



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT This Report provides a summary of the activities of the Parish Council who endeavour to protect, promote and improve services thereby enhancing the quality of life in Hockley for its residents. The unprecedented impact of COVID-19 in the last few months of the civic year have changed almost everything that most of us have come to take for granted.

- The local elections have been deferred by the Government and will now be held in May 2021. Your councillors' term of office has therefore been extended for a further 12 months.
- Completion of some of our planned work had to be postponed along with the Annual Parish Meeting which could not be held due to restrictions on public gatherings.
- The duties and powers of a Parish Council are quite extensive, but on a routine daily basis the work is, in the main, concerned with managing finances, planning applications, the upkeep of Parish Council property; play spaces; open spaces and community events etc. I believe that where we can, our actions have had a positive impact on constantly improving facilities within the Parish and will continue to do so in the future.
- Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our team. As such, I would like to thank my Vice Chairman Cllr Veronica Randall, the Chairs of our Committees and all members of the Council for the work they have carried out on behalf of residents. My thanks are also due to all our staff for their hard work over the past 12 months. Our Parish Clerk, Kelly Holland, and Finance Officer Margaret Saunders, have worked tirelessly, providing administrative support to ensure the council is working lawfully and within their remit. Together we have an excellent team that strives constantly to improve facilities and services for the benefit of Hockley and its residents. The active support received from our County and District Councillors is also very much appreciated.
- The fight against the closure of Libraries in Essex was no small task this year. The Parish Council vigorously supported our residents' opposition to Essex County Council's proposed libraries restructuring plans which could have resulted in the closure of the facilities in Hockley and the community turned out in force to successfully oppose the decision. Everyone should be proud of their contribution to this achievement. We must all continue to use and support our library so this valuable service will remain in Hockley for many years to come.

It has been amazing to see the way Hockley has pulled together to help each other through this current crisis in so many different ways. As the situation unfolds our hope is for a safer and brighter future for us all. I consider it an honour and a privilege to have served as Chairman of Hockley Parish Council. **Councillor Roy Martin**

Finance

The Parish Council has a responsibility to set the annual Budget and Precept which funds the upkeep of the village. We have to work lawfully and continue to manage expenditure to obtain the best value for our residents.

Projects in the budget for 2019-20 included:

- *Regeneration of the Marylands Nature Reserve;*
- *Taking on the maintenance of the Public Toilets in Southend Road;*
- *Establishment of a new Allotment Site;*
- *Provision for Special Police;*
- *Refurbishment of the Old Fire Station and move of the Parish Office*

The Parish Council aims to support its local community groups; to this end around £7,000 has been awarded by way of grant funding to:

- *Hockley & Hawkwell Day Centre towards the refurbishment of the Centre;*
- *Hockley Public Hall to replace their wooden flooring;*
- *Wyvern Community Transport to support their local free food parcel delivery service.*

The Government Revenue Support Grant has reduced over the past few years and came to an end last year. Although we have made savings where possible, there are areas where costs have increased and councillors felt that safeguarding facilities within the village was very important alongside new projects. The Council maintains reserves to cover unexpected eventualities and considers its current level is acceptable to meet most contingencies. After a full Budget review, the Parish Council submitted a Precept to Rochford District Council. of £294,976 for 2020-21. This will ultimately result in an increase of £6.45pm on a Band D property in the Parish Council portion of the Community Charge compared to the previous year. Our Responsible Financial Officer would be pleased to provide more details on request.

Planning and Environmental issues have a high priority for the Parish Council

- Parish Councils are statutory consultees on planning applications and final decisions rest with Rochford District Council. During the past year our members have received and commented on over 90 applications. We have also responded to planning and local development consultations which may have had an impact on the District and Hockley in particular.
- The lease to transfer the allotment land at Folly Chase to the Parish Council is with the developer. As soon as this is finalised work will commence on setting up the site.
- Maryland's Nature Reserve is undergoing a 5-year regeneration plan managed by the Parish Council; coppicing and clearing has commenced and results are being seen.
- Our inspection and management programme for the Play Spaces at Laburnum Grove and Plumberow Avenue has been improved this year to bring it in line with current practice. Funding has been earmarked for the replacement of some of the play equipment and residents will be consulted on proposed designs.
- The Parish Council manage 300 additional street lights in unadopted roads and a rolling programme to replace all the lights with LEDs is ongoing to control rising costs.
- To ensure the safety of the public, contractors working on behalf of the Parish Council have undertaken a survey of all trees growing in the council's open spaces. As a result, residents can expect to see tree maintenance work taking place.
- The floral displays in the village are maintained by the Parish Council. This year our Rangers have made and installed two new wooden pavement planters outside the Sorting Office in Spa Road and new raised beds have been created at Broad Parade.

Our members actively liaise with many residents, businesses, schools and local groups to advise the council on community requirements including events

- The Parish Council has acted to retain the public toilet in Southend Road Hockley and a 10-year lease has been signed with Rochford District Council to take over the maintenance which will start after a full refurbishment has been completed.
- Funding has been approved for Special Constables in Hockley to help deal with anti-social behaviour and support our community. We are pleased to report that Essex Police are currently recruiting.
- Select staff and councillors have been trained to become contact points for those suffering domestic abuse under the J9 initiative, which raises awareness and supports victims.
- As part of a refurbishment programme at the Parish Hall, the Office has moved into the first floor and heat pumps have been installed which have reduced our running costs. The council holds its meeting in the downstairs Meeting Room which is also available for community use. Councillors are available to chat with residents at a monthly surgery held at the Village Market in the Parish Hall.
- The Remembrance Service plays an important part in the life of the village and support has grown over the years. The Parish council wished to give the Second War Generation the fitting tribute they deserve on 8th May to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day but this had to be scaled down. So the Anniversary did not slip by, bunting was put up in the village, posters were available to download from the website for residents to display at home and the War Memorial was lit with candles in the evening. Various other activities planned around the village have been postponed to later in the year.
- The Christmas Lights Switch on in November was a wonderful community occasion and the mild weather ensured that many of our local businesses, schools and charities were able to take part. The Parish Council install the lights in the village which are now all LED to save costs and many favourable comments on the displays were received during the festive season.

As an active Council we are always looking to ensure that residents are kept up to date with the latest decisions and that we are aware of issues impacting on the Parish. Our main communication is through the web site which contains a wealth of information as well as details on the Council. We also have a Face Book Page and 6 noticeboards where you will find council and community information.

YOUR PARISH COUNCILORS: Hockley Parish Council has 15 members who volunteer their time for the benefit of the community and represent the council on outside organisations. The Parish Council must act as one body with decisions made by the majority of members present and voting. The council currently has one vacancy in West Ward. Full Council Meetings are held bi-monthly and Committees meet regularly to drive the smooth running of the council.

HOCKLEY WEST WARD			
	Cllr Mark Anderson 01702 204 879		Cllr Steve Chelmsford 01702 200 178
	Cllr Brian Hazlewood 07831 705943		Cllr Mrs Shirley James 01702 205 050
	Cllr Roy Martin 01702 202 750 Chairman		Cllr Sue Martin 01702 202 750
	Cllr Phil Meacham 01702 204 099		Cllr Mrs Veronica Randall 01702 202 142 Vice Chairman
	Cllr Mrs Barbara Thorogood 01702 203 748	HOCKLEY EAST WARD	
	Cllr Nick Boxall 01702 204 800		Cllr Mike Carter 07958 707 070
	Cllr Mrs Toni Carter 01702 205 648		Cllr Brian O'Shea 01702 204 334
	Cllr Mrs Lesley Vingoe 01702 202 829		

Committee Membership 2019-20

(Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council are Ex Officio members of all Committees)

Resources & Procedures Committee: Cllr Roy Martin (Chair), Mark Anderson, Nick Boxall, Shirley James, Sue Martin, Veronica Randall, Lesley Vingoe.

Planning & Local Development Committee: Cllr Mike Carter (Chair), Nick Boxall, Toni Carter, Steve Chelmsford, Shirley James, Barbara Thorogood.

Environment & Open Spaces Committee: Cllr Lesley Vingoe (Chair), Nick Boxall, Brian Hazlewood, Shirley James, Brian O'Shea, Barbara Thorogood

Communities Committee: Cllr Sue Martin (Chair), Mark Anderson, Shirley James, Phil Meacham, Veronica Randall, Barbara Thorogood.

Festive Lights Sub Committee: Cllr Barbara Thorogood (Chair), Mark Anderson, Steve Chelmsford, Shirley James, Sue Martin, Veronica Randall

Personnel Committee: Cllr Nick Boxall (Chair), Mike Carter, Toni Carter, Shirley James, Roy Martin, Phil Meacham, Veronica Randall

If you have any comments or enquiries, please contact Clerk to the Parish Council Mrs Kelly Holland
Phone: 01702 20 77 07: Email: enquiries@hockley-essex.gov.uk : Website: hockley-essex.gov.uk

Please address all correspondence to:

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