



HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18



Following my re-election as Chairman in May 2017 I have again had the good fortune to work alongside Cllr Veronica Randall, our Vice Chair and my fellow councillors, without whose invaluable work and enthusiasm, we would not have functioned. 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.

- **Your Parish Councillors** The Parish Council consists of 15 elected members, two of whom are also Rochford District Councillors, who all serve for a term of 4 years. The Council is an elected corporate body with tax raising powers and represents over 10,000 people in the civic parish which is split into two Wards Hockley West and Hockley East. An Honours Board is displayed at the Parish Hall which lists all the past Chairs and Clerks from the inception of the Parish Council in 1894. Your councillors are here to represent your views so together we can work to achieve the best for our community. We currently have a vacancy on the council and are pleased to have received interest from potential new members.

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 throughout the year.

The Council works on a committee system with regular Monday evening meetings where projects are discussed and progressed and policies, procedures and practices reviewed. These meetings may seem unnecessarily formal but all councils have to work within their lawful Standing Orders. However there are opportunities for you to have an informal chat with members at our monthly councillor surgeries. Members work also involves taking part in many parish activities; dealing with resident issues, representing the Council on local groups and working closely with other partners within the Rochford District and across Essex. The Council's website provides easy access to all council information. Alongside this a regular Newsletter is published which is available to download from the website.

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

This Committee has responsibility for the Council finances and I am pleased to report that the Parish Council's Precept has been set at £230,826 with no year on year increase in the Hockley Parish Council proportion of Band D equivalent payments. As a council, our aim is to continue to provide our residents with the service they have come to expect from us. Reserves have been earmarked to enable us to take on the maintenance of new public toilets, provide Allotment facilities, undertake a Conservation Plan for Marylands Nature Reserve and improve facilities at the Parish Hall. Full Budget details are published on our website or will shortly be available from the Parish Office on request.

The council aims to secure and maintain the best possible services for the Parish of Hockley. However we always have to be extremely careful over the management of our affairs and on rare occasions we fall short. Expenditure is continuously monitored and every project has to be considered and evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness, and benefit to the community. 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 conform 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. From May 2018 Data Protection Regulations changed and in common with all businesses the council is undertaking a major review of its documentation to ensure we are compliant.

Each year the Council receive 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 community groups were awarded grants in 2017-18:

- £500 to the Rochford & Rayleigh Citizens Advice Bureau who work towards supporting our residents with advice and assistance covering all aspects of their lives.
- Granted use of the Parish Hall to the Women's Institute to support a charity event for dementia sufferers
- Granted use of the Parish Hall to Hockley Chamber of Trade & Commerce to support a BEST business event at the Parish Hall to encourage new business into the village.

➤ **Personnel Committee:** *Cllrs Nick Boxall (Chair), Mike Carter, Toni Carter, Shirley James, Sue Martin, Brian O'Shea, Veronica Randall, Lesley Vingoe.*

The Personnel Committee is responsible for all staff related matters. Training for councillors and staff are managed by this committee using the services available from the Essex Association of Local Councils, Rochford District Council and other outside agencies. My thanks go to our all our staff, some of whom were new to their roles this year, who have managed to overcome a challenging time. The support they have given to Councillors and the wider community has been much appreciated.

➤ **Planning & Local Development Committee:** *Cllrs Nick Boxall, Mike Carter, Toni Carter, Steve Chelmsford, Tim Gleadall (Chair), Shirley James.*

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee and through this Committee debates local planning applications, commenting on various consultation documents which are passed on to Rochford District Council to aid their decision making process. The Parish Council 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 Folly Grove Development has enabled the council to acquire land for allotments as a potential community benefit. The planning process has taken time but is moving forward. Following site visits the Parish Council were able to negotiate with the developers to provide more parking spaces and better access. The allotment site will be handed over 12 months after completion of the development. In the meantime the Parish Council will work with a potential Allotment Group to pursue the provision of a water source and adequate fencing to ensure the badger setts and other wildlife is protected.

The Parish Council has continued to be in consultation with the Rochford District Council on the Local Plan to enable residents to have a voice on the future of Hockey and its surrounding areas on the issues of concern that have been raised.

➤ **Environmental & Open Spaces Committee:** *Cllrs Mark Anderson, Nick Boxall, Tim Gleadall, Brian Hazlewood, Shirley James, Brian O'Shea and Lesley Vingoe (Chair)*

Work has started on the 5 Year Conservation Plan at Marylands Nature Reserve and you will begin to see the results as the seasons progress throughout the year

The Parish Council is grateful to the Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund for funding a project to renew the surfaces at the Plumberow Play Space and this work is now completed.

Diseased trees at Broad Parade have been removed, and we are keeping a close watch on the area to keep it clean and tidy.

The Street Scene is also being maintained. The trees on the the pavement outside the Sorting Office caused major root damage and the area had become a hazard for pedestrians. The surface was replaced by Essex County Council at no cost to the Parish. Although we have lost the trees on the site the parish council will be looking at installing some planters later in the year.

The Parish Council continues to maintain 300 street lights which are in addition to those maintained by ECC. Whilst most of the street lights owned by Essex County Council are being turned off between midnight and five o'clock in the morning, all of the street lights owned by the Parish Council continue to stay on and we are continuing with a rolling replacement using LED lamps.

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

Our priority is to improve community engagement. Hockley Parish Council is always very keen to consult and communicate as widely as possible with local residents and groups and the Communities Committee works towards this.

There has been a lot of publicity about the public toilets in the District and many of our parish councils have already taken over the maintenance of the facilities from Rochford District Council. Hockley is one of the last to complete negotiations and I am now pleased to report that a new toilet facility will be installed on the existing site and your Parish Council will take on the maintenance costs as we appreciate that residents consider this to be a valuable asset.

The Parish Council has worked alongside the Community Heartbeat Trust to provide a defibrillator in Spa Road this year with financial support from the Big Lottery Fund and a unit is now operational.

The Council organises the Hockley Art Trail in the summer where local artists are able to display their work at various venues around the village. Two of our artists have been selected to exhibit their work at the 10th Anniversary of Essex Summer of Art at Harwich in 2018. The younger members of the community also had an opportunity to showcase their talents at the Schools Art Exhibition held at the Parish Hall in early March.

Hockley Parish Council has launched its Heritage Trail Scheme with the first plaques being displayed this year. Further sites will be added to give visitors a chance to discover some of the history of our area.

Remembrance Day in November 2018 will see a display of locally knitted poppies at the War Memorial in Southend Road to mark the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1.

- **Festive Lights Sub Committee:** *Cllrs. Mark Anderson, Nick Boxall, Steve Chelmsford, Tim Gleadall, Shirley James, Roy Martin (Chair), Sue Martin, Veronica Randall.*

The Christmas Lights Street Event is a major undertaking both in time and money and the Committee worked hard to bring this back to Hockley in 2017. It proved to be a real community event again during a very cold afternoon in November and thanks to everyone's generosity the event raised over £3,000 for local charities. The childrens' painting competition attracted 243 entries and The Chamber of Trade donated £1 to Little Havens for each entry. The Parish Council provide and maintain all the Christmas Lights in Hockley and the displays are always a welcome sight over the festive season.

Your Parish Council are here to work with the local community to help shape the future of Hockley and will, as far as possible, continue to give its full attention to these matters. It is always good to receive feedback from residents with a range of comments on matters concerning the area - it does help. As always, you are welcome to attend any of our meetings. We hope you will find this report 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 2017/18

HOCKLEY WEST WARD

Cllrs Mark Anderson, Steve Chelmsford, Tim Gleadall, Brian Hazlewood, Shirley James, 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
WILL BE PUBLISHED ON OUR WEBSITE
OR CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE PARISH OFFICE ON REQUEST**

Office Opening Times: Monday – Friday 10am to 12pm

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