Sampson our Clerk has qualified with distinction the Parish Clerk's exams, CiLCA, additionally over 90% of the Councillors being elected clears the way for the Parish to aim for Quality Status. There is a need for residents to form a steering group to advise on a design Statement how Grange Park will evolve over the next few years Parishioner willing to assist in this project please contact the Parish Clerk.

Parish meetings

All Parish meetings are on the first Thursday of every month and these are public meetings at which in the open session at the beginning of every meeting you have an opportunity to express your views, raise matters that concern you or just come along to hear how your Parish Council operates. We would be very pleased to see more of

you at these meetings. However, you should also be aware that we are bound by certain regulations and protocol, which means we cannot make decisions “on the hoof” but need to take all matters into consideration. We do aim to respond as quickly as we can. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person then correspondence to the Parish Clerk, Tracy Sampson will be dealt with at the next meeting.

Council Tax – Council Precept

Precept had to be set for the period at £101900.00 The Precept is the sum of money that is collected in the Council Tax. It is to cover the cost of running the Parish and is levied on each dwelling by South Northants District Council.

2005 –2006 Dwellings 1401 = £60.67 / £5.06 per month

2006-2007 Dwellings 1530 = £66.60 / £5.55 per month

The balance 99.9% of the Council Tax levied by the District and County Council to pay for such items a Policing, roads; waste collection etc. As show in the papers that accompany the Council Tax demand.

The cost of running the Community Centre was the biggest item of expenditure that the Parish incurred. However, there has been an increased usage over the past year and it is now reaching break-even but this has not been done at the cost to local groups. We no longer make payments to ACRE for the community development worker

Communications

Some of you will be aware that we have a Web Site www.grangeparkpc.org where you can make keep up to date; make comment. Good, is nice, or bad will be dealt with also. The web site is maintained via the Clerk assisted by a Working Group directed by a Lead Councillor. Newsletter Editor and publisher is also a volunteer, Julian Wesson, and we can only thank him for his continued efforts on our behalf. Every household should receive a copy of the quarterly Newsletter delivered to your home.

Forward Planning

This year we have had a series of meeting with the Developers: the District Council regarding the hand over of the responsibility of the cycleway; children’s playgrounds and country parks to the Parish Council. The Parish Council is already responsible for the Community Centre and the small car park, and the Multi User Games area out of school hours. Roads and one meter either side of the kerb remain the developer’s responsibility until such time as the County Council Highways Dept adopts them. It is anticipated some of these areas will be handed over to the Parish Council before the middle of this year. Meetings with the County Council regarding road adoption are to be held shortly.

Wootton Grange Bowls Club uses the Bowling Green that is behind the Community Centre but the legal process for the land transfer has not yet been completed.

Parishioners who wish to join the Bowls Club are invited to do so and if necessary coaching will be available.

Community Groups

It is not the Council's function to organise and run events or organise sports functions. However, if there is a body of residents who will be willing to undertake those roles, there is guidance and advice available via the Lead Councillors to advise on the establishment of properly constituted and officered groups.

Neighbourhood Watch that has the support of the Council is running but still in its embryonic state but again it requires resident's input to form a properly constituted committee.

Thank You

I wish to thank Julien Wesson for his continued voluntary work on the Parish Magazine. John Lawrence for his sterling work as the Community Centre Caretaker and not least Sara Ramsey for her work as Community Centre Booking Clerk and Office assistant backing up the Clerk. Lastly to thank Tracy Sampson for her sterling efforts in not only getting us up to speed at the same time studying for and passing with distinction her qualifications.

Lastly I must thank my colleagues on the Council for their continued input and support because without that the job of Chairman would be impossible.

Anthony (Tony) Walker
Chairman