

Grange Park Parish Council

Great Place Positive Community



Grange Park Parish Council

Annual Report

2020/2021



Chairman' s Report for 2020/21

I hope that by the time you read this that the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic is firmly behind us and that life continues to move toward some semblance of normality. This crisis has not only changed so much of our day to day lives but it has also brought out the best in society. We have all come to truly appreciate the magnificent work of our NHS and support services. Our local community, has rallied round to the aid of neighbours and friends which was great to see. The GP surgery has been at the centre of vaccine delivery, not only for Grange Park but also for the surrounding villages.

The year was inevitably shaped by Covid-19. Emergency legislation introduced in April 2020 allowed us to hold our meetings 'virtually' and, like so many others, we have become Zoom aficionados. Councillors and members of the public with access to computers or phones have been able to attend these meetings. As Chairman I have also remained in regular contact with the Parish Clerk to constantly review the optimal approach to managing the day-to-day business of the Parish to reflect the regularly changing circumstances.

Some activities have been postponed until life and business gets back to some normality, but as a Council we have continued to deal with the usual and varied matters that arise: maintaining the environment to its high standard, financial control, setting budgets and attending a public inquiry on major development within the parish. There have been many new challenges which have been dealt with effectively by our excellent team.

Like everyone, we are keen to get to 'business as usual'. We are all local people with a wealth of local knowledge, and we willingly devote our time (unpaid in the case of councillors) to try and make our community the best place to live-we are proud of this. Please remember we are approachable and ready to help if we are able, keen to work together for the continued good of our community.

Residents are also encouraged to attend our monthly meeting to raise any concerns or simply attend and listen to the business being discussed.

I would like to thank all Councillors, Staff, District and County Councillors for their continued support during these difficult times.

We look forward to the coming year (which is an election year) and the formation of the new unitary authority for West Northamptonshire.

As always, further information can be obtained from visiting our website at <https://www.grangeparkpc.org/> or contacting the Parish Clerk on parishclerk@grangeparkpc.org

Martin Smith

Chairman
Grange Park Parish Council

You are invited to attend the

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Thursday 20th May 2021 at
7.30pm in the Small Hall at
Grange Park Community Centre**

Please find below in brief work that has been carried out over the past year :

Finance

Grange Park Parish Council are committed to ensuring we give real value for money in the services we provide. This year we introduced a new accounting system (SCRIBE) to allow for a more detailed analysis of our income and expenditure, phased budgeting, and short, medium, and long-term business planning and the associated risks as the parish continues to grow.

The past twelve months have had a significant impact on the council's finances. With halls closed and restrictions on activities impacting the council's income, we have relied heavily on our reserves to bridge the gap. With the ongoing uncertainty over the council's income for the coming year, we have had to consider our budget even more carefully than normal.

I attach for your information an end of year Balance Sheet. All other financial matters including budgets, precept request and explanations can be viewed on our website www.grangeparkpc.org.

Grange Park Parish Council

BALANCE SHEET

31/03/2021

<i>(Last) Year Ended</i> 31 Mar 2020		<i>(Current) Year Ended</i> 31 Mar 2021
£	CURRENT ASSETS	£
0.00	Stocks and stores	0.00
0.00	Work in progress	0.00
8,722.10	Debtors (Net of provision for doubtful debts)	0.00
0.00	Payments in advance	0.00
2,218.90	VAT Recoverable	20,317.80
0.00	Temporary lendings (investments)	0.00
1,236,333.22	Cash in hand	1,215,920.10
1,247,274.22	TOTAL ASSETS	1,236,237.90
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
0.00	Creditors	0.00
<u>1,247,274.22</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>1,236,237.90</u>
	Represented by:	
1,177,683.05	General fund Balance	1,135,885.81
	Reserves:	
0.00	Capital	0.00
69,591.17	Earmarked	100,352.09
0.00	Adjustments	0.00
<u>1,247,274.22</u>		<u>1,236,237.90</u>

HR Committee Report

As Chairman of the HR Committee (Cllr Jonathan Davies) I am proud of the way the Council and its staff have continued delivering the council services and working remotely.

Grange Park Community Centre, Café/Bar and Foxfield Pavilion sites has unfortunately had to remain closed for much of the last year. Our Parish Clerk and Administrator were quickly able to adapt to working at home, whilst our Caretaking, Cafe Bar and Cleaning staff have had to join the Government Furlough/Flexi Furlough Scheme.

As stated previously the Parish Offices has been closed during the pandemic with staff working from home and only coming into the offices when essential to do so. It is hoped that as restrictions are lifted the office will be able to reopen and staff return to work there, that said, the benefits of flexible working should not be dismissed, and staff will continue to review working practices to ensure they are working as effectively as possible whilst recognising the need for the office to be open to the public. Whilst the current restrictions remain in place the contact details for the staff are:

Tracy Sampson	Parish Clerk	07971165349	parishclerk@grangeparkpc.org
Helen Blatchford	Administrator		parishadmin@grangeparkpc.org
Stephen Horner	Head Caretaker	07971165468	caretakers@grangeparkpc.org

Helping throughout the pandemic

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, Grange Park Parish Council having been helping those who have found themselves in the vulnerable category and in need of support to get food supplies and medication. We have been working with the following

- SOFEA where we have been collecting and distributing food boxes within our community on a weekly basis
- Richmond Homes – Delivery of Fish and Chips lunches to the elderly (including Easter Eggs and VE Cupcakes)
- Creation of a Community Liaison Group who have volunteered to give up their time to get/deliver shopping or medical supplies to residents.

Planning

Back in 2019, before the pandemic, GPPC had objected to the planning application to build 300 houses in the field to the south of Alamein woods. We went on to make a significant contribution to that application being rejected by SNDC in the early part of last year.

After the developer appealed against that decision, the challenge for GPPC in 2020, amidst all of the Covid restrictions was to do everything in our power to get that appeal dismissed. In December 2020 we all received an early Christmas present when the planning inspector announced his decision to dismiss the appeal. The roadmap to achieving this momentous result was:

- The PC agree to strongly resist the appeal. A working group of councillors Millerchip, Bainbridge, Aluko along with our clerk, Tracy is established.
- The working group is expanded to include members of Quinton PC, our respective district councillors and our county councillor. We embark on a one team approach to present a unified, coordinated resistance to the appeal.
- Through a series of six team meetings, led by the GP team our plan was formulated. Letters of objection were lodged; residents were engaged such that 130 objections were raised on the appeal site and speeches were written. The consultant representing SNDC joined some of the meetings where we were able to help him structure and build his case
- The total team attended the five-day public enquiry. Both written representation and live speeches were made by Millerchip and Bainbridge along with those from Quinton PC and our district and county councillors. SNDC defended their position using the strategy that we had helped them define. Councillor Millerchip conducted a site visit for the Inspector and the contestants.

The Inspector found in our favour. We still need to celebrate!

Community Matters!

The COVID - 19 pandemic has had an impact on the way, as a society, we communicate with each other and the Parish Council quickly adapted to these changes. A virtual meeting, Community Matters, was set up to discuss how local residents and local businesses can work together to make positive change to Grange Park.

The Community Matters meetings are designed for local residents, local businesses and the Parish Council to discuss and work together to resolve any local issues or problems and to encourage positive change and support to the community. The Parish is hoping to continue to hold regular Community Matter meetings, and the support of the local community and local businesses is crucial to enable positive changes to take place in Grange Park.

Future Projects:

- Community Litter Pick
- Outdoor Gym at Foxfield's County Park

Keeping Grange Park Looking Great!

The COVID-19 pandemic may have put a temporary stop to a number of our local community activities, including the monthly Community Litter Pick. However, it did not prevent some amazing local residents borrow litter pickers and continuing to make sure Grange Park is looking great! Thank you and we look forward to restarting the monthly Community Litter Pick in the autumn (depending on government guidance).

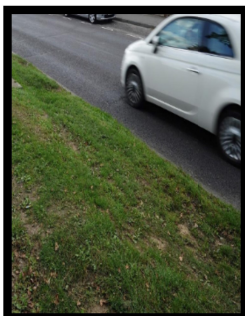


Environment

The focus last year was twofold. Firstly, to keep Grange Park looking good but to do so on a reduced budget necessary because our closed facilities could generate no income. Secondly to respond to the growing number of issues posed by trees.

- The tree survey finalised in May 2019 produced a report detailing 200 action items to be completed over a three-year period. By the end of 2020 we had these completed. We have recently decided that because trees are still an issue, we are to pull forward the next tree survey one year to May 2021
- The PC responded to all residents' concerns about trees (not all of them resulting in action) Encroaching growth was cleared away from 400 m of fence line. Four large Leyland Cypress trees were felled at the rear of Bluebell Rise and one from Springwell close because of the threat they posed to adjacent property. Many more smaller wind damaged trees presenting a safety hazard were also felled
- Our contract with R&G was closely managed to reduce the number of jobs done and therefor the cost to us but in a way that had a minimal impact on the visual appearance on where we live.
- Environmental audits were conducted every month and documented. All issues requiring action were dealt with, most of them closed, a few ongoing. The reports can be found on our web site. The results can be seen as you walk around Grange Park.

Saxon Avenue



The Parish Council are continuing to liaise with Northampton County Council (NCC) and Amazon regarding local issues, particularly the issues of delivery drivers parking and churning up the grass verges along Saxon Avenue. The Parish Council has met with NCC and Amazon regarding this particular issue and anticipate the installation of yellow lines and the grass verge reinstated along the section of Saxon Avenue parallel to the Amazon warehouse in spring 2021.

Café-Bar 2020

The Café-Bar is run by the Parish Council as a facility for the Grange Park Community and is normally well used during the day for coffee and lunches, Friday after school drinks and Monthly social evenings and events. You can find us at the back of the Community Centre and the Café-Bar is also available for hire for private parties and events.



Our aim is to ensure that we cover all costs with any profit being put back into the community.

As with all retail and hospitality 2020 has been a difficult year for the Café-Bar with closure for 10 out of the 12 months.

After closure in March 2020, all staff were furloughed, and we were finally able to re-open in September '20. Income was clearly at a reduced level as we had to maintain social distancing and we were unable to have our usual popular drinks and karaoke evenings. Due to this we operated restricted hours and with limited staffing. Mainly just Katie the Manager working shifts alone.

Sadly, we had to close again for the November lockdown and are yet to reopen. Katie did try a takeaway facility, but it wasn't viable and it is clear that our customers value eating in whilst visiting the Community Centre during the day and after school for other activities.

I am pleased to say that we are planning to re-open following government guidelines during the next relaxation of restrictions in May. We ask that the community support the facility. Without the customers we will not be able to maintain running the Café-Bar so 2021 will be an important year in deciding the future, we will need to keep the staffing low and menu limited until we can rebuild the business. We hope to be able to hold after school parties, BBQs and Drinks and Karaoke evenings again in the near future, so watch out for these being advertised.

Please follow the Café-Bar on Facebook for regular updates once we re-open, <https://www.facebook.com/GPcafebar/>. We also welcome any feedback from our customers, please feel free to get in touch with the Parish Council for any ideas for the future.

Finally, a big thank you to Katie for her efforts this year when we were able to be open. I know that Katie and all the staff are looking forward to coming back when it is safe and viable to do so.