

Grandborough Parish Plan 2011

Incorporating Design statement



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Introduction

Grandborough Parish Council initially drew up a Parish Plan in 2006 to provide a context for its future discussions and actions. It is recommended that such Plans are reviewed every 5 years or so, hence the current update.

In order to reflect the collective views of parishioners as far as practicable, a working group of volunteers drew up, conducted and analysed a comprehensive survey. The survey was distributed to all addresses (176) in the Parish and 92 (52%) were returned. . Additionally a separate housing needs survey was carried out in conjunction with Warwickshire Rural Housing Association. Copies of the analysis of both surveys can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

The action plan, which follows, has been agreed by the Parish Council based upon the results of these surveys.

Grandborough – a short background

Grandborough is a relatively small community with 176 households, but it has a long history, and its Church spire and the two Wellingtonia trees alongside it are a well-known landmark in the Leam valley.

The Domesday Book records that Raneberge (today's Grandborough) was an established settlement with 1000 acres of land, 27 villagers, and 11 smallholders. In early days the main centre of settlement was at Woolscott, but over the centuries a larger centre has developed in the valley bottom around the Church. Calcott was a separate Domesday village but its site is long deserted and the land now forms part of Grandborough Parish. Over the years other extensions of the Parish boundary mean that at 4494 acres, Grandborough is now one of the largest of England's Civil Parishes.

The population has not changed dramatically over the centuries. In 1086 it was 200 and the 2011 electoral register shows 335 electors. In addition it is estimated that there are about 88 children currently living in the Parish.

Today's community still has strong agricultural links, but there are also many who commute to local towns and cities or even further afield to work. As befits a technological age there has been an increase in home working in recent years.

A strong sense of community has been retained, and despite the loss of such centres as the Village School and the Village Shop, there are regular social events centred on the Church, Chapel, Village Hall and The Shoulder of Mutton (the one surviving pub of three). This strength of community is reflected in the good level of response to this Parish Plan project, and it is hoped that the action plan that follows will underpin the maintenance and development of our community.

Housing Needs

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, in partnership with Grandborough Parish Council conducted a detailed study of housing need in the parish. The survey not only investigated housing needs but also measured local support for a development to meet local needs.

The survey revealed only one respondent with a need for alternative housing. However, since this respondent did not meet Rugby Borough Council's criteria to justify any further development in the parish the survey concluded that there is no current housing need, which meets the Borough Council's planning requirements.

It is recommended that the Parish Council carry out a further survey in 5 years time.

Environment, incorporating Design Statement

Houses and other Buildings.

It is clear from the Survey that the overwhelming wish of the residents of Grandborough is that wherever possible it retains a clearly rural village environment; no one wishes to see it transformed into a suburb detached from a town. This has clear implications for the future maintenance and/or development of the parish environment.

Although there is no single building style or design that marks the parish (unlike say some nearby Cotswold stone villages) there are a number of distinct areas that have a cohesiveness that we should seek to maintain. They are as follows:

The area around the Church, including Moat House and Moat House Barn, The Old Royal George, 'The Saucy Six', 1-5 Church Road, and the Church and its Wellingtonia trees. This area is considered a major asset of the parish and any alterations and development need to be in keeping with the character, scale and design of the existing buildings.

Woolscott. There are a number of houses which have a distinctive design style be it timbered, stone or Georgian brick, and these together with the open setting and the long sight lines make this a much admired part of the parish. Any future alterations to the significant buildings in this area will need to be in keeping with the existing design and materials. Equally infill development should be resisted in order to preserve the nature of the area and the long sightlines.

Other significant buildings. There are a number of other buildings within the Parish, which are seen as significant contributors to Grandborough's environment. These are: Mill House, Mill Cottage, The Old Vicarage, Lawrence Cottage, Church Cottage, and The Shoulder of Mutton. Again any future development of these buildings, or development in close proximity to them, should be in keeping with their existing character, scale and design.

Other than the buildings mentioned above there is an eclectic mix of building types and materials throughout the Parish and it is difficult to lay out any design criteria for future development other than to say that any proposal will need to be considered in its own context. However there are some general principles, which do emerge from the survey:

- Avoid flat roof extensions particularly to the frontage of houses.
- Seek to use materials in keeping with the existing structure.
- Keep any new build at a scale compatible with adjoining properties.
- Encourage any new house building to be of three bedroom or smaller.
- Encourage sensitive location of agricultural developments.

Other structures.

There are a number of features, which are obviously warmly regarded by most Parishioners such as the new bus shelter, post boxes and telephone box, though the current condition of some is deprecated. There is a shared view that as far as possible clutter (some defined it as urban clutter) should be minimised.

It is therefore suggested that the following actions are pursued:

- Retain the existing post boxes in Grandborough and Woolscott.
- Refurbish and retain the existing telephone box.
- Retain and maintain the old kerbing sets at the corner of Church Road and Main Street.
- Retain and maintain the granite set gutter adjacent to Moat House.

Retain the blue brick footpath in Church Road.
Retain (or increase) seats at regular intervals around the parish.
Retain and maintain notice boards.
Retain and maintain the War Memorial.
Maintain the two bridges and causeway in good order.
Seek to remove spindly street name carriers and place street names on adjacent walls etc.
Whenever the opportunity arises get telephone and electricity wires placed underground

Planters

The survey asked if parishioners were in favour of building two brick planters, one on the Church road/Main Street triangle, and one at the junction of Hill Road and Grandborough Fields Road. Sixty respondents were in favour and twenty were not in favour of the proposal. It is therefore suggested that the action plan includes going ahead with this proposal.

Hockley Close Wildlife garden

The survey asked parishioners if they were in favour of creating a wildlife garden in the triangle at the foot of Hockley Close. Sixty-six respondents were in favour and thirteen were not. It is therefore suggested that the action plan includes this proposal.

Other Issues.

There are environment and design implications with regard to concern over parking at Village Hall, Church, and Chapel functions. These are considered below.

Using Roads, Bridleways and Footpaths

Although the overwhelming majority of journeys into and out of the village are by private car, there are a significant number of parishioners who are regular users of public bus services. It would appear that use of buses would increase if services were more frequent and allowed users a reasonable period at their destination before the scheduled return journey. Concern was also expressed that on return journeys from Rugby, as passengers for Dunchurch Road and Dunchurch village are allowed to board, those seeking to return to Grandborough may be stranded.

The state of the road between the A45 and the entrance to Fields Farm was of concern to a substantial number of respondents. The transport operations at Fields Farm should be much reduced by or before the end of November, and it is suggested that this would be an opportune time for road repairs to be done.

Speeding traffic through the village, the vulnerability of traffic entering or leaving both the A45 and A426 accesses to the parish, and the lack of consideration for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, were concerns voiced by a substantial number of parishioners.

There is a high usage of footpaths and bridleways within the Parish mostly without problems but both users and landowners report some difficulties.

A large number of respondents (32%) complained about parking on footpaths and verges.

A significant number of respondents (12%) complained of the lack of consideration to other road users demonstrated by groups of 'professional' cyclists.

A number of action points flow from these comments:

Seek to maintain bus service, seek priority boarding for return journey to Grandborough, seek to extend timetables, and seek connections with other services at Dunchurch.

Reinstate/maintain the bus stop at or near Manor Farm (A45)

Press for repairs to approach to A45 at end of November

Press for improved safety features at A45 and A426 junctions and for signs to be kept clear of vegetation.

Press for adequate signage for the access turning to Onley Equestrian Centre.

Seek to remove redundant road signs and resist further signage.

Contact local “professional” cycling clubs to seek their assistance in improving consideration for all road users.

Encourage residents not to park on pavements and verges.

Carry out an up to date survey of all footpaths and bridleways within the parish.

Set up a system for parishioners to report footpath and bridleway problems.

Discuss findings with Warwickshire County Council footpaths officer.

Publish a leaflet showing the Parish footpath and bridleway network with recommended circular walks/rides.

Remind all parishioners of the Country Code, in particular the need to keep to footpaths, to keep dogs under control, and the need to remove dog faeces and dispose of them safely.

Amenities and Utilities

Eighteen respondents to the survey identified ditches they thought needed maintenance. Between them they referred to virtually every ditch in the parish.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents were satisfied with the two-weekly cycle of bin collection. Fifty-seven respondents said they would find a ‘freecycling’ notice board or equivalent useful

In response to the query about lighting twenty respondents wanted more lights while fifty-three wanted no change or less lights and nine wanted all public lighting removed. In the event of any addition being considered, the most mentioned site was The Lane. Regardless of other views unnecessary light pollution is a common objection.

Public Utilities generally provided a reasonable level of service with the clear exception of mobile phone reception and Broadband coverage. Given the substantial and growing numbers home working in the Parish (6%) the level of provision in these two areas is just not acceptable. Thirty-seven respondents gave details of their broadband download speed. Thirty-one of them reporting 1meg or less, eighteen of these less than 0.5 meg. Only three reported speeds over 2meg.

The Emergency services were rarely called upon, but when they were responses were normally acceptable. In the case of the police service the definition of acceptable is heavily influenced by the well publicised low levels of police manpower covering rural Warwickshire.

Action points are :-

Press for improved Mobile Telephone and Broadband connections.

Join in with the Warwickshire County Council initiative on broadband in rural areas

Consider better shading for existing Parish lights.

Maintain regular survey of ditches and watercourses.

Explore ways of promoting freecycling in the parish.

Community Affairs

Children and Young persons

There were 10 respondents with children in the 0 to 4 age group, and eight said they would be interested in a Mother and Toddler group. Five of these offered to help run such a group.

Opinion was split almost equally over the question of whether current (minimal) youth provision was adequate, there were twice as many respondents who believed that more should be done as those believing not. Fifteen respondents said they would be willing to help with some provision. Although the questionnaire invited separate responses from youngsters, none were received. It is therefore suggested that we should:-

Encourage parents to form a Mother and Toddler group.

Set up a meeting of parents and other interested parties to discuss additional youth provision.

Weekday Group

Twenty respondents were interested in joining a weekday group and fourteen offered to help support such a group. Monthly meetings were favoured by eighteen. It is suggested that we set up a meeting of potential group members.

Persons with disability or special needs or requiring assistance

The households covered by responses to the survey contain 220 adults of who 60 (27%) were aged 60 or over. Only 8 respondents reported having a disability or infirmity, and all of these were assisted by family members living with them or nearby.

Thirty-two respondents would be prepared to add their names to a list of those able to provide assistance with the collection of prescriptions, lifts to hospital or for shopping, etc. (It should be noted that the Pharmacy in Dunchurch offers a collect and deliver service for repeat prescriptions from Dunchurch Surgery)

It is suggested that we encourage the setting up of a register of occasional drivers for hospital visits, etc., with a coordinator.

Allotments

Eleven respondents were interested in having an allotment and two said that they owned land, which might be suitable. We should therefore start discussions with these two landowners.

Community shop

Sixty-one respondents felt that there was a need for a community shop, and twenty said they would be prepared to help run one. Two said that they owned premises, which might be suitable for such use. We should therefore start discussions with these two site owners and set up a meeting of all those interested in this proposal.

Newspapers

Twenty-six respondents were interested in using a local pick-up point for newspapers, and two said they had premises suitable for such use. . We should therefore start discussions with these two site owners and set up a meeting of all those interested in this proposal

Village Hall

Seventy five percent of respondents used the Village Hall often or occasionally, and most expressed satisfaction with its facilities. However, thirty-five respondents expressed a preference for the provision of off-road parking. We should explore the possibilities for such provision.

Church and Chapel

Over 60% of respondents used the Church or Chapel often or sometimes. Suggestions for additional uses were sought and the most common responses were, Lunch Club; Coffee Mornings; Toddler Group; Youth Group.

Twenty-nine respondents expressed a preference for off-road parking.

It is suggested that we discuss these responses with representatives of Church and Chapel.

First Responders

Seventeen said they would be prepared to train in the use of a defibrillator and join a rota of emergency first responders. We should contact the local first responder organisation for help in setting up this arrangement.

Welcome Pack

Virtually all replies were in favour of such a pack. We should make appropriate arrangements.

The Pub

Eighty-six respondents (98%) said that they regarded the village pub as very important or important to the village. Several pointed out the impact on House prices as well as the social life of the village if we were to lose it.

However only twenty-six (29%) said they used it once a week or more and 39% said they used it 'a couple of times per year' or even 'never'. A wide range of suggestions for making it more successful were suggested.

As this is being written the Pub is not trading. The Parish Council have written to the owners to express concern and seek assurances about future plans. We will need to keep the situation under review.

One message is clear – when trading is resumed we must all realise that, **'If we don't use it we will lose it.'**

Summary of Suggested Action Points

Carry out a further housing needs survey in 5 years time.

Buildings

Seek to ensure that in regard to the area around the Church; a number of houses in Woolscott, and other individual houses within the Parish with distinctive design features, that any future development of these buildings, or development in close proximity to them, should be in keeping with their existing character, scale and design.

Other than the buildings mentioned above:

- Avoid flat roof extensions particularly to the frontage of houses.

- Seek to use materials in keeping with the existing structure.

- Keep any new build at a scale compatible with adjoining properties.

- Encourage any new house building to be of three bedroom or smaller.

- Encourage sensitive location of agricultural developments.

Other structures.

- Retain the existing post boxes in Grandborough and Woolscott.

- Refurbish and retain the existing telephone box.

- Retain and maintain the old kerbing sets at the corner of Church Road and Main Street.

- Retain and maintain the granite set gutter adjacent to Moat House.

- Retain the blue brick footpath in Church Road.

- Retain (or increase) seats at regular intervals around the parish.

- Retain and maintain notice boards.

Retain and maintain the War Memorial.
Maintain the two bridges and causeway in good order.
Seek to remove spindly street name carriers and place street names on adjacent walls etc.
Whenever the opportunity arises get telephone and electricity wires placed underground
Go ahead with the proposal to build two planters
Go ahead with the Hockley Close wildlife garden proposal.

Roads, Bridleways and Footpaths

Seek to maintain bus service, seek to extend timetables, and seek connections with other services at Dunchurch.
Reinstate/maintain the bus stop at or near Manor Farm (A45)
Press for improved safety features at A45 and A426 junctions and for signs to be kept clear of vegetation.
Press for adequate signage for the access turning to Onley Equestrian Centre.
Push for signs for passing places on Hill Road and Grandborough Fields Road.
Contact local cycling clubs to seek their assistance in improving consideration for all road users.
Encourage residents not to park on pavements and verges.
Carry out an up to date survey of all footpaths and bridleways within the parish.
Set up a system for parishioners to report footpath and bridleway problems.
Discuss findings with Warwickshire County Council footpaths officer.
Publish a leaflet showing the Parish footpath and bridleway network with recommended circular walks/rides.
Remind all parishioners of the Country Code, in particular the need to keep to footpaths, to keep dogs under control, and the need to remove dog faeces and dispose of them safely.

Amenities

Press for improved Mobile Telephone and Broadband connections.
Join in with the Warwickshire County Council initiative on broadband in rural areas
Consider better shading for existing Parish lights.
Maintain regular survey of ditches and watercourses.
Explore ways of promoting freecycling in the parish.

Community Matters

Encourage parents to form a Mother and Toddler group.
Set up a meeting of parents and other interested parties to discuss additional youth provision.
Set up a meeting of potential weekday group members
Encourage the setting up of a register of occasional drivers for hospital visits, etc., with a coordinator.
Allotments :start discussions with two owners of possible sites..
Community shop: start discussions with two possible site owners and set up a meeting of all those interested in this proposal.
Newspaper delivery start discussions with two possible drop off site owners.
Explore the possibilities for Village Hall off-road parking.
Discuss with representatives of Church and Chapel suggestions for additional uses and expressed preferences for off-road parking.
Contact the local first responder organisation for set up help.
Make appropriate arrangements for a welcome pack.
Publicise the survey results relating to the Pub to all households.