

# Grandborough Parish Plan

## Incorporating Design statement



This Parish Plan has been supported by DEFRA funding

# **Grandborough Parish Plan, Incorporating Design statement**

## **Introduction**

Grandborough Parish Council decided in 2006 that it wished to draw up a Parish Plan to provide a context for its future discussions and actions.

The Plan was intended to reflect the collective views of parishioners as far as practicable, and to that end 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 108 (62%) were returned. . A copy of the survey analysis was subsequently distributed to every address within the Parish. 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. A drop in day in Grandborough Village Hall was also held and attracted over 40 visitors who made extensive use of the ‘graffiti’ boards for comments.

The action plan, which follows, has been agreed by the Parish Council based upon the results of these surveys and the comments made during the drop-in day.

## **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 2007 electoral register shows 325 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 around the Church, Chapel, Village Hall and The Shoulder of Mutton (the one surviving pub of three). In this respect we are following a long tradition as there are records of extensive celebrations for Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887 which were echoed in our 2002 Golden Jubilee celebrations. This strength of community is reflected in the high level of response to this Parish Plan project, and it is hoped that the action plan which follows will underpin the maintenance and development of our community.

## **Environment, incorporating Design Statement**

### Houses and other Buildings.

It is clear from the Survey and from the comments made at the drop in day 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 any further 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 post boxes and telephone box. Others are regarded as essential but the current condition 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 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.

Seek to replace the Bus Shelter with something stronger. In the meantime maintain it 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

Retain and maintain notice boards.

Retain and maintain the War Memorial.

Maintain Village entrance signs in good order

Maintain the two bridges and causeway in good order.

Consider placing posts in the grass strip alongside the Causeway to prevent vehicle damage to the verge during floods. Reconsider placement of existing concrete bollard.

### Other Issues.

There were three other issues raised consistently by respondents to the questionnaire, which have environment and design implications.

They were

- a) concern over speed on entrances to the village,
- b) concern over parking at Village Hall functions, and
- c) concern over the state of verges throughout the Parish.

It is suggested that the following are included in the Action Plan;

Seek the provision of a parking area for the Village Hall.

Seek ways of drawing drivers' attention to the fact that they are entering a village .

Seek to have passing places marked clearly.

Seek a one way system for any emergency diversions.

### The natural environment

The majority of respondents expressed an interest in wildlife with many varying special interests e.g. birds and bats. Warwickshire has recently launched a biodiversity plan identifying particular species at risk and actions parishes can take to improve their local area.

In farming, the national stewardship scheme has been taken up by some of the local farmers. One of the primary aims of this scheme is to improve sustainability in local environments.

It is suggested that the following are included in an Action Plan

Consider the implications for the Parish of the Warwickshire biodiversity plan and add to the action plan as necessary.

Ensure that Parish Council actions are supportive of, and complementary to, local farmers' Stewardship Plans.

## **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.

Their recommendation was that a single development of three - four social housing dwellings be considered as follows:-

**1 x 2-bed house for rent**

**2 x 2-bed bungalows for rent**

**1 x 2-bed bungalow for shared ownership**

This development would alleviate the current housing need for those who cannot afford to secure a suitable property in Grandborough, but wish to stay in the parish or return to be close to family and friends for support and work commitments.

It may be possible for all of the identified need to be met as part of the District Council's local redevelopment programme, and they recommended that the Parish Council make the appropriate representations to the District Council to see if this can be achieved.

In addition to the above, the survey also revealed a need for the following affordable housing: **2 x 2-bed houses to rent.**

However, these respondents fail to satisfy the definition of 'Local Person' set out by the Local Planning Authority.

It is suggested that the Parish Council seek to have these housing needs formally adopted by Rugby Borough Council

## **Transport**

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.

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 number of action points flow from these comments:

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)  
Resurvey school bus users to establish reasons for dissatisfaction with Service.  
Press for gritting to include school bus route.

Press for improved safety features at A45 and A426 junctions and for signs to be kept clear of vegetation.  
Explore further the 'Quiet Lanes' initiative.  
Press for 30mph limit in village, consider 'advisory' signs if no statutory limit  
Seek ways of reducing speed of traffic approaching village from Sawbridge.  
Seek to agree a diversion policy with the Police.  
Push for signs for passing places on Hill Road and Grandborough Fields Road.

Encourage residents not to park on pavements and verges.  
Run a 'beware of walkers/cyclists/riders' campaign in the parish, since it is mainly locals who use local roads.(perhaps link with neighbouring Parishes).

Consider publishing a leaflet showing the Parish footpath and bridleway network, with recommended circular walks/rides; and include a reminder of the Country Code.  
Set up a system for parishioners to report footpath and bridleway problems.

### **Amenities and Utilities**

It was accepted by most parishioners that as a small village they did not expect a full range of services on their doorstep. There was substantial support for the Pub and for the Village Hall and the Church and Chapel.

Many remarked on the unfortunate loss of the Post Office and Village shop.  
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 amount of homeworking in the Parish the level of provision in these two areas is just not acceptable.

Public lighting in the Parish provoked widely differing views from those who would wish to see all lights removed to those who identified sites for up to a dozen additional lights. However, unnecessary light pollution is a common objection.

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
- If any additional lighting is considered the first priority should be The Lane from Church Road to its first bend.
- Press for Onley and Golf range lights to be shaded to reduce light pollution.
- Consider better shading for existing Parish lights.
- Maintain support for Village Hall.
- Extend the area of level ground in the open space at the rear of the Village Hall.
- Seek off road parking for Village Hall.
- Push for the provision of a fire hydrant at Manor Farm Barns
- Explore the support for setting up a Community/Farm shop.
- Press for the extension of recycling collections to Woolscott.
- Seek a suitable site for 10 – 15 Allotments.
- Maintain regular survey of ditches and watercourses.

### **Children and Young persons**

There was a general view that whilst one would not expect extensive provision in a small community, current provision was very limited, comprising two open spaces and a set of moveable goalposts. It is therefore suggested that we should:-

- Encourage parents to form activity groups.
- Explore the costs of play equipment and possible sites.

### **Older residents and those with disabilities.**

The households covered by responses to the survey contain 221 adults of whom 56 (25%) were aged 60 or over. Only 5 respondents reported having a disability or infirmity and all of these were assisted by family members living with them or nearby.

Action points in this area are:-

- Encourage the formation of a social group for older residents
- Encourage the setting up of a register of occasional drivers for hospital visits, etc.

## **Community Affairs**

The responses to the survey indicate that most respondents find our Parish a lively community and a substantial majority participate in a range of community activities.

There were, naturally, a number of suggestions for improvements and the most widely supported of these seem to be:

- Maintain support for the Village Hall.
- Assess the possibility of setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- Review first response capability for medical emergencies.
- Establish an e-mail address list for the circulation of Newsletter etc.
- Look into replacing the newspaper delivery service.
- Revitalise the web-site
- Consider the development of a welcome pack.

## **History**

There was substantial interest in exploring the history of the Parish, and the setting up of a Local History Group.

It is recommended that we support the establishment of such a group.