

# 'GLANBROOK WAS GOING TO CHANGE EITHER WAY'

## AMALGAMATION, DEVELOPMENT BOTH PLAYED A ROLE IN COMMUNITY'S GROWTH

TAMARA BOTTING  
tbotting@sachem.ca

*This is the third article of a four-part series from the Glanbrook Gazette looking at amalgamation: How it happened, its political and cultural impacts and what the future may hold. Part 3 looks at the impact it had on Glanbrook itself.*

Glanbrook has undergone massive changes in the past few years, but Kathy Dinney doesn't think amalgamation is the only reason.

"The time of amalgamation was also the start of all the development ... Glanbrook went from one of the smallest communities to one of the fastest growing," she said. "Glanbrook was going to change either way."

Currently, Dinney is the executive assistant to Coun. Brenda Johnson; a position she also held when David Mitchell was in office.

Before that, Dinney served a term as councillor for the former Township of Glanbrook, and two terms as a school board trustee. She was also on the transitional board for the amalgamation.

"In my own opinion, the new city has brought some

positives, and we've lost some good things as well," she said.

Dinney thinks that when Glanbrook was its own township, residents felt more connected to municipal projects and properties.

"We had local people doing our stuff," she said, noting it was generally area residents who would be hired for construction jobs, to clean the community halls, etc.

"Because we were smaller, there was more of a personal touch."

The personal connection to the community is one Delaney Della Fortuna knows well.

Besides being the owner of the Binbrook Animal Hospital, she is a lifelong Binbrook resident.

"I haven't even left the road I was born on," she said with a smile.

She agrees that development in the community has been extensive.

"It's hard to see, personally, when you grew up here," she said.

However, she thinks that ultimately it will prove to be a good thing, though, "some people think (it) happened too quickly," citing infrastructure shortfalls as a particular concern.

With the area's swelling population, Della Fortuna has seen some positives, such as new residents launching new events, like the Binbrook Easter Egg Hunt and the Spooktacular Stroll.

"Those were things I didn't grow up with," she said.



**THE ISSUE: AMALGAMATION  
LOCAL IMPACT: GLANBROOK  
HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY  
IN RECENT YEARS, BRINGING  
MANY NEW RESIDENTS TO A  
COMMUNITY WITH DEEP  
HISTORICAL ROOTS**

Tamara Botting/Metroland

The Township of Glanbrook had the Glanbrook Municipal Office paid for in full when it opened.

Local journalism makes a difference.  
Support us by registering at  
[sachem.ca](http://sachem.ca)



Of course, there are other events with a deep history in the community, like the Binbrook Fair, which celebrated 164 years in 2018.

When asked whether she thinks there is an "old guard" in the community, Della Fortuna said she did, but "I think (it's) getting smaller," she said, adding that with the agricultural society, "I feel like we're trying to get newcomers in-

olved."

Karen Thomson thinks it's still hard for new residents to integrate into some of the longer-standing organizations.

"I think there is a division, and it's very apparent," she said. "It's unfortunate, because we have the wonderful traditions and ideals of the agricultural community that I think so many of the newcomers could benefit from."

Thomson became the executive director of Glanbrook Community Services in January 2015. While she doesn't live in Glanbrook, she has been involved in a number of community events - most recently, the Binbrook Tree Lighting.

She feels that while "there are some good things about having an old guard ... change is inevitable."

She said she has spoken

with some newer residents who tried to volunteer with various area groups, but soon left because they didn't feel they or their ideas were welcome.

"The old guard can't be so steadfast. They need to be more open to other ideas," Thomson said, adding new residents also need to "maintain respect (for) the way things have been done."

*Next week: Amalgamation's future.*

### STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Post-amalgamation there have been many issues that have pitted the old city against the suburbs and the rural areas. We wanted to explore some of the most important ones.

Reading us is supporting  
your local journalism

Register now at