



*Ramsden Bellhouse  
Parish Council  
Annual Report  
2007-2008*



## **Report from the Chairman Alan Harvey**

The past year has been quite eventful for the Parish Council. It began with our long standing Council Chairman, Cllr Len Ferris, announcing that he would be standing down from the Chair. Len has served the residents of Ramsden Bellhouse as a Councillor for many years and was instrumental in establishing the Parish Council and in ensuring it was recognised with Quality Council status. Len has also announced that he would not be standing for re-election in May 2008. His experience and skills will be greatly missed and we wish him well with his next endeavours.

The Traffic Calming scheme was not fully implemented at the start of the year and that is still the case a year later. The "lost" island to the North of the railway bridge is still missing despite the attempts of your Council to expedite completion of the scheme by Essex County Highways. Essex Highways have confirmed their intent to pursue the completion of the scheme and the Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

Although the final island is missing, the rest of the traffic calming scheme has been in operation for over a year now and has clearly met the original objectives set by local residents. There has been a significant reduction in heavy lorries on Church Road, particularly those which used to speed through in the middle of the night waking residents and shaking their homes. Vehicle speed has also been reduced generally, although some drivers still insist on treating the village as a race track. The Parish Council is now exploring additional means to deter these inconsiderate and unwelcome drivers. The scheme also enables safer pedestrian access across Church Road. This is particularly valuable for those visiting our local shop or the park. Many residents have commented that making it safer to walk around in Ramsden Bellhouse has helped to restore the feeling of a village. Indeed many more people can now be seen walking through the

village than before this scheme. Although a very small minority of local residents have expressed concern over these islands the scheme remains a success and continues to meet the aims of residents as expressed during local consultations.

The Parish taxi voucher scheme helps those residents who have more limited mobility than the rest of us. This service, funded through the Parish Council taxes, continues to provide an important service that is deeply appreciated by those who have need of it. On behalf of these people I would like to thank all the residents of Ramsden Bellhouse for their continued support of this scheme.

During the local consultations a few years ago residents expressed a need for their Parish Council to act in two major areas; traffic calming and village security. The success of the traffic calming scheme has already been reported above but on security matters it has been more difficult to introduce a service which would address the concerns of residents. These difficulties stem mostly from the way in which the Police operate community policing. It proved to be impossible to obtain any assurances that a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) funded by your local taxes would in fact be allocated to this Parish for duty. Instead Police policy is to allocate available resources based upon need (i.e. crime levels) rather than provide services to those who fund them. As a result, towards the end of this Council year, the Parish Council initiated a village security patrol as a pilot scheme using a private security company. These security personnel patrol the village at various times each day and have a communications link to the Police through their own control centre. The security company also provides a 24 hour helpline enabling residents to report issues which they wish to bring to the attention of the patrols. The Council will monitor the success of this pilot scheme and take into account residents' views before deciding whether to continue with the patrols on a longer term basis.

As we enter a new year, and indeed a new term of office for the Parish Council, it's with regret that we say goodbye to retiring Councillors but we welcome two new Councillors, both local residents, who have volunteered to serve the local community for the next four years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my fellow Councillors who have put in so much effort during this past year and also our Parish Clerk who provides invaluable support to the Council. My thanks also go to those residents who have supported the Council by attending the meetings, completing questionnaires and giving us valuable feedback.

During the coming year there will continue to be focus on the services outlined above and also on improving the appearance of the village and enhancing local amenities such as new bus shelters. The Council welcomes new ideas and views from residents. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public. These meetings are held in the village hall according to the schedule published on the hall notice board. The views, needs and concerns of the residents of Ramsden Bellhouse are vital to ensure that the services upon which the Parish Council spends your money are those which the majority of residents value.

## **SUMMARY RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/3/08**

31/03/2007		31/03/2008
£	RECEIPTS	£
16284.60	Precept	15206.85
123.32	Interest Deposit Account	272.66
70.00	VAT Refund	45.50
16477.92	Total receipts	15525.01
	PAYMENTS	
252.32	Administration	294.15
2925.40	Staff	3272.33
80.00	Training	50.00
464.17	Audit/Insurance/Elections	431.42
322.67	Subscriptions	272.05
935.00	Taxi Vouchers	925.00
101.00	Noticeboard refurbishment	
1080.00	Projects/Memorial/Churchyard	970.00
55.00	S137	57.00
44.62	VAT	45.51
6260.18	Total Payments	6317.46
	SUMMARY	
10663.00	Balance at 1/4/07	20880.74
16477.92	ADD Total Receipts	15525.01
6260.18	LESS Total Payments	6317.46
20880.74	Balance Carried Forward 31/3/08	30088.29

These cumulative funds are represented by:

Current Account balance	6242.60
Deposit Account balance	23845.69
Total fund	30088.29

<b>YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS 2007-8</b>					
	<b>Pam Cummins</b>	<b>Len Ferris</b>	<b>Alan Harvey</b>	<b>Richard Bayliss</b>	<b>Ernie Skinner</b>
Contact details	Firs Cottage, Ramsden Park Road	Malbo, Homestead Road	Brook House, Church Road	Sonesta, Church Road	St. Anthony, Ramsden Park Road
Posts held	Taxi Voucher co-ordination, Open Spaces & Environment, Planning monitoring	Member internal auditor, Notices	<b>Chairman,</b> Traffic Calming	<b>Vice Chairman,</b> Open Spaces & Environment,	Taxi Voucher co-ordination, Open Spaces & Environment, Notices deputy
Representatives to:		Village Hall deputy	Basildon Association of Town & Parish Councils,	Police Liaison, ECC Public Transport Liaison	Village Hall
Meeting attendance	<i>7/7</i>	<i>7/7</i>	<i>7/7</i>	<i>4/7</i>	<i>7/7</i>
Training Attended	Statutory Planning				

<b>NON-ELECTED APPOINTMENTS 2007-8</b>		
<b>Clerk to the Council</b>	<b>Independent Internal Auditor</b>	<b>External Auditor</b>
Mrs. Karen Plumridge, 2 Clinton Close, East Hanningfield, Chelmsford CM3 8AZ ☎ 01245 400628 ✉ <a href="mailto:karen.plumridge@btinternet.com">karen.plumridge@btinternet.com</a>	Heelis and Lodge	Lubbock Fine, Russell Bedford House, City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 2QQ

### **During the year**

- The Parish Council subscribed to membership of the National Association of Local Councils, the Essex Association of Local Councils, The Basildon Association of Town and Parish Councils and the Rural Community Council of Essex. The Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- The Clerk attended Training on the Code of Conduct, Information Technology, Management, Planning, Community Development, Project Management and Law.
- The Parish Council considered 52 planning applications.

**The members of your newly elected Parish Council for 2008-12 are Ian Batley, Pam Cummins, Alan Harvey, Ernie Skinner, and Dick Wellborne.**

[www.essexinfo.net/ramsdenbellhouseparishcouncil](http://www.essexinfo.net/ramsdenbellhouseparishcouncil)