



HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

**ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR**

APRIL 2007 TO MARCH 2008

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CHAIRMAN'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is now an expectation for Annual Parish Reports to be presented in a more formal format than hitherto and for it to be suitable for wider publication than at the annual meeting of the parish. Hawkwell Parish Council have decided to do this as we prepare to meet the criteria needed to apply for "Quality Council" status, as has been achieved by other parish councils of similar size within Rochford District and further a-field within Essex. The Report covers factual information on how Parishioners and Stakeholders can communicate with the Council and how the Council communicates with them. The full report will be available on the Council website by 30th June 2008, the last publication date for such documents.

In the Report, there will be a comprehensive and detailed exposition of the 2006/2009 Strategic Plan adopted by the Council following the May 2006 elections. It is from this plan that annual Operational Plans are agreed and budgeted for. The Operational Plans direct the monitoring and control of expenditure and at the same time financial planning is considered for the next year's operational plan.

This is explained in the report from the Chairman of the Finance Committee, followed by reports from the Chairmen of the other Standing Committees of the Council which are General Purposes, Parks and Open Spaces and Planning. Their task is to see that the plan is implemented and report back to the corporate body, which is full Council.

Standing Committees have the power to set up sub-committees, where they think this will lead to greater efficiency. Full Council may establish ad-hoc Committees, where it is appropriate.

The next part of the report gives an unaudited Account of the Council's receipts and payments for the year prior to the publication of the accounts to be submitted to the external auditor later in the year. The date for this is set by the accounting regulations. These unaudited accounts will be presented to the Annual Meeting, as has always been the practice, but now with this executive summary.

The Report's final part relates to the future and covers the Parish Plan and Council's hopes of becoming a "Quality Council". This part also relates to the Parish Council's thoughts on the proposal to be put forward by the Principal Authority on the local development framework in the near future. This followed an informative presentation given to Council by the Head of Planning and Transport of the Principal authority. The Parish Council organised an "in house" seminar to allow members to give voice to their thoughts from which policy could be developed. The Vice-Chairman acted as facilitator, and the policy was forwarded to Rochford District Council and a press release issued, which the *"Evening Echo"* published.

J M Dixon
Chairman

(1) INTRODUCTION

The Council follows the practice of presenting a report, supported by un-audited receipt and payment accounts, to the annual meeting of the Council which takes place in May. The audited Income and Expenditure accounts follow later. These are also publicly displayed (A Receipt and Payment account differs from an Income and Expenditure account in that the former shows only receipts and payments made in the year in question, while the latter requires accruals to be included, depending on which financial year the transactions apply to.)

This year, in order to comply with more recent movements in democratic accountability, Council resolved to publish a more formal report, modelled on the style of report recommended by the National Association of Local Councils and H.M. Government. Electors and stakeholders have a need to know how, where and to whom, they can go to communicate with the Council. This information will be provided in the report. There will also be information on how the Council makes policy and how that policy is transformed into action. There will also be information about the Members' Code of Conduct. It is the aim of Council that this report will inform readers how the separation of responsibilities of the Council, into policy making and administration and delivery of policy are carried out. We have to be seen to be accountable, efficient and transparent. It is our wish for this to be so and to act in this way. The Council has accepted the Members' Code of Conduct and although Members can receive attendance allowances, they have declined to do so.

(2) CONTACTING YOUR COUNCILLORS OR THE PARISH OFFICE

There are thirteen Parish Councils and one Town Council in Rochford District. Of these thirteen Parishes, Hawkwell has the largest population. The Parish is served by seventeen Councillors and is divided into three wards; West Hawkwell, South Hawkwell and North Hawkwell. The Parish boundary, by road names, is roughly the B1013 from the Emmanuel Church to Potash Corner, Rectory Road to Golden Cross, Ashingdon Road to The Chase just beyond the Victory Public House and part of White Hart Lane. It encloses what may be described as a triangular area in which there are approximately 4542 dwellings interspersed with green spaces, some of which are public open spaces. Elections are held every four years. The Parish Councillors, elected in May 2006 are shown below so that Electors or Stakeholders can contact them if required. The Parish Office is to the rear of Hawkwell Village Hall in Main Road Hawkwell. The Parish Clerk is Mr Stuart Mennell. He is also the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer of the Council. The office telephone number is 01702 207710.

The Parish Council Email Address is hawkwell.council@totalise.co.uk

West Hawkwell Ward

Mrs Angela Heath
2 Englefield Close, Hawkwell
SS4 4LE

Mr Keith Holmes
7 Martin Walk, Hawkwell
SS5 4LP

Mr David Weir
18 Glenwood Avenue
Hawkwell SS5 4HH
Tel: 01702 207764

Mrs Myra Weir
18 Glenwood Avenue
Hawkwell SS5 4HH
Tel: 01702 207764

Mr Alan James
25B Belchamps way
Hawkwell SS5 4NT
Tel: 01702 207297

Mr Robert Mitchell
53 Hawkwell Chase
Hawkwell SS5 4NG
Tel: 01702 200477

South Hawkwell Ward

Mrs Elizabeth Chippette
58 Alexandra Road
Rochford SS4 3HD
Tel: 01702 544770

Mrs Margaret Dorrell
5 Holt Farm Way
Rochford SS41SA
Tel: 01702 547028

Mrs Heather Glynn
The Laurels, Lincoln Road
Rochford SS4 3AF
Tel: 01702 547060

Mrs Jill Fern
18 Caroline Close
Southend-on-Sea SS2 6RQ
Tel: 01702 307389

Mr Vic Leach
53 Westbury
Rochford SS41UL
Tel: 01702 541413

North Hawkwell Ward

Mrs Jean Barney
52 Harewood Avenue
Rochford SS4 3BH
Tel: 01702 547450

Mr Royston Patient
84 Princess Gardens
Ashingdon SS4 3BJ
Tel: 01702 531462

Mr David Eede
66 Princess Gardens
Rochford SS4 3BJ
Tel: 01702 541515

Mr John Dickson
27 The Westerings
Hawkwell SS5 4NY
Tel: 01702 206625

Mrs Cynthia Cunningham
37 Lascelles Gardens
Rochford SS4 3BW

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS FOR HAWKWELL PARISH

HAWKWELL NORTH

Mr Michael Starke
"Altwien", Little stambridge Hall Lane, Rochford.
Tel: 01702 544773 or 01702 530329

Mrs Lucy Cox
290 Little Wakering Road, Little Wakering,

HAWKWELL SOUTH

Mr Philip Capon, 12 Wheatfields, Ct. Stambridge,
Tel. 01702 258792
Mrs Heather Glynn, The Laurels, Lincoln Road, Rochford SS4 3AF
Tel: 01702 547060

HAWKWELL WEST

Mr John Mason, Wistaria Cottage, Englefield Close,
Hawkwell. Tel: 01702 204377 Fax: 07092196148 E-mail:
john.mason@bigfoot.com

Mr Derrick Stansby, 52 Hill Lane, Hawkwell
Tel: 01702 202431

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR AREA
Tracy Chapman, 30 South Street, Rochford
Tel: 01702 542452

(3) HOW THE COUNCIL COMMUNICATES WITH PARISHONERS

The Parish Council communicates by publishing a Parish Newsletter several times a year. These newsletters are delivered to every household in the Parish. Those with access to the internet can visit the Parish website on www.hawkwellparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Press releases are also sent to the editors of local newspapers when important policy decisions are made by Council. We organise public meetings, when there is a need to do. There is a statutory requirement to publish details of all council meetings on all of the Parish noticeboards. Members of the public can also council meetings. This is often the case when planning matters are being addressed. Please remember that the Parish is not the planning authority and has no powers to either agree or refuse planning applications. We have the right to be consulted and we can make views known. Public participation is allowed and encouraged. We are always seeking ways to improve our communication and consultation process.

(4) THE PARISH STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2002, Council resolved to consider adopting a strategic plan to guide the way in which the Parish might develop. Policies would continue to be made by full Council and power would continue to be delegated to Standing Committees for the implementation of these policies. Strategic objectives would be agreed. This operational plan would require costing and budget preparation to be addressed before implementation. It was thought that a planned approach, would be better than a piecemeal way of operating. The strategic plan would determine the structure of the operational plan. The Standing committees would prepare the operational plan first by addressing the budget implications and the action plan to deliver it. The Finance Committee would oversee the budgeting aspects and Full Council would ratify all recommendations, requiring lawful corporate endorsement.

This proposal would enhance the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the Council. The electorate, stakeholders and other interested agencies would know what was happening, through the four year rolling strategic plan and the annual operational plans.

In 2002 the newly elected Council authorised the preparation of a plan and asked the Clerk to the Council to draft it. After formal adoption by Councillors in 2002 it was rolled forward to 2006. It can be revisited if changes are needed.

The current Parish Strategic Plan is given below:-

The Mission of Hawkwell Parish Council is:

'To develop and sustain a sense of community within the parish of Hawkwell by addressing environmental, economic and social issues and delivering quality services to our Parishioners'.

Our Strategic objectives are:

1. To work with the Police and other authorities to nurture a safe and lawful environment:
 - By supporting the Police in the prevention and detection of crime;
 - By working with young people wherever possible to engage them in creative activities;
 - By working to develop facilities to provide spaces for young people to gather and socialise;
 - By working with the appropriate authorities to ensure the streets and public areas are well lit and where possible designed to minimise crime, by ensuring our streetlights are maintained in a fully functional mode with repairs effected within agreed timescales;
 - By working with the appropriate authorities to ensure the footpaths are well maintained;
 - By supporting people and local organisations by the introduction of traffic calming measures and other road safety initiatives in their immediate locality.

2. To work for the improvement of the built environment:
 - By developing a village plan to which all parishioners have had a chance to make a contribution and which provides a vision for the development of the parish.
 - By identifying unacceptable building proposals and registering our concerns with the planning authority prior to their formal consideration;
 - By maintaining our bus shelters and other street furniture in good order and pursuing an appropriate maintenance and renewal plan.
 - By working with the Community Policing team to detect and prosecute perpetrators of graffiti or other vandalism;
 - By working with the appropriate authorities to minimise the detrimental effects of litter in the streets and public areas.

3. To work with Statutory and Non - statutory Bodies seeking to improve the quality of life for parishioners:
 - By co-operating with neighbouring parishes.
 - By supporting and working with Youth Groups and Elderly Persons organisations as directed by the Council;
 - By co-operating and working with local schools to improve facilities for the young in the parish.

4. To develop the parks and the nature reserve in the parish to provide green and open spaces and to contribute to sustaining bio-diversity within the parish:
 - By maintaining the nature reserve at Magnolia Park and by working with the various authorities and agencies to improve the natural environment and sustain bio-diversity;
 - By developing the facilities at Magnolia Park for the use of parishioners;
 - By developing and sustaining the plan for use of Spencer's Park;
 - By developing and implementing a management plan for Glencroft Public Open Space.

By maintaining and improving the children's play spaces including the replacement of play equipment when required.

 - By developing a village plan to which all parishioners have had chance to make a contribution and which provides a vision for the development of all the parish parks and open spaces.

5. To improve the environment in the Parish:
 - By developing and sustaining an active footpaths policy and by working with the Parish Paths Partnership to maintain our current network of footpaths.
 - By identifying opportunities to open or re-open bye-ways in conjunction with The Parish Paths Partnership Officer.

6. To manage the affairs of the Council on an efficient and effective basis. By ensuring all decisions are taken on a value for money basis;
 - By being a good employer and treating employees as valued members of the team;
 - By ensuring all legal obligations are observed and good practice followed in respect of the financial management of the Council;
 - By developing and implementing policies and procedures that ensure good governance of the Council's affairs;
 - By adopting and updating appropriate financial policies including

reserves.

(5) STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

(i) THE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee of Hawkwell Parish Council controls the spending of other Committees, monitors the spending of the Council and works to ensure that the Council is well run and prudently managed.

Between October and November of each year the Committees decide their priorities for the next municipal year and calculates the possible cost of new initiatives. These are put to the Finance Committee as 'budget bids' along with known ongoing costs and may be accepted or rejected according to the financial climate at the time. As an example, the Council has, for many years, sought the agreement of Rochford District Council to take over the management of Glencroft open space. This will have unique costs in the first year or two to create the type of parkland we want. However the equipment we use is employed throughout the Parish in all of our open spaces so, to ensure continuity of use, our budget could read; £2000 development of Glencroft; £1000 set aside in a general fund to replace worn out machinery. Each year a sum, which is allowed to grow, is put to one side for major capital expenditure. Once the budget has been set our Council Tax (in Parish terms, our Precept) requirement is calculated and an adjustment made over the previous year.

Any organisation is only as good as it's employees and we have been very fortunate over the years to have staff dedicate and committed to the Council. To make sure this continues we pay an appropriate level of salary which, to ensure fairness, is linked to comparable occupations in other organisations.

Each month each Committee is presented with a detailed account of expenditure, the Finance Committee is, in turn, presented with each one. After scrutiny the monthly accounts are presented to Full Council for approval along with any requests for additional, unbudgeted sums that could crop up because of emergencies. This is also an opportunity for Councillors not on a specific Committee to ask questions and interrogate our Proper Officer and Chairman of the Finance Committee to satisfy themselves that the Council is being run in a responsible manner.

Vic Leach
Chairman, Finance Committee

(ii) The General Purposes Committee Report

The Committee deals with the Parish street lights, the bus shelters around the parish are owned and repaired by us as are the seats around the area. We provide Xmas Parcels, delivered round the Parish to the elderly who are on their own. The Christmas lights on the Common, the Main Road shops and Golden Cross are paid for and maintained by us

as also is the Father Christmas ceremony.

During the last year, with funding from ECC, we have worked with the youth of the area and have already put some of their ideas into being. We have worked on this project with the local police, RDC and ECC. St. Mary's churchyard's western side had been cleared to make a new open area for the public to use. The land is in unknown ownership. This will allow the Parish church to have approximately 70 more graves at no expense to the Church

We have set up a Website at www.hawkwellparishcouncil.gov.uk.

We are arranging a Fayre in Magnolia Park on 12th July 2008 for the Parishioners to enjoy each others company. Come and enjoy the fun of the fayre.

Heather Glynn.
Chairman off the General purposes Committee

(iii) The Parks and Open Spaces Committee's Report

The Parish Council 'parks and open spaces' committee has responsibility for the management plans of these locations. The hard work to bring these plans to fruition however, is the groundsman's responsibility. Our new groundsman, Dave Abrams should be congratulated in the excellent way he has completed his first full season of fulfilling the tasks associated in maintaining and sustaining such a wide diversity of open space.

As spring arrives, it is lovely to see our parks and open spaces burst into life. We are very fortunate in Hawkwell to have three such areas within easy reach by road or parish footpaths:

Magnolia Park and nature reserve (entrance accessed from Rectory Rd near Railway Bridge) offers a variety of locations to just sit or stroll around using the extensive pathway network. It is surprising that many people comment on how large the area is and seeing features such as the lake for the first time. Seasonal work in the reserve has included cutting back scrub areas, widening pathways and maintaining perimeter fencing.

Spencers Park is adjacent to Clements Hall fitness centre and has now matured into an area the parish can be proud of. There is a good mix of tree plantations, cut grass, pathways and wild grass islands. Seasonal work in the park has included trimming the lower branches on selected young trees to create a healthy shape and maintain access around them.

Glencroft open space - has an entrance from White Hart lane, near the Railway Bridge. Having only recently been acquired by the parish, 2008 will be our first full

season for shaping this area and should complement our other open spaces. Something unique to Glencroft are the gorse bushes with their lovely golden flowers in spring. Several seats have been located in areas that allow you enjoy the peace and quiet this location can offer.

Hopefully, as summer emerges and the weather warms up, you will get a chance to take a stroll through the parks and enjoy these features, which we hope you agree are worthy of the efforts the Parish makes in maintaining and improving these facilities.

Keith Holmes
Chairman
Parks and Open Spaces

(iv) The Planning Committee.

The Council receives lists of planning applications for Hawkwell on a regular basis. The Planning Committee meets to consider these and make comments. Generally these applications are either for changes house-owners wish to make to their property, such as extra rooms and conservatories. The members recognise the principle that people should be able to enjoy their property, providing their neighbours can continue to enjoy theirs. Members are aware, also, that objections must be based on material planning law matters and not their opinions. They do take into account any presentations received from parishioners. We are aware property costs are so expensive now, that the most economic way is to consider making one's accommodation bigger.

We keep up to date on proposed changes in planning changes being proposed by the Government and the the local development framework proposals. The Council has developed a policy on this, which was featured in the "*Evening Echo*", following a Council press release. Finally we emphasise that representations and comments from you on specific issues is welcomed by the Committee

Myra Weir
Chairman , Planning Committee.

(6) The Un-audited Income and Expenditure Account for 2007/8.

Hawkwell Parish Council

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2008

31st March 2007

31st March 2008

Income Summary

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 112,763 | Precept | 117,595 |
| 2,725 | Interest Received | 3,920 |
| 115,488 | Sub Total | 121,515 |
| | Operating Income | |
| 200 | Administration | 240 |
| 0 | Grants (incl S137) | 0 |
| 0 | Street Lighting | 0 |
| 965 | Street Furniture | 0 |
| 0 | Magnolia Park | 0 |
| 0 | Spencers Park | 0 |
| 0 | Play Areas | 0 |
| 378 | Works Department | 0 |
| 0 | P3 | 0 |
| 0 | Youth Activities | 0 |
| 2,554 | Projects - Youth | 6,735 |
| 119,586 | Total Income | 128,490 |
| | Running Costs | |
| 48,800 | Administration | 55,556 |
| 1,395 | Council | 1,551 |
| 1,807 | Grants (incl S137) | 3,228 |
| 7,765 | Street Lighting | 7,482 |
| 3,522 | Street Furniture | 2,495 |
| 1,539 | Xmas Celebrations | 1,486 |
| 0 | Projects - G P | 0 |
| 1,672 | Magnolia Park | 2,209 |
| 231 | Spencers Park | 387 |
| 377 | Glencroft Park | 1,319 |
| 397 | Play Areas | 126 |
| 95 | Churchyard | 2,641 |
| 27,270 | Works Department | 33,733 |
| 0 | P3 | 0 |
| 525 | Youth Activities | 220 |
| 2,554 | Projects - Youth | 6,945 |
| 97,947 | Total Expenditure | 119,378 |
| | General Fund Analysis | |
| 23,254 | Opening Balance | 44,893 |
| 119,586 | Plus: Income for Year | 128,490 |
| 142,840 | | 173,383 |
| 97,947 | Less : Expenditure for Year | 119,378 |
| 44,893 | | 54,004 |
| 0 | Transfers TO 1 FROM Reserves | 0 |
| 44,893 | Closing Balance | 54,004 |

(7)FUTURE THOUGHTS

Following deliberations by my Council, I write to advise you of our response to future, possible developments in Hawkwell.

Hawkwell Parish Council (HPC) has, over many years, demonstrated its commitment to protect its' Green Belt by the leasing and management of a growing number of open spaces and parks and has an ongoing commitment to continue doing so. HPC also acknowledges the strong opposition to any major Green Belt development within the Parish by many Parishioners and would draw your attention to such opposition. However, HPC also acknowledges the strong, external pressure from central Government on Rochford District Council (RDC) to provide additional homes within the District and it recognises that discussions and consultations today will influence the structure of Rochford District for decades to come.

The preferred option of Hawkwell Parish Council to satisfy these new housing requirements is to create a single new community within the District thus allowing services and infrastructure to be properly and viably provided, this new community would be ideally situated in the West/North West of the District to allow best access to public transport and dual carriageways.

Should the construction of a new community fail the following applies.

HPC acknowledges the inevitability of utilising Green Belt for new homes in the District but expects that development will be snared equally throughout the Parishes/District using a calculation based on Parish hectares or heads of population. Alternatively the distribution future housing developments should be base on Essex Fire Service accessibility data.

HPC expects any new development within the Parish boundaries to have minimum impact on the Green Belt, not increase the village footprint and that RDC will actively use its' compulsory purchase powers to achieve this. HPC further expects that, prior to any development commencing, infrastructure in general (but including means of managing traffic capacity, healthcare etc.) will be in place.

HPC further expects any new development to include a mix of properties encompassing 'affordable', 'social' and others that encourages a broad demographic spread and sustains a housing chain that may include, where absolutely necessary, flat/apartment developments of no more that three stories and in the 'Garden Flat' style. HPC would draw your attention to the loss of bungalows by conversion to executive homes thus removing from the housing chain many affordable homes. HPC additionally expects RDC to create a positive and direct link between accommodation and employment. HPC would ask that the term 'affordable' be more clearly and realistically defined given that even the Roach Close, Rochford development is beyond the means of many of those living locally who wish to get onto the housing ladder without social need.

(8) THE PARISH PLAN

The parishes of Hockley and Rawreth have both published parish plans. In 2007, Council resolved to begin the process of engagement with parishioners and stakeholders to create a parish plan. A spokesperson from The Rural Community Council of Essex, which is the agency responsible for such projects invited to advise Council on how to start the process. These plans are not developed by Councillors but by citizens. Inaugural meetings were set up and Officers and a steering group elected. Council provided some money to pump prime the initiative, enabling the steering group to open a bank account. The remaining funding for the project will come from Government grants especially designated for the purpose and the process had begun. Because of the diverse nature of Hawkwell and its quite distinctive geographical distribution, the task may still take quite some time to reach completion but it has started. The aim is to determine, by consultation, what sort of village people wish to live in. It will be their vision and not that of the Council. We will become involved in aspects of the Action Plan needed to change the vision into a reality and the actions needed to procure delivery.

(ii) The Quality Council Scheme

This concept was seen in print in 2000, as chapter 12 of the Government's Rural White Paper of that year. Quality Council status became established in 2003 and the County of Essex was at the forefront of the scheme, where the first quality council in England to be awarded the status was a parish in the District of Tendring. In Rochford District, Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley have all achieved quality status. It is the wish of Hawkwell Parish Council to become a quality Council. The Current White Paper "*Strong and Prosperous Communities*" is proposing to enhance the powers of quality councils with parish plans to improve the well being of people who live and work there. Council has resolved to follow this path and is addressing the steps needed to meet the criteria the Accreditation Panel require for us to demonstrate that we have the capacity and ability to be awarded this status. We hope to succeed in 2008.

(iii) The Local Development Framework and Planning Issues.

In December 2008, Council hired a room to carry out a seminar on formulating a policy on their response to the Secretary of State's final approval of the East of England plan and implications for the local Development Framework currently being discussed by the District Council in its capacity as the planning Authority. There had been much speculation in the local press and the Head of Planning and Transportation, Mr Shaun Scrutton was invited to address Council, which he did. It was then that Council decided to hold the seminar, which would be free from procedural inhibitions and standing orders so that members could speak freely to air their views.

The aim of the seminar was to deliver

"A comprehensive, coherent statement of our vision for Hawkwell covering living space, community space, play space and green space and a tenable infrastructure to meet the needs of the people of Hawkwell now and in the future to secure a sustainable community, based on environmental, social and economic considerations "

The Vice-Chairman of Council, Councillor Leach acted as the facilitator and constructed the summary of the findings copied below, which was forwarded to the Head of Planning and transportation at Rochford District Council, following approval at the January meeting of full Council. A press release followed, which was featured in the "*Evening Echo*".

(9) CONCLUSION

This is first Report of the Council written for publication. It contains information and comment not normally contained in such a document. This is because it is the first. There are descriptions of the way in which governance is managed by the Council, to meet its responsibilities, duties and powers, This is for the enlightenment of others who read the report and but who may be unaware of how we go about our business as the first tier of local government. It is our wish that this has indeed occurred through the publication of this report.

Stuart Mennell

Clerk to the Parish Council.

Date: 25th June 2008

John Dickson

Chairman