

**HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 7.00pm Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015**



**Chairman's Annual Report 2014/15**

The council has reached the end of its civic year and the Annual Assembly provides an opportunity for the local community and organisations to hear what the Parish Council has been doing on your behalf for the past year. Firstly, my thanks go to our Vice Chair Cllr Veronica Randall and fellow Councillors for their hard work and support during the year. Our staff continues to serve the public well and council would like to record our appreciation of their efforts. The Parish Council is a service provider for residents in Hockley, and a conduit for local views, working in partnership with many organisations within the community it represents. Our members regularly attend liaison meetings with other agencies and representatives from parish councils in Essex to share knowledge and experience. As the first level of local democracy, the parish is responsible to parishioners for a number of services. Our priorities are: the provision and maintenance of parish owned street lighting; management of our open spaces, play areas and nature reserve; statutory consultees on planning applications; working in partnership with Essex County on public rights of way and footpaths; provision of some bus shelters; and point of contact for county, district and many other public services. We are investigating the feasibility of possible sites for allotments. Councillors make themselves available to residents and regularly attend Full Council and Committee Meetings to progress this work throughout the year. The Parish Council encourages residents and businesses to attend the meetings and there is time allocated to enable members of the public to address councillors and ask questions or make statements. We also hold forums to enable other organisations to keep us up to date with their local involvement and concerns relevant to Hockley. Our aim is to improve our existing responsibilities and add some new projects for your consideration. The reports that follow summarise our work and achievements for the past year.

**Finance Committee Chairman - Cllr Roy Martin**

As anticipated, funding from central government for councils has again been reduced, so there are difficult decisions being made everywhere. However we are pleased to be able to report that with some careful planning, which will enable us to maintain and enhance our services, the council has set a budget of £244,525 for 2015/16, which means that the money raised from local taxpayers went down by 1.3% in the parish proportion of the council tax; based on a Band D property. Budgets are allocated to the committees to enable them to maintain continuity of existing services and plan new projects and each year we put aside a sum of money to cover large capital expenditure as it arises. Our Audit Inspection Reports have been favourable and we have a robust risk assessment policy in place. In response to applications submitted by local organisations the Parish Council has awarded the following grants under The Local Government Act 1972, Section 137 for the year 2014/2015: Massive Youth Centre £7500, COPE (Community Older Persons Events) £500, and 55+ Social Centre £400. We are also able to assist eligible local charities with the hire of the parish hall by way of a grant. We strive to ensure that every penny is wisely spent and that we give the best service we can across the community. A Budget Summary accompanies this report and our Responsible Finance Officer will be pleased to discuss anything you may wish to raise regarding these figures.

### **Planning Committee Chairman - Cllr Steve Chelmsford**

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning matters and always takes the opportunity to respond on issues relevant to Hockley. We trust that Rochford District Council take our views into consideration. We have commented on the many documents received to ensure the character of the village is preserved and, if possible, enhanced. The Hockley Area Action Plan has been adopted by Rochford District Council, and your parish councillors will ensure they are actively involved in its progress so the community can have a say in the ongoing development as it evolves, especially with reference to traffic issues and infrastructure. The Council continues to liaise with Rochford District Council and Essex County Council.

### **Personnel Committee Chairman - Cllr Veronica Randall**

This Committee was formed to look after the well being of our staff and ensure they receive the appropriate training. We currently have 8 members of staff working in the office, hall and on the ground. A training programme is now in place for both staff and councillors, which will enable us to be better informed in areas which benefit the wider community. Staff appraisals take place annually to enhance staff performance and improve staff satisfaction. You will see our Parish Rangers working around the village wearing their protective uniforms which creates a professional appearance when representing the council.

### **Environmental Committee Chairman - Cllr Brian Hazlewood**

**Marylands Nature Reserve** – Last year new benches, a new kissing gate, a new drain, and a new circular path were installed. The new path did not extend to the road as we were waiting for flood management work to be completed along the stream. Now that is done, we will continue the path to the road so that everyone has access to this nature reserve, and we have been assured that flooding in that area is a thing of the past.

**Parish Rangers** - The team consists of two trained members of staff who work to keep the village tidy, maintain the parish owned street furniture and signage, remove overgrown vegetation from pavements and footways, cut back verges and hedgerows. They also undertake maintenance at our open spaces and the children's play areas. They can only work on land owned by the Parish Council. They cannot work on private land nor, unfortunately, are they able to repair potholes.

**Street Scene** - As part of our ongoing street scene improvements, a new type of seat has been purchased and installed in Plumberow Avenue. There has been new planting by the railway bridge and outside the library and the seats in Spa Road will be repainted during the coming months. All seats are planned to be refurbished or replaced. Our mobile watering tank ensured the baskets around the village produced a magnificent display last year and it is intended to expand the planting programme during the coming year. New waste bins have been installed in the town centre. New fencing has been installed at the Zebra crossing. A water leak in the town centre has been repaired.

**Street Lighting** –The Parish Council is responsible for around 300 street lights which are unaffected by the County Council's Part-Night Lighting Plan. You can identify all parish lighting as the columns are marked with the letter 'P' on a green label. A rolling programme of replacing the parish owned street lighting with LED units is under way (10 new LED units installed) and we would encourage residents to report any of our lights which require attention.

**Allotments** – There is a historic lack of suitable accessible sites in Hockley where the necessary facilities can be installed, however, funds have been allocated from the budget to carry out a feasibility study in this regard and the committee is working towards finding a suitable way forward to enable the Parish Council to meet its statutory duty to assist those residents interested in acquiring horticultural space. All options are carefully considered when presented to us.

**Play equipment** – The Parish Council successfully applied for funding from the Essex County Community Initiative Fund to update Plumberow Mount Play Area with a new piece of play equipment. The equipment has been chosen and is waiting to be installed. There is a new entrance gate, new signage and new dog bins at Plumberow Mount.

## Hall and Premises Committee – Chairman Cllr Sue Martin

The Parish Hall at the Old Fire Station is owned and maintained by the council for community use. Although the hall is fairly well supported locally, running costs exceed income, thus, in order to maintain this facility, the council underwrites the difference and we are always looking for ways to increase usage. Our Hall Manager would be pleased to hear from you should you wish to hire the hall for an event. There has been no increase in the Hall hire fees. The new workshop with security lighting is now fully installed to assist the Rangers. The Hall windows have been re-sealed and the brickwork has been re-pointed. Flower baskets have been added to the outside of the Hall. There are 2 Caretaker / Cleaners who alternate on a weekly basis.

## In The Community

**Festive Lights** - The Festive Lights switch-on in November brought the community together to celebrate an even better event than the previous year. Spa Road was filled to capacity during the afternoon with visitors enjoying a great variety of market stalls, and an entertainment programme on a much improved stage and music arrangement. The children's colouring competition, Punch & Judy, and face painting were all well attended in the Parish Hall. Hockley Library put together an amazing grotto and Santa worked tirelessly throughout the afternoon. The lights were switched on by the competition winners and the afternoon was brought to a close with a grand firework display. The new style event again attracted a lot of favourable feedback from the community and businesses and planning has already begun on the next event. The date for your diary is Saturday 21st November 2015 and we are pleased to report that Father Christmas will be back.

**Newsletters** - The Parish Council produced and published three editions of Hockley News during the year which is delivered to residents, and provides latest information about Council news and events in the village.

**Website** - Provides a very clear and quick way to access information about the Council, the village and beyond.

**Notice boards** - Also keep the community informed of issues that affect them.

**Special Events** – Councillors run a Village Market once a month at the Parish Hall giving smaller local businesses an opportunity to promote their services and are always available at the market to chat with residents. The council again supported the Hockley & Hawkwell 55+ Social Centre Summer Fete in June. In August, the Parish Council held a WW1 service around the War Memorial which was very well attended. In partnership with Hockley British Legion and representatives from our local churches we held the annual Remembrance Service in November at the War Memorial which was followed by a parade made up of local groups and accompanied by members of the public who all marched along Southend Road to Hawkwell to join their service. Other community events arranged in the last year have included the annual garden competition, Hockley's first Art Trail, a 'primary schools' Art Exhibition, and an Art Exhibition for local artists. During the coming year, arrangements for the Garden Competition in July, the Art Trail in July, and the annual Remembrance Service in November are already in place. Events are run by councillors on a voluntary basis and are mostly self funding. We look forward to seeing you at some or indeed all of these events.

The Parish Council has introduced a **Community Resilience** group to work with other appropriate organisations to consider a community emergency plan incorporating preventative measures and a response programme. An emergency ready kit will be available in the Parish Council Office.

Councillors welcome your continued support as it is only working with your involvement that we are able to ensure Hockley continues to grow whilst maintaining its identity as a friendly village with a good community spirit.

**Councillor Tim Gleadall**  
**Chairman Hockley Parish Council**

**May 2015**

## HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET SUMMARY FOR PRECEPT 2014/2015

£

CURRENT A/C FUNDS AVAILABLE AS AT 30.9. 2013	14,642
TRACKER A/C FUNDS AVAILABLE AS AT 30.9. 2013	<u>261,017</u>
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE AS AT 30.9. 2013	275,659
<u>PLUS</u>	
ESTIMATED INTEREST ON CREDIT BALANCES TO YEAR END	<u>25</u>
<u>FUNDS AVAILABLE</u>	275,684
PLUS VAT REFUND FOR APRIL TO JUNE	<u>7,445</u>
	283,129
LESS TRANSFER TO RESERVE	1,934
LESS COMMITTED/ESTIMATED TO YEAR END	<u>274,919</u>
THEREFORE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO REDUCE PRECEPT	6,276
<u>BUDGET FOR 2014/2015</u>	250,800
LESS FUNDS AVAILABLE TO REDUCE PRECEPT	(6,276)
AMOUNT TO BE PRECEPTED FOR 2014/2015	<u>244,524</u>

## Hockley Parish Councillors

**Tim Gleadall**

Chairman of the Council



**Veronica Randall**

Vice Chairman of the Council & Chair of Personnel



**Roy Martin**

Chair of Finance/Festive Lights



**Steve Chelmsford**

Chair of Planning



**Brian Hazlewood**

Chair of Environmental



**Sue Martin**

Chair of Hall & Premises



**Mark Anderson**

Chair of Special Events



**Shirley James**

Chair of Newsletter



**Phil Meacham**

Chair of Innovations

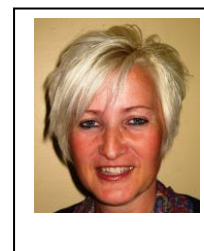


**Mike Carter**

Editor of Newsletter



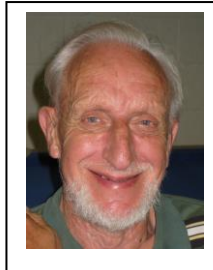
**Toni Carter**



**Lesley Vingoe**



**Brian O'Shea**



**Richard Amner**

