

# SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2006 - 2007

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### INTRODUCTION

The objective of the report is to communicate the progress of the Sulgrave Parish Council during the period March 2006 to April 2007. The items contained in the report were also presented at the Parish Council Annual Assembly meeting held at Sulgrave Church Hall on 19th April 2007. The draft minutes of this meeting will be published and approved at the next Annual Assembly Meeting in 2008.

The financial report will show the Council is in command of its finances and is working within the guidelines laid down by Local Government. Audited accounts can be viewed by interested parties by prior arrangement with the Parish Clerk. This report will record the final year of the Parish Council as all the present councillors will stand down to allow a new council to be appointed for a four year term commencing in 2007.

The activities of the council over the previous 12 months have been varied and have engaged both the council officers and other village voluntary organisations in a number of activities that can only be briefly reported upon in the body of this report. The report does show that the continuing trend in Sulgrave village is one of a consistent high level of community service for the benefit of the parish.

The members of the council have been fully and actively engaged as far as work and family commitments allow. During the year there have been 10 Parish Council Meetings. There has been a quorum of councillors at each meeting and the meetings have been reasonably well attended by the public.

### OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL 2006/7

Councillor Ken Christy	Chairman
Councillor Graham Roberts	Vice Chairman
Councillor Clare Pollak	

Councillor Jane Osborne  
 Councillor Kevin Moore  
 Councillor Ian Cherry

### Chairman's Report for the Year 2006/2007

During my second term as Chair there has been a whirlwind of activity involving active and engaging debate within the Council. We have seen the Community Shop making good progress and becoming established. Castle Green has been registered as a Village Green, funding for a major restoration project has been secured and the conservation area enlarged, all to the benefit of the Village.

In the year ahead I see this council facing the following challenges:

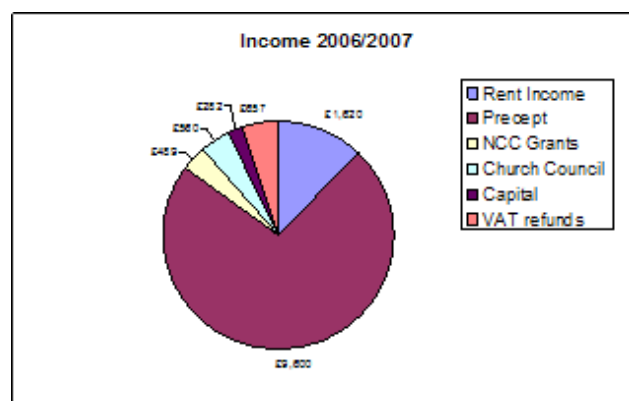
- Changes in farming practices as central government wakes up to the voice of the countryside.
- The need, on certain projects, to work closer with neighbouring villages to maximize the opportunities for funding at district and county level.
- The controlled growth of this village, so it does not lose its unique character. Particular care being given to the impact of cars and parking upon the village.

Finally, as the 4 year term comes to a close and a new Council is to be formed from next year, as Chair I would like to thank the present council, Jane Osborne, Kevin Moore, Clare Pollak, Ian Cherry, Jo Powell and Graham Roberts and wish the new Council every success for the future.

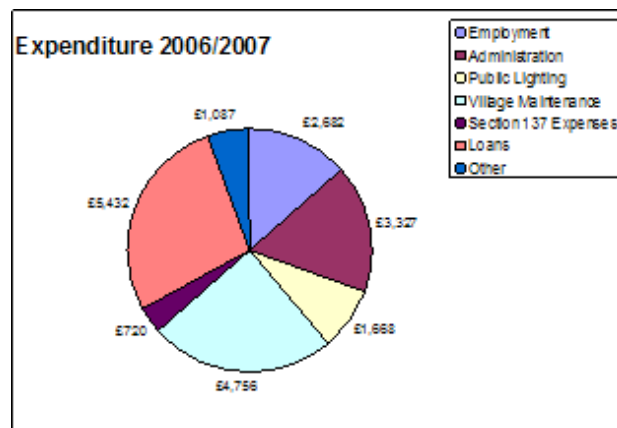
*Ken Christy*

### Sulgrave Parish Financial Report

The Parish Council had an income of just over £13,000 during 2006/2007, of which £9,600 was raised via the precept. Additional income is raised via modest grants from Northamptonshire County Council and rental income from the Community Shop and allotments.



The expenditure for the year has been just over £10,140, servicing the loan for the purchase of the reading room takes a significant part of our income but this does secure the future of this historic building. 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.



### Community Policing

PC Shillito is the local officer for Sulgrave and covers 32 other villages. Sulgrave is a safe place to live although there were some burglaries in the village last year which had an impact on the crime figures. The crimes reported were as follows: 1 violent domestic crime, 5 burglaries and a theft from a motor vehicle. After the last burglary, the police came to Sulgrave with the mobile station and handed out intercom systems. PC Shillito reminded the meeting that the numbers to call are 999 if the crime is in progress or 08453 700700 to report any crime information. The police regularly communicate with Vera Smith, our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

### Information and Communications

There are a number of ways of communicating to Villagers, through the [Village Newsletter](#), which is compiled, collated and delivered entirely by volunteers each month and 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](http://www.sulgrave.org) provides a mixture of village news and information and a photographic record of events as they take place, together with features such as the Wildflower of the Month and Village Gardens.



## Community Activities

### *Footpaths and Rights of Way*

Northamptonshire County Council rights of way Department have been busy during the year and we have seen a new improved bridle path between Stockwell Lane and the Windmill, providing a much improved cycle path between the village and Culworth.

In addition, our Footpath Warden, Christina Shillito has organised a number of [local footpath walks](#) which have provided an energetic and enjoyable day out for a number of villagers. Details of these walks can be found on both the Website and in the Village Newsletter.



### *Community Allotments*

The [allotments](#) in Tow Rise have been gradually deteriorating over the past years due to the increasing encroachment of weeds and overgrown hedgerows resulting in real difficulties for the villagers who were working the area. It was decided that there needed to be a plan to improve the area and some work has been completed during the year to remove waste, renovate the ground and lay out new allotment areas.

There is a growing interest in working an allotment and the Parish Council are endeavouring to provide a suitable facility, however more work is required.

### *Pocket Park*



Sulgrave's park, on land owned by the village, is almost an acre in extent. Roughly triangular in shape, it is bordered on two sides by mature trees. It is unusual insofar as it includes a play area for the young children of the village, with equipment paid for partly by the Parish Council and partly by voluntary money raising. It also comprises spring and summer meadows for wild flowers, a small pond and an area planted with a variety of young trees and shrubs.

During the year funds have been raised to make improvements to the Children's play area which will be implemented during 2007.

To ensure this amenity is managed effectively there is a real need to identify a Pocket Park Warden who would be willing to continue to encourage volunteers to undertake regular maintenance in order to keep this tranquil and attractive amenity in good condition for all to enjoy.



### **Voluntary organisations**

### *Sulgrave Community Shop Association*

[The shop](#) opened in September 2004 and is now in its third trading year and is pleased to report a 10% growth this year over last year. This year, to supplement the postal services there has been a wider product range including stationery, groceries, and delicatessen. To ensure the Community shop is a viable business the committee will continue to build basic product lines that provide value for money and intend to promote local produce in order to secure local trading. Whilst a key objective for the committee is to attract people from neighbouring villages they would also like to increase the patronage of the shop by the villagers. More information can be found on the website [www.sulgravevillageshop.org](http://www.sulgravevillageshop.org)

### *Castle Green Management Committee*

A year of hard graft from the Committee has been rewarded with considerable success in various projects.

**Registration as a Village Green.** Castle Green was now [formally registered as a Village Green](#), (with the help of many residents), and this will protect it from any housing development in the future.

### **Environmental**

The committee aimed to maintain and encourage a rich biodiversity on the Green. To this end a Wildlife Survey, (which included the Castle Mound and the Churchyard), had been completed by Northants Wildlife Trust. A selective mowing regime had been designed, and a planting session of indigenous species has taken place. Provision of nest boxes etc., for wildlife is planned. Special thanks were extended to George Metcalfe for his continued help and advice.

The [restoration and improvement project](#) was launched in 2005 and the Management Committee have been successful in raising all £87,000 required to implement the project. The funding had come from a number of Grant making bodies including the Lottery Fund, County and District Councils.

The Committee plan for the work to start in May with the Repair and Rebuilding of the retaining wall around Castle Green and the creation of disabled accesses and path across the Green. New fencing, gates and seating would be provided, and an archaeological survey carried out. Interpretation panels, leaflets and sign boards would be prepared during 2008. It was hoped that the main works would be completed for the annual Field Day event in September. The Committee intended to keep everyone informed of progress via the Newsletter and Website.

### **Events**



The District Council organized a Holiday Play Scheme on the Green during the glorious summer weather, and the [Annual Field Day in September](#) was for the first time equally blessed, and many local organisations raised valuable amounts for their funds.

### **Sulgrave Charities**

There are two separate charities administered by a panel of trustees:

Sulgrave Relief in Need Charity  
Sulgrave Educational Charity

The Relief in Need Charity has capital funds valued at £1362 and generates a small annual income in the region of £44. No expenses were incurred and no grants were made during the year. There are now accumulated funds available for distribution amounting to £677.

These funds may be applied to relieving parishioners who are in the conditions of need, hardship or stress by making grants or by paying for items. These days Social Services meet most of the circumstances for which the charity was originally conceived and the small sums available limit the occasions when the trustees are able to provide any meaningful assistance. The trustees would like to receive any suggestions for the beneficial use of these funds.

The Educational Charity has funds invested currently at £31940. During the year income generated amounted to £992. No expenses were incurred. There are now uncommitted funds available for distribution amounting to £1888.

These funds may be applied to provide facilities or financial assistance to young persons for educational and recreational purposes. Again these objects are, for the most part, the responsibility of the State. During the year the trustees approved an application for a grant to assist with the cost of renewing and improving the children's play area in the Pocket Park.

During the last year Ron James resigned as a trustee and Mrs Jo Gregory has agreed to replace him. Robin Prior has indicated that he will stand down as soon as an alternative trustee is appointed. Mrs Jill Barrett has taken over the Chair and Mr Roly Langdon will act as Treasurer.

## **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;
- Articulates the needs of the community;
- Is committed to work in partnership with principal authorities and other public service agencies;
- In proportion to size and skills, delivers local services on behalf of principal authorities when this represents the best deal for the local community;
- Engages with voluntary groups in its community;
- Gives leadership to voluntary work in the community;
- Working with its partners, acts as an information point for local services.

### **OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL 2007-2008**

Councillor Graham Roberts    Chairman  
Councillor David Kellet      Vice Chairman  
Councillor Clare Pollak  
Councillor Jane Osborne  
Councillor Jo Powell  
Councillor Andrew Waite

Mrs Christine Coles    Parish Clerk

Published by Sulgrave Parish Council  
June 2007

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