



HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17



**LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION**

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17



In May 2016 I was re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council an office I have held for five years. During that time I have seen changes in governance and attended many events on behalf of the council both in an official and informal capacity. I would like to express my thanks to the community groups who are always very welcoming; Councillor Mrs Veronica Randall, my Vice Chair, whose support has been invaluable, and to my fellow councillors who all work together on behalf of the community of Hockley.

- This Annual Report aims to highlight the successes and progress of Hockley Parish Council over the past year and its aspirations for the future. It is fair to say that the Council have had both successes and failures this year.
- The Council is an elected corporate body comprising 15 Councillors with tax raising powers; representing over 10,000 people in the civic parish which was re-arranged into two Wards from May 2016. Your councillors are here to represent your views and appreciate hearing from you so that together we can work to achieve the best for our community
- Through an extensive range of discretionary powers we provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including open spaces, play equipment, footpaths, street furniture, a community venue, some bus shelters, additional street lighting as well as facilitating various community events and workshops throughout the year.
- Councillors do much more than just attend meetings where projects are discussed and progressed and policies, procedures and practices are constantly reviewed – their work involves taking part in many parish activities; dealing with varying resident issues, representing the Council on local groups and working closely with other partners within the Rochford District and across Essex.
- The Council works on a committee system with regular Monday evening meetings, continuously striving towards improving community well being and providing better services at a local level.

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

- Budgets and Precepts are completed in January. Although we have had to use some of our Resources this year for additional expenditure; I am pleased to report that the council has managed to hold its **Precept at £229,000** for the fourth year running whilst maintaining and improving services. Full details are published on our website or are available from the Parish Office on request.
- The council aims to secure and maintain the best possible services for the Parish of Hockley. However, as we are all well aware, the current financial climate has meant that we always have to be extremely careful over the management of our affairs. Basic expenditure comprises items that the Council must pay to function and to maintain facilities. Scheduled parish elections, building maintenance and essential maintenance of our play spaces and open spaces fall into this group. We also have to pay for internal and external audit procedures to comply with central government requirements. Committed expenditure comprises sums set aside for items or services, which the Council has decided upon earlier, but has yet to pay for. In addition to the responsibilities already mentioned, the Precept must also cover staff salaries, office administration, insurance, repairs, and utility bills. We continuously monitor our expenditure, and examine very closely how and where we spend the money. Every project has to be considered and evaluated in terms of cost- effectiveness, and benefit to the community at large.

- This Committee also sets and regularly reviews the *Policies and Procedures* of the Council, introducing new ones as necessary.
- The Council has gradually moved towards achieving a standard of working which, in September 2016, gained us an Essex Association of Local Councils' award at Foundation Level setting our benchmark for future improvement.
- Each year the Council receives a number of requests for financial assistance by way of *Grants* from societies and groups offering facilities and services to the local community. All are welcomed, but have to be considered in relation to the resources available. In response to requests received the following groups were awarded grants in 2016-17:
 - **£10000 to Hockley & Hawkwell Old People's Welfare Centre** towards their replacement minibus which we were pleased to see commissioned in February. The centre is a valuable service for our elderly residents. They are to be congratulated in raising over £45,000 from within the community and the parish council was pleased to be a part of this.
 - **£4397 to Hockley Public Hall** towards a new water system and refurbishment of the outside toilets
 - **£4000 to Massive Project** towards providing young people with a safe environment in which to meet. The Project has seen a recent increase in youngsters using the centre and are now receiving additional support from Essex County Council.
 - **£300 to the Parent & Toddler Group** for new play equipment. The Group meets at the Parish Hall and offers an informal social environment where parents with young children are able to meet.
 - **£100 to a Community Poppy Project** a new group whose volunteers will be working together to provide hand crafted poppies for the war memorial in 2018, to commemorate the end of the WW11.
 - **£50 Hockley WI** towards the hire of the Parish Hall for a charity event.

Personnel Sub Committee: Cllrs Veronica Randall (Chair), Nick Boxall, Shirley James, Sue Martin, Brian O'Shea, Lesley Vingoe.

The Personnel Committee is responsible for all staff related matters, including senior appointments, training, disciplinary matters, health and safety and any disputes.

- We appreciate the help and support given to elected Councillors and the wider community by all our staff. Our Clerk completed his Cilca qualifications this year and our Administration Assistant, has progressed to the post of Assistant Clerk and Accountant.
- All training comes within the responsibility of this committee and, using the services available from the Essex Association of Local Councils, Rochford District Council and other outside agencies, ensures our members and staff are up to date with current procedures and aware of their responsibilities.
- Members are appointed to an Appeals Panel to enable an impartial hearing in the event any disputes.

Planning & Local Development Committee: Cllrs Tim Gleadall (Chair), Mark Anderson, Nick Boxall, Toni Carter, Steve Chelmsford, Shirley James; Malcolm Maddocks.

- Hockley Parish generally hold two Planning Meetings a month to consider all current planning applications and any other planning and highways issues which are received from Rochford District Council.
- The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications and also comments on various consultation documents from the District Council and other authorities.
- We are actively involved in the Local Development Planning for the District and regularly comment on proposed development in the parish and surrounding areas to ensure Hockley has a voice.

Environmental & Open Spaces Committee: Cllrs Lesley Vingoe (Chair), Tim Gleadall, Brian Hazlewood, Mike Carter, Brian O'Shea, Shirley James, Mark Anderson, Toni Carter, Nick Boxall, Malcolm Maddocks.

Our open spaces are well used by walkers, equestrians, cyclists and runners and this committee inevitably has responsibility for a large proportion of our budget to maintain the areas managed by the Parish Council. Unfortunately Hockley has had its share of vandalism and anti social behaviour during the past year and residents are thanked for their assistance as only by working together on this can we aim to resolve the problems.

- The new path at *Marylands Nature Reserve* has been completed this year and updated interpretation boards are now in place. New contractors have been appointed to maintain the Reserve and we are already seeing an improvement there. A Conservation report and 5 year maintenance plan has been commissioned and there are some exciting ideas which will be developed over the next few years to keep the Reserve in good order and provide a pleasant area for our residents to enjoy.
- The surfaces under the play equipment at the *Jubilee Play Space in Laburnum Grove* have been replaced this year with jungle mulch, and the Council has agreed to continue this work at the Plumberow Avenue Play Space during the coming year, hopefully, with financial assistance from the Community Initiative Fund.
- Our Rangers have completed the renovation of the benches and construction of wooden planters for the village.
- The green at Broad Parade has been replanted, and we are keeping a close watch on the area to keep it clean and tidy.

Communities Committee: Cllrs Sue Martin (Chair), Mark Anderson, Tim Gleadall, Shirley James, Roy Martin, Phil Meacham, Veronica Randall, Lesley Vingoe.

Hockley Parish Council is always very keen to consult and communicate as widely as possible with local residents and groups and the Communities Committee are empowered to advise the council on the needs and requirements of the community, recommending ways to match council resources to village needs.

- **The public toilets** are owned and managed by Rochford District Council who, from April 2018, will no longer fund them. It is not a statutory requirement for local councils to provide facilities. However the Parish Council appreciates that residents consider Hockley's Public Toilets to be a valuable asset and is in negotiation with the District Council to find the best way forward in this matter.
- **Anti social behaviour** is of great concern to us all and is primarily a police matter. Working with neighbouring parishes, we have initiated discussions to see if we can jointly make use of Community Protection Officers, which are used elsewhere in Essex, to support the police to better manage the problems.
- Our Members arrange regular Events in the Parish. **The Schools Art Exhibition and Art Trail** are always well supported by the community as is the **Village Market** and for the first time this year residents opened their gardens to the public. **Remembrance Sunday** is observed in November. This year an additional name was engraved on the memorial and the family were pleased to have an opportunity to visit Hockley and lay a wreath. A community Poppy Project group has been formed to work on knitted poppies to create a veil for the War Memorial in 2018 to mark the end of WWII.
- The council were delighted to celebrate **Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday** by inviting 9 very lively nonagenarians from the village along with their guests to an enjoyable Afternoon Tea where they met up with long lost friends. The Parish Council was also represented at the District Council's **Wild Woods Day** in Hockley Woods where councillors were able to speak with many of our residents.
- The first **Parish Community Workshop** was held in August where a variety of subjects were raised. Residents asked to have **Heritage Plaques** for areas of interest around the village and the council formed a Heritage Panel with the help of local historians. A Heritage Guide will be developed to give the community a chance to discover more about the area in which they live. The first plaque has been ordered and others will start to appear in the centre of the village shortly.
- Businesses and residents asked us to consider providing a **Defibrillator** in Hockley and I am pleased to be able to report that the council has agreed to support the installation of a unit in Spa Road. The project is in partnership with the Community Heartbeat Trust and the National Lottery and training sessions will be arranged in due course for anyone interested in learning how to use the equipment.
- A variety of local groups regularly meet at **The Old Fire Station** which is owned and managed by the parish council. Plans have been approved for a replacement building to the rear of the hall to provide more room in the public areas for activities and additional utility space for storage of council property.
- The Council maintains a **Website** that is 'growing' with information every day and produces regular **Newsletters** which are distributed to all residences in the parish to keep you in touch. We also maintain six notice boards displaying local information.

Festive Lights SubCommittee: Cllrs.Roy Martin (Chair), Mark Anderson, Nick Boxall, Mike Carter, Steve Chelmsford, Tim Gleadall, Shirley James, Sue Martin, Veronica Randall.

- Although we were all disappointed not to be able to hold the *Christmas Street Event* in 2016 the festive lights display in the village received many compliments and the Children's Competition went ahead as usual. The youngsters coloured Gingerbread Houses and the winners switched on the tree lights in Southend Road.
- **This year the Street Event is back** and will be held on the 25th November with some new entertainment for everyone to enjoy and we hope you will join us again to celebrate the Christmas season.

In Conclusion

Your Parish Council are well placed to work with the local community to achieve your aspirations and help shape the future culture of Hockley and will, as far as possible, continue to give its full attention to these matters but it needs input and support from residents and local groups which ensures a healthy exchange of information on any matters concerning the area. We hope you will find this report both helpful and informative and should you wish to comment on any aspect of our services please contact your local Parish Councillor or the Parish Office.

**Councillor Roy Martin,
Chairman
Hockley Parish Council**

HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCILLORS 2016/17

HOCKLEY WEST WARD Cllrs Mark Anderson, Steve Chelmsford, Tim Gleadall, Brian Hazlewood, Shirley James, Malcolm Maddocks, Roy Martin (Chairman), Sue Martin, Phil Meacham, Veronica Randall (Vice Chairman).

HOCKLEY EAST WARD Cllrs: Nick Boxall, Mike Carter, Toni Carter, Brian O'Shea, Lesley Vingoe.

**FULL DETAILS OF THE BUDGET SUMMARY FOR PRECEPT 2017-18
ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PARISH OFFICE OR ON OUR WEBSITE.**

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