

Grandborough Parish Plan 2017

Incorporating Design statement



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Introduction

Grandborough Parish Council initially drew up a Parish Plan in 2006, revised in 2011 to provide a context for its future discussions and actions. It is recommended that such Plans are reviewed about every 5 years, 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 (177) in the Parish in September 2016 and 102 (58%) were returned. Additionally a separate housing needs survey was carried out in conjunction with Midlands Rural Housing. 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 177 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 2016 electoral register shows 336 electors. In addition it is estimated that there are about 80 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.

What sort of community we will see over the next 5 years will be determined by the final form of Rugby Borough Council's Housing Development Plan. Current proposals include a 1500 house 'garden village' at Lodge Farm. Strong objections to the proposal have been made, and the opposition to these plans will no doubt be a major focus of Parish action in the early stages of this Action Plan

Lodge Farm proposed development

The Survey asked residents if they thought the proposed development would be beneficial to the parish. 87% said no. The 8 respondents who thought it might be beneficial gave reasons such as the provision of a local shop, local school, affordable housing, and local Doctor's surgery. It has become apparent as more information was made available that these perceived benefits are unlikely to be delivered for at least 15 years, if ever. Had this been known in early September it is quite likely that there would have been a 100% response perceiving no benefit.

Proposed Action - The Parish Council should take every opportunity to object to these proposals.

It should also look into the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan to shape future development within the Parish. It should also explore the possibility of combining with neighbouring Parishes to produce an integrated Neighbourhood Plan.

Housing Needs

Midlands Rural Housing, in partnership with Grandborough Parish Council conducted a detailed study of housing need in the parish in April 2016. The survey not only investigated housing needs but also measured local support for a development to meet local needs.

Midlands Rural Housing concluded that, "the survey analysis showed there was a need in the next 5 years for 2 open market (sale) homes and 1 affordable home for local people enabling them to be suitably housed within the community". They suggested that if an affordable need was found in the future, local needs affordable homes could be developed on a 'rural exception site', if available, and subject to local support some open market sale homes could be used to cross-subsidise the affordable homes. The alternative to this is that the local homes that are needed are developed as part of a larger development if the opportunity arises and if the needs cannot be met by existing properties.

The survey showed 47% in favour of small scale affordable homes development in the Parish, while 35% were not in favour and 12% were unsure.

Proposed Action - Press Rugby Borough Council to modify their policy on small scale developments in smaller rural settlements.

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 bedrooms 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 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.
- Retain and maintain 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) and maintain 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, and reduce the number of road signs.

Other Issues

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

Using Roads, Bridleways and Footpaths

The overwhelming majority of Parishioners use private transport, with an average of two cars per household in regular use. Only 2 survey respondents used public transport.

Speeding traffic through the village, including large agricultural vehicles; HGV's ignoring the weight restriction; and the lack of consideration for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, were concerns voiced by a substantial number of parishioners. Many motorists also complained of the inconsiderate behaviour of large groups of cyclists

There is a high usage of footpaths and bridleways within the Parish mostly without problems but both users and landowners report some difficulties. The state of pavements, particularly those from Meadow Cottages to Church Road, and outside Moat House were cause for concern; as were the lack of verge or walkway on bends on the road towards the A45

A large number of respondents (33%) complained about parking on footpaths and verges.

A number of action points flow from these comments:

- Carry out an up to date survey of all pavements, and press Warwickshire County Council for repairs as required

- Encourage residents not to park on pavements and verges.

- Contact local "professional" cycling clubs, (including the two Rugby clubs, Daventry club, etc.) to seek their assistance in improving consideration for all road users.

Amenities and Utilities

Sixty one respondents felt that there had been an improvement in village appearance since the introduction of the Lengthsman scheme, and Sixty nine were in favour of continuing the scheme.

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

Ninety percent of respondents were satisfied with the two-weekly cycle of bin collection. Sixty one respondents said they would find a 'freecycling' notice board or equivalent useful

In response to the query about lighting fifteen respondents wanted more lights while sixty eight wanted no change or fewer lights and six wanted all public lighting removed. In the event of any addition being considered, the most mentioned site was The Lane.

Public Utilities generally provided a reasonable level of service with the clear exception of mobile phone reception. Broadband coverage has been greatly improved through the operation of the Community based microwave link, which provides speeds in the 5-10mg range. Service providers using the landline links struggle to reach 1mg, with only 3 out of 42 such users reporting speeds over 1mg. Given the substantial and growing numbers home working in the Parish (13%) the level of provision in these two areas is just not acceptable. .

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 :-

- Enter into a new contract for Lengthsman services.
- Ensure regular ditch maintenance, particularly in areas liable to flood
- Press for improved Mobile Telephone and Broadband connections.

Community Affairs

Children and Young persons

There were 9 respondents with children in the 0 to 4 age group, and seven said they would be interested in a Mother and Toddler group. Two of these offered to help run such a group.

Sixty three respondents were in favour of the provision of a small equipped play area on one of the open spaces. Forty two of them preferred the Village hall site.

Opinion was split over the question of whether more than the current (minimal) youth provision should be offered, with 21 respondents saying that more was needed. Six respondents said they would be willing to help with some provision.

It is therefore suggested that we should:-

- Encourage parents to form a Mother and Toddler group.
- Seek advice on appropriate play equipment from Rugby BC; assess costs and identify sources of finance
- Set up a meeting of parents and other interested parties to discuss additional youth provision.

Weekday Group

Twenty nine respondents were interested in joining a weekday group and twelve offered to help support such a group. Monthly meetings were favoured by twenty.

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 252 adults of whom 83 (33%) were aged 60 or over. No respondents said they required additional assistance with day to day tasks.

Forty five 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 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 but none said that they owned land, which might be suitable.

We should maintain a watching brief for suitable land..

Community shop

Sixty-two respondents felt that there was a need for a community shop, and thirty one said they would be prepared to help run one. One said that they owned premises, which might be suitable for such use.

We should therefore start discussions with this site owner and set up a meeting of all those interested in this proposal.

Newspapers

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

Village Hall

Seventy six percent of respondents used the Village Hall often or occasionally, and most expressed satisfaction with its facilities. However, forty two respondents expressed a preference for the provision of off-road parking.

We should explore the possibilities for such provision.

Defibrillator

Forty two respondents said they were interested in attending a training session.

We should arrange training.

Church and Chapel

Just under 60% of respondents used the Church or Chapel often or sometimes, while 72% use the Farmer's Market often or sometimes.. Suggestions for additional uses were sought and the most common responses were: Coffee Mornings; Film screenings.

It is suggested that we forward these responses to representatives of Church and Chapel.

The Pub

Ninety -six respondents 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 thirty two said they used it once a week or more and forty two 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, and have been passed to the landlord.

We should promote the use of the pub whenever possible, - use it or lose it.t.

Summary of Suggested Action Points

Development and Housing

Take every opportunity to object to the Lodge Farm proposals.

Look into the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan to shape future development within the Parish. Explore the possibility of combining with neighbouring Parishes to produce an integrated Neighbourhood Plan.

Press Rugby Borough Council to modify their policy on small scale developments in smaller rural settlements.

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 bedrooms or smaller.

- Encourage sensitive location of agricultural developments.

Other structures.

- Retain the existing post boxes in Grandborough and Woolscott.
- Retain and maintain 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

Roads, Bridleways and Footpaths

- Carry out an up to date survey of all pavements, and press Warwickshire County Council for repairs as required
- Push for signs for passing places on Hill Road and Grandborough Fields Road.
- Contact local cycling clubs, (including the two Rugby clubs, Daventry club, etc.) to seek their assistance in improving consideration for all road users.
- Encourage residents not to park on pavements and verges.

Amenities

- Enter into a new contract for Lengthsman services.
- Ensure regular ditch maintenance, particularly in areas liable to flood
- Press for improved Mobile Telephone and Broadband connections.

Community Matters

- Seek advice on appropriate play equipment from Rugby BC; assess costs and identify sources of finance
- Encourage parents to form a Mother and Toddler group.
- Set up a meeting of parents and other interested parties to discuss additional youth provision.
- Explore the possibilities for provision of parking near the village hall.
- Arrange defibrillator training.
- 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: maintain a watching brief for suitable land..
- Community shop: start discussions with possible site owner and set up a meeting of all those interested in this proposal.
- Newspaper delivery: start discussions with possible drop off site owner.
- Publicise the survey results relating to the Pub to all households.
- forward relevant responses to representatives of Church and Chapel