



*Ramsden Bellhouse
Parish Council
Annual Report
2008-2009*



Report from the Chairman Alan Harvey



This has been another busy year for the Parish Council. Following the elections last year we were joined by two new Councillors keen to make a difference in the community. This enabled the Parish Council to press ahead with a number of initiatives including new bus shelters, additions to the traffic calming scheme, formalisation of the security patrol scheme and the introduction, in collaboration with the Police, of the Community Speedwatch scheme. The Council managed to deliver these projects whilst also achieving a 20% reduction for 2009/10 in the Parish Council precept that forms a part of your Council Tax bill.

The Traffic Calming scheme was still not fully implemented at the start of the year. The "lost" island to the North of the railway bridge, although approved by the County Council and by safety and other experts, was objected to by a Chelmsford Councillor. As a result Essex County Highways extended the 30mph limit Northwards and offered to install a Vehicle Activated sign in place of the island. The Parish Council accepted with the condition that measurements of traffic speed entering and leaving the village at the Northern end were taken after these works to gauge their success. That survey has now been carried out and shows that the sign and speed limit extension together are not as

effective as the islands. The Parish Council will therefore be pressing again this year for completion of the traffic calming scheme as originally designed including that final island.

In other parts of the village where the islands have been installed vehicle speed has been reduced, although some drivers still insist on treating the village as a race track. The Parish Council has responded to these inconsiderate and unwelcome drivers by introducing the Community Speedwatch scheme in co-operation with Essex Police. A number of volunteer village residents took part in the Police training together with Parish Councillors. The team regularly give up their time to operate Speedwatch which identifies speeding vehicles to the Police who then decide how to deal with the driver concerned. The results so far are encouraging as the number of speeding vehicles is reducing. The Parish Council aims to continue to find new ways to reduce speeding through our village as it remains one of the major concerns voiced to us by residents.

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.

A consultation exercise was carried out in the village to find out whether residents wanted to continue with the private security patrol scheme that was piloted last year. Strong support for the scheme was forthcoming and so the Parish Council have formalised the patrols and put in place a longer term arrangement which is regularly monitored for performance to ensure value for money.

New bus shelters were installed at the centre of the village to replace the broken, bent and leaky ones that were there before. Other opportunities for projects to improve the appearance of the village would be most welcome so I invite residents to please put forward practical ideas to improve Ramsden Bellhouse.

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 volunteering for the Speedwatch team, attending Parish 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 further improving the appearance of the village. 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 31/3/09

31/03/2008		31/03/2009
£	RECEIPTS	£
15206.85	Precept	15685.74
272.66	Interest Deposit Account	158.88
	HM Customs Incentive Payment	315.40
45.5	VAT Refund	698.62
15525.01	Total receipts	16858.64
	PAYMENTS	
294.15	Administration	248.00
3272.33	Staff	3117.92
50	Training	160.00
431.42	Audit/Insurance/Elections	440.30
272.05	Subscriptions	350.29
925	Taxi Vouchers	925.00
	Security Project	5250.12
970	Projects/Memorial/Churchyard	989.00
57	S137	59.00
45.51	VAT	910.87
6317.46	Total Payments	12450.50
	SUMMARY	
20880.74	Balance at 1/4/08	30088.29
15525.01	ADD Total Receipts	16858.64
6317.46	LESS Total Payments	12450.50
30088.29	Balance Carried Forward 31/3/09	34496.43
These cumulative funds are represented by:		
	Current Account balance	10491.86
	Deposit Account balance	24004.57
	Total fund	34496.43

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS 2008-9					
	Ian Batley	Pam Cummins	Alan Harvey	Ernie Skinner	Richard Wellborne
Contact details	Brynhedryn, Homestead Road	Firs Cottage, Ramsden Park Road	Brook House, Church Road	St. Anthony, Ramsden Park Road	September Cottage, Church Road
Posts held	Notices	Taxi Voucher co-ordination, Open Spaces & Environment, Planning monitoring	Chairman, Traffic Calming	Taxi Voucher co-ordination, Open Spaces & Environment, Notices deputy,	Community Speedwatch
Representatives to:	Basildon Association of Town & Parish Councils Reserve		Basildon Association of Town & Parish Councils,	Village Hall	Police Neighbourhood Action Panel
Meeting attendance	<i>7/7</i>	<i>7/7</i>	<i>5/7</i>	<i>7/7</i>	<i>6/7</i>

NON-ELECTED APPOINTMENTS 2008-9

Clerk to the Council	Independent Internal Auditor	External Auditor
Mrs. Karen Plumridge, 2 Clinton Close, East Hanningfield, Chelmsford CM3 8AZ ☎ 01245 400628 ✉ karen.plumridge@btinternet.com	Heelis and Lodge	Audit Commission, Room 215, Tamar Science Park, Davy Road, Derriford, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 8BX

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 and Briefings on the Power of Wellbeing; Freedom of Information, Publication Schemes and Data Protection; Audit; the Local Development Framework, Community-Led Planning, the Future of the Sector and First Aid.
- The Parish Council considered 42 planning applications.