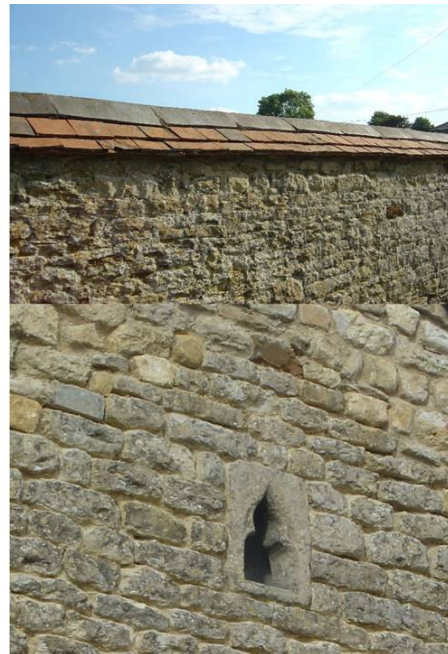


Sulgrave Parish Council



Annual Report 2008

Published by Sulgrave Parish Council and available free of charge in the Village Shop, Star Public House or view on-line at WWW.Sulgrave.org

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to communicate the progress of the Sulgrave Parish Council during the period April 2007 to March 2008

The items contained in the report were also presented at the Parish Council Annual Assembly meeting held at Sulgrave Church Hall on 10th April 2008, draft minutes of this meeting are available on request to the Parish Clerk.

In order to encourage a wider participation in this annual event, a more relaxed presentation style meeting was organised and refreshments served allowing the attendees to mix socially during the evening. The evening was very well attended and provided an opportunity for villagers to meet with County Councillor Ben Smith, South Northants District Councillor Ashley Warren and the Northamptonshire Rural Community Policing Team, plus of course the Parish Councillors.

With the appointment of a new Parish Council at the start of the year and with two new Councillors joining the team we have been fully and actively engaged as far as work and family commitments allow. During the year there have been ten parish council meetings, which have been quite well attended by the public.

The Parish Council has been keen to identify the needs of the community, there have been lively discussions on a number of topics and consultation exercises to try and identify priorities. Sulgrave Parish is very fortunate with a high level of community involvement in a number of projects and events which benefit the parish as a whole, some of which are illustrated in this report.

Traditions



Sulgrave Parish Council • Annual Assembly • 10 April 2008

Chairman's Report for Year

The "new" Parish Council had now been in existence for almost a year. Our focus has been to consolidate the work of the previous Council and to encourage more villagers to take an active part in affairs, provide channels to communicate concerns and encourage attendance and open debate at the Parish Council Meetings. Attendance levels have, in fact, been growing steadily and the success of this approach was illustrated during the year by the very strong turn out for the spring litter pick.

The council has continued with the policy of seeking opinion and consultation where practical. When issues are identified the parish councillors have taken positive steps to find a way to address the issues, either through awareness campaigns, establishing consultation groups or encouraging the service industry to meet its commitments to the community.

As a council we have been keen to debate issues openly, resulting in lively discussions at our Parish meetings which are both healthy and interesting and dare I suggest, enjoyable, for those who participate.

Graham Roberts
Chairman
Sulgrave Parish Council

Leisure and Recreation



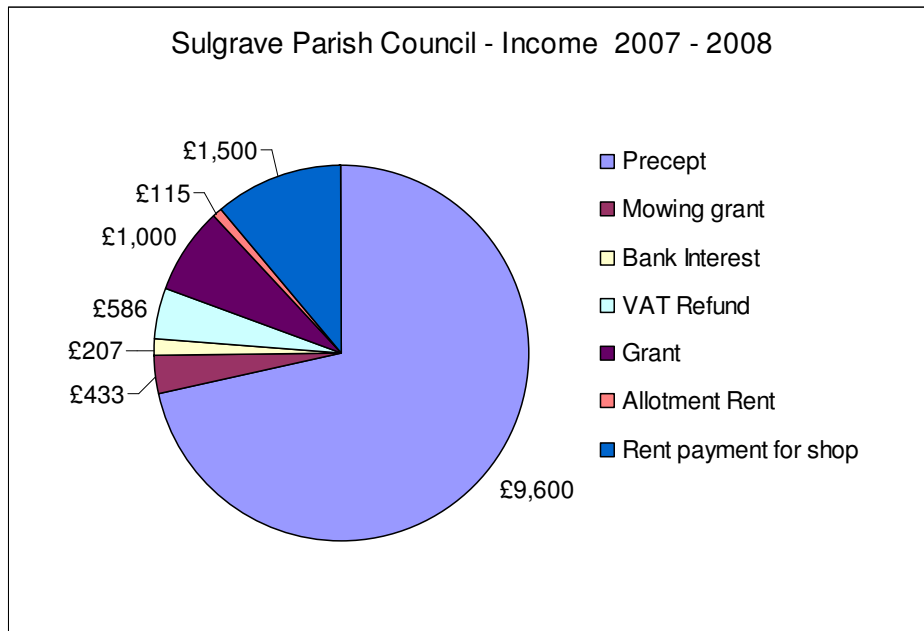
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Sulgrave Parish Council Financial Report

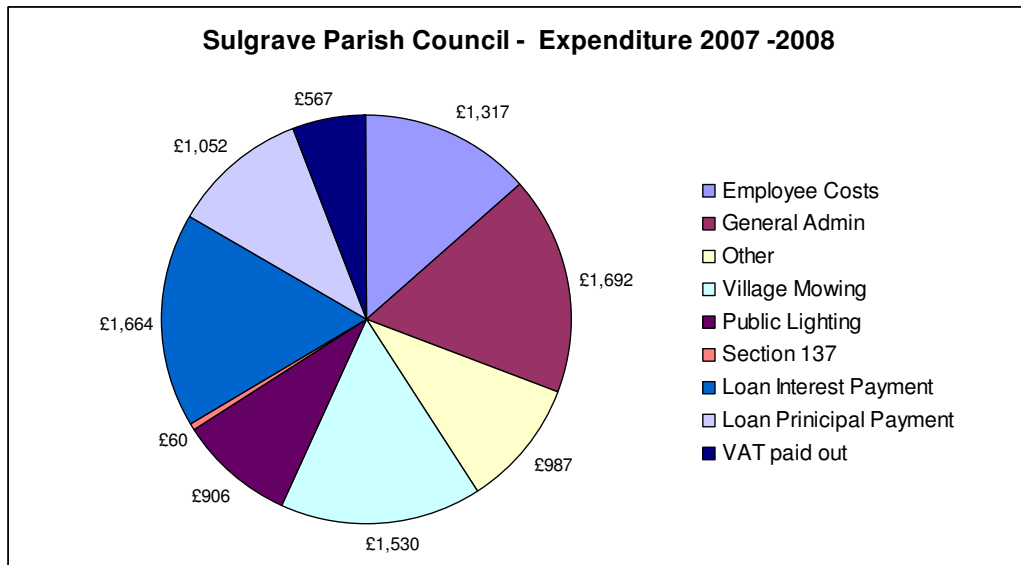
The financial report will show the Council is in command of its finances and is working within the guidelines laid down by Local Government. However, in order to meet new requirements for governance in the forthcoming year the council intends to assess its level of internal control procedures, including internal audit.

To meet this requirement the council has obtained a copy of "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners' Guide 2008 (England)*", which sets out the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 and incorporates the changes to Regulations in 2006 and the impact of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Parish Council has been in contact with the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Northants CALC) regarding appropriate internal audit procedures and practices and intends to implement these procedures in 2008/09

Audited accounts can be viewed by interested parties by prior arrangement with the Parish Clerk.



The Parish Council had an income of just over £13,000 during 2007/8 of which £9600.00 was raised via the precept. Additional income is raised via modest grants from Northants County Council and rental income from the community shop and allotments. During the year a grant of £1,000 was received from Sulgrave Charities to be used on work in the Pocket Park.



Expenditure for this year has been just under £10K of which a significant part includes servicing the loan for the purchase of the reading room which is currently in use by the Community Shop.

The other main areas of expenditure include the cost of maintaining the appearance and tidiness of the grassed areas, verges and the environs of the village, public lighting, employee costs, and administration including newsletter and web-site.

Expenditure on major projects that have been undertaken during the year, for example the reconstruction of the boundary wall for Castle Green, have been self funded through grants, secured by the co-ordinating management committee.

Projects



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By economising during the year the opportunity has also been taken to increase the Parish Council reserve accounts, which has strengthened the financial provisions for the future.

Information and Communication

The Parish Council regards effective communications with the community to be very important and sponsors a number of initiatives. The *village newsletter*, which is edited enthusiastically by Tom Cockeram, (newsletter@84f.com) and is collated and delivered entirely by volunteers each month to be delivered to every home. The newsletter provides up to date information on events, the activities of clubs and associations and provides a valuable means of delivering detailed information on the activities of the Parish Council.

The *Sulgrave village website* www.sulgrave.org provides a mixture of village news and information plus a photographic record of events as they take place. Features include the wildflower of the month, village gardens, a growing village history section with photographic archive, wildlife, fauna and flora. The Webmaster is Colin Wooton, a lifelong villager who volunteers his time and effort to produce a very high quality output which attracts visitors worldwide.

The Annual Parish Assembly provides a forum for discussion and the opportunity to hear from local and county councillors, police authority and other community services operating on behalf of the community. Regular, more formal, Parish Council Meetings are held throughout the year and consultation documents are published by the Council on matters of community interest or to seek views on particular issues or concerns.



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Community Amenities

The responsibility of the Parish Council includes sponsoring and encouraging community services and activities - during the year Sulgrave Parish Council has been engaged in the following:-

Community Allotments

Allotments



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A lot of work has been carried out to improve the allotment area in Towrise. Whilst this work is ongoing it is encouraging to see that all the plots, except one, are now being rented out to local residents and the area is starting to recover from previous neglect.

Pocket Park

Volunteer teams have undertaken maintenance and improvements to this attractive area, which includes spring and summer meadows for wildflowers, a small pond and an area planted with a variety of young trees and shrubs. The children's play area requires further attention and during the year funding has been secured to allow this work to commence.

Leisure and Recreation



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Footpaths

Footpaths



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The volunteer Footpath Warden has continued to organise local walking groups to ensure the footpaths in the parish remain open and clear, a determined group of villagers turn out to beat a path through some of the less well defined footpaths on a regular basis a number of times during the year.

Community Events

One of the most popular and well attended events during the year was the celebration of our Village Postman's 60th birthday and recognition of over 20 years of continual service to the village. Over 120 villagers turned out for the surprise birthday party for "John the Post" and his family and a most enjoyable and memorable day was had by all.

Community



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Voluntary Organisations and Associations

Sulgrave Community Shop Association



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The Sulgrave Community Shop is now in its 4th trading year and has become, for most, an important facility and part of life in Sulgrave; as much about "community" as about "shopping". The continuity of the shop in its current form is due largely to a team of over 50 volunteers. Their consistent support and help with all aspects of the operation has been invaluable, without them the shop would not be able to continue to provide the same level of service - it is open for nearly 60 hours a week.

Castle Green Management Committee

The Management Committee reported a year which has seen dramatic happenings and significant progress towards the objectives of the Restoration and Enhancement Project. There has been much energy and effort on the part of the Committee. Some parts of the project have gone better than others but it was hoped that all aspects would be completed by the end of the summer.



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Sulgrave Charities

During the last year Sulgrave Charities have agreed awards to two causes that they

considered fitted within the Educational Charity's remit. The first for £1000.00 was to Sulgrave Parish Council to fund some essential work on the play equipment in the pocket park. The second award was £100.00 to George Holly-Moore. George is visiting India and Nepal this summer on an expedition to see a different culture and to assist in building an orphanage in Nepal. They have asked George to take some photographs and upon his return to present them to a couple of organisations so that villagers can see and hear about his experience.

Leisure and Recreation



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Village Services and Utilities

Activities during the year have including exerting continual pressure on Central Networks to progress the under grounding of electrical overhead services within the village and it is expected that a further phase of this work will commence in the late summer of 2008.

In addition, there have been understandable concerns due to the incidents of heavy rainfall, regarding the capacity of the storm water systems to cope with excessive surface water. The ongoing situation has been monitored by the council and all incidents of pooling water and blocked drains reported through the Street Doctor system for attention.

There have been three separate exercises to clear blocked drains and remove obstructions from the systems which should improve the situation, however monitoring will continue for the foreseeable future.

The Year Ahead Parish Council Mission Statement

Sulgrave Parish Council intends to undertake its responsibilities and duties in a manner that:-

- is representative of, and actively engages all parts of its community, providing vision, identity and a sense of belonging;
- is effectively and properly managed and articulates the needs and wishes of its community;
- is committed to work in partnership with principal authorities and other public service agencies;
- works closely with voluntary groups in its community;
- and, working with its partners, acts as an information point for local services.

Officers of the Council 2008/2009

Chairman - Cllr Graham Roberts (07778 584108)
Vice-Chairman - Cllr David Kellett (07747 808574)
Parish Clerk - Mrs Christine Coles (01295 276229)
Cllr Clare Pollak (01295 768224)
Cllr Jane Osborne (07879 624375)
Cllr Jo Powell (01295 768243)
Cllr Andrew Waite (07787 502260)