

MANNINGFORD PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2009 - 2010

Dear Parishioner,

General. This is my third annual report as Chairman of Manningford Parish Council (PC). Over these three years much has changed: Wiltshire County Council (WCC) became a Unitary Council on 1 April 2009 as Wiltshire Council (WC). The Pewsey Community Area Board (PCAB) is now well established, involving 27 parishes in the Vale of Pewsey between Beechingstoke in the west and Great Bedwyn in the east, Huish in the north and Upavon in the south. Parish affairs tend to remain much the same - a reflection upon limited finances and a genuine desire to 'get it right' first time in whatever we do. The following paragraphs set out what this has meant over the past year.

Police. Councillor (Cllr) Paul Pelham has continued to represent the PC on police matters. Fortunately, there were very few issues involving the police in Manningford in 2009. Parishioners should, though, be warned of two incidents of theft of heating oil in recent months in Manningford and a break in at the 'Woodborough' Garden Centre. Point of contact is: mail@barset.co.uk or 01980 630036.

Highways. The PC has continued to pursue its policy of applying for a 50mph limit on the A345 from The Woodbridge Inn through to Pewsey. WC has advised that a complete review of the existing speed limits on all A/B roads in the county will have been completed by 2011. C roads such as the Manningford Bruce/Abbots C52 will be surveyed afterwards. It is the PC view that all lanes previously designated as *Quiet Lanes* should be limited to 40mph, with a 30mph limit within all villages. This could well be reduced to 20 mph, if agreed nationally.

The PC will continue to campaign for safer roads in the Parish, especially a reduction in the number of large goods vehicles (LGVs) using the village as a transit route. Black signs indicating the route of the A345 for LGVs have at last been erected and we wait to see how effective these will be in diverting LGVs from the C52. In addition, blue 'HGV Unsuitable' signs have also been replaced by WC. There is now also a notice on the A346 on the north side of Marlborough warning of the low bridge in Pewsey and hopefully diverting LGVs heading south onto the A338 as opposed to the A345.

Volunteers from the Manningford Roads Action Group (MRAG) conducted a traffic flow survey on 26 March 2009. This indicated that 535 cars/motorcycles, 153 light goods vehicles and 51 large vehicles used the C52 over a 12 hour period, a total of 739 vehicles of all types. A further survey is anticipated in 2010. A speeding monitoring exercise has recently been in place opposite Wythe Cottage on the C52 and close to the village hall. The former location indicated that excessive speeding was a serious issue warranting the use of enforcement action under the Community Speed Watch Scheme.

Village 'gate' and camera signs are soon to be erected. 30 mph warning signs are now available to be affixed to wheely bins and some residents on the C52 have already taken advantage of this scheme. It is felt that the existing parish white signboards should either be smartened up or removed once the gates are in place.

The use of Wick Lane by LGVs attempting to gain access to Barset Farms was also a

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cause for complaint in 2009. A meeting was held on 31 March 2009 to consider actions to ameliorate the situation and it was agreed that Baset Farms signs would be placed 200m either side of the main entrance. The blocked ditches in Wick Lane have been cleared and WC advised that Wick Lane signs on the A345 were inappropriate and only served to exacerbate the problem. New signs are to be installed by WC. Baset Farms would also be considering submitting planning permission for an LGV access road from the industrial units to the A345.

The failure of WC to clear a single road in Manningford during the recent cold weather is a cause for concern. There are no salt boxes at all on any of our roads and this needs to be rectified for future winters if accidents are to be avoided. As a consequence of the ice, pot holes have formed and require action to remedy but without inadvertently widening the roads in the process. In addition, WC is asking farmers to assist in snow clearance. If anyone is able and willing, they should contact: Diane.Ware@wiltshire.gov.uk

Cllr Richard Netherclift continues to provide sterling service as the PC representative for highways. Parishioners are encouraged to utilise the Parish Steward scheme for minor road improvements, all bids to be placed with Cllr Netherclift. Point of contact: r.netherclift1@btinternet.com or 01672 562777.

Parish Council Projects. Hard standing along the north side of the recreation ground has yet to be installed. Playground safety measures are in hand. Point of contact is Cllr Bernard Gaskin: bernard.gaskin@btinternet.com or 01980 630917

Footpaths. An investigation is (still) under way as to how and why Footpath No 30 southeast from the A345 near Indigo (GR 144581) to Grant's Firs (GR 176557), a distance of 4km, has been blocked off and footpath signs removed. The PC aims to restore this footpath to its rightful use. Action is with WC (Esther Daly). If any parishioner is able to shed light on the closure, the PC would be most grateful.

The possibility of a permissive bridleway (PB) alongside the C52 from Indigo through the village up to and beyond the Manningford/Wilcot parish boundary is under consideration. This would only be with the agreement of relevant landowners and provided funding could be found. It is envisaged that the PB would run on alternate sides of the C52 so as to avoid local housing throughout. This may be of interest to horse riders, dog walkers, runners and cyclists. A similar scheme could possibly be created alongside the A345, which remains a highly dangerous main road. Cllr Marcel Lichter is point of contact: marcel@gaspin.com or 01672 562053.

A more recent development has been the opening of the Pewsey Avon Trail (PAT) which is a 28 mile walk on existing rights of way between Pewsey and Salisbury and on to the sea at Christchurch. PAT enters Manningford from Sharcott by road and then passes by Manningford Abbots old church before assuming the White Horse Trail to St Peter's Church and on to Upavon. A Guide to the walk may be purchased from the Tea Rooms in Pewsey. Regrettably Manningford PC was not consulted in the choice of route and it is thought that an amended 'dog friendly' variety could have been followed in lieu.

Village Website. Cllr Phil Hossack (phil@skypower.co.uk or 01672 564438) has continued to maintain the website, re-launched in 2008 and recently updated. All matters relating to PC meetings, and other village issues, are regularly posted and can be found at www.themanningfords.co.uk

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Village History. Manningford has a diverse and rich history, which features in some local history books but not within the Parish itself. It is thought that such a compilation would benefit the Parish and could include both artefacts, photographs, written testimonies and oral histories, especially from those residents of long standing in Manningford. A small volunteer committee has been established under the supervision of the historian, Mr Peter Ward, to gather the material, maintain the archive and post it onto the website. Those interested should contact Peter: PeterWard7@aol.com or 01672 562638.

Finance. Cllr Bernard Gaskin has continued to oversee the Parish finances. The PC is always mindful of the whole community when setting the precept which is kept as low as possible and yet allows sufficient funding to maintain the facilities of the village. The precept for 2010 has been agreed at £6,300, an increase of £300 over the previous year. Contact: bernard.gaskin@btinternet.com or 01980 630917.

Village Hall. The Village Hall continues to function as a valuable centre for the community. Events, such as the July 'Big Lunch', Quiz Nights and Xmas Carols are much appreciated. Anyone with suitable photographs of village life, both past and present, and are prepared to donate them to the Village Hall, should contact Andrew Marshall, chairman of the Village Hall Committee (VHC): vandamarshall@tiscali.co.uk or 01672 569077.

There has been a long standing debate over a 'loan' made by the PC to the VHC, concerning which no evidence appears to exist. It was proposed and agreed at the last PC meeting on 16 March 2010 that this 'loan' should be considered null and void. The PC 'owns' the Village Hall on behalf of the Parish and the VHC administers it on behalf of the PC. It is therefore essential that there is a close and cordial working relationship between the two bodies, not one of tension. The cancellation of the 'loan' will hopefully assist in bringing this about. Equally, the VHC is required to submit an annual statement of accounts as of April in each year and it is hoped that the VHC chairman will, once each year, personally report to the PC on outstanding issues pertaining to the Village Hall.

Parochial Church Council (PCC). The PCC has continued to provide valuable support to the community through the organization of a number of events and the upkeep of St Peter's Church. These have included a highly successful repeat of the Manningford Abbots, Bruce and Bohune Rounders match, Parish carol singing and a Christmas party. Services are held on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday each month and attendance has been good (50 adults and 6 children on Christmas Day 2009). A third Rounders match is planned for Sunday 20 June 2010. All are welcome to bring picnics/barbeques.

Environment. Cllr Bridget Lanyon (contact bridget.lanyon@googlemail.com or 01672 564269) continues to take responsibility for Environmental matters. The PC is now a member of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE). One small 'victory' was the request to Network Rail that its metallic telecommunications mast and shed by Primrose lane should be painted green to blend, just a little, with the rural landscape, which has been duly achieved. A WC Flood Survey is being completed and any parishioners with concerns over flooding should get in touch with Bridget.

Community Affairs. Cllr Carol Mortimer deserves congratulation for having compiled a Manningford Local Directory, published in September 2009. All Parishioners are invited to add their personal details, such as address, telephone number and e-mail to the Directory for its second publication in September 2010. Local businesses are also encouraged to supply their details. Contact: carol@themortimers.co.uk or 01672

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564374. Carol is also investigating the possibility that the local Mobile Library service should stop in Manningford.

Allotments. Two plots are currently available. If anyone wishes to apply for a plot, contact Jackie Liebling, the Parish Clerk: cornerc@btinternet.com or 01672 56487.

Village Design Statement. Cllr Reg Sampson is point of contact. This continues to be lodged with WC.

Planning. Cllr Reg Sampson has continued to provide sterling service to the community in ensuring that planning applications are dealt with in good time and judiciously assessed. Contact: regandmyffy@btinternet.com or 01672 563736.

Military and Defence Related Matters. The presence of the military around Manningford is on a day and nightly basis, with over flights by Apache Attack Helicopters, Hercules C-130s and armoured/artillery activity to the west on Salisbury Plain. WC has now established a single point of contact for issues or complaints: Alistair.cunningham@wiltshire.gov.uk (01225 713203).

Communication. It is intended that reports such as this will receive a wide distribution via email to parishioners and also in hard copy through letterboxes and on notice boards. As always, comments and views from the Parish are most welcome, either by email, verbally or by letter to the Parish Clerk, Jacki Liebling at Corner Cottage, Manningford Abbots. And since we do not have our own pub, Parish and other social matters may be discussed in a convivial manner at the Golden Swan in Wilcot between 1800 and 1900 each Friday evening. All are most welcome to join in. The next PC meeting will be on Tuesday 6 July at 1930 in the Village Hall and at two month intervals thereafter. All parishioners are most welcome.

DAVID BENEST
Chairman
24 May 2010
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