



Hawkwell Parish Council

Annual Report for the Civic Year 2022/23

I have been a Councillor for over seven years and last year I was voted as Chairman. Having watched previous Chairs I had a good idea what was involved in monthly meetings and making decisions for the benefit of the parishioners, making sure Council spends its precept wisely and carefully.

To name a few things for example, street lighting is now all LED to help keep costs down and lower emissions, while lights are kept on all night to help keep residents safe. We have improved the children's playground in Elizabeth Close by replacing the 'inclusive' roundabout and resurfacing an area with new safety surfacing. Council has also installed two new pieces of adult gym equipment which are proving popular, together with a new football goal with basketball hoop in Magnolia Park.

Council declared a climate emergency in 2022 and has since undertaken an Eco Audit covering all aspects of Council's functions and working practices. A Working Group has been formed to work through the suggested actions.

The three parks and open spaces are maintained by a contractor who does a fantastic job. Magnolia Park includes a large Nature Reserve with a pond and Council obtains expert advice on managing its open spaces from various organisations. This year the Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group have created an additional small pond in the Nature Reserve for the benefit of Great Crested Newts and Council has partnered up with the Essex Wildlife Trust, by joining the 'Wilder Villages' Project. Council has also worked closely with Essex County Council Public Rights of Way to divert a section of Bridlepath 35 through the Nature Reserve, where badger activity had seriously weakened the surface with large holes appearing.

During 2022, Council planted three large Magnolia trees in Magnolia Park in celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and these now stand proudly in her memory. Special thanks go to the two Councillors who kept these trees regularly watered during the long, hot summer months. Following the sad passing of the Queen, Council looks forward to commemorating the coronation of King Charles III and has erected a raised flowerbed planter, which has been filled with wildflowers to mark the occasion. Thanks go to Councillors Andy MacPherson and Tommy Hargrave for their work in putting the planter together and in filling it with plants. The flowerbed is situated a short distance from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee trees in Magnolia Park.

Council has an artist in Councillor Steve May, whose work can be seen in Magnolia Park, depicting the wildlife found in the park and Nature Reserve. Additional paintings will be added to the wall during the summer months.

Following the purchase of four community defibrillators which are situated around the parish, Council decided to hold two free training events for residents. These were held in June and November at the Hawkwell Baptist Church. Thanks go to Cllr Roger Gardner for leading the project to secure these important, life-saving apparatus and for assisting in the organisation of the two successful training events.

Council has employed a private security company to patrol its parks and around the parish, which gives residents a sense of security and is to deter Anti-Social Behaviour and minimise vandalism.

With regard to my duties as Chairman, I attended the lighting of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon in Rayleigh and I laid a wreath on Remembrance Day for the fallen soldiers. Being ex-military myself, I was honoured to undertake this duty. I have also attended various charity functions and had to check the Council's leases, deeds, and asset register which I am pleased to say were all in order.

At Christmas, Council again provided a gift of either a food parcel or luxury biscuits to its elderly residents living alone in the parish. This project is much appreciated by recipients, and I was delighted to assist in the packing and distribution of the parcels, alongside several other Councillors and volunteers.

Council was fortunate in that it co-opted six new Councillors during the civic year and it continues to seek new Members to join, as there are still vacancies. It goes without saying that the Parish Council is far stronger in supporting its community to grow and develop services for its residents if it is fully constituted in its membership. Those who have a community spirit and a desire to make improvements in the local area are encouraged to contact the Clerk to find out what becoming a Parish Councillor means and how to go about it.

Thanks go to all my fellow Councillors for their input and support throughout the year in helping to make our Parish the best it can be for the residents of Hawkwell. Also, thanks go to Diane, Council's Clerk and Anna, the Clerk's Assistant, for their guidance and help throughout the year.

Farewell and here's to a new Civic Year.

Cllr Martin Strubel
Chairman

Summary of Income & Expenditure (2022/23 un-audited)

	2021/22	2022/23
Precept Income	£186,475	£189,155
Interest Received	£261	£5,458
Other Income	<u>£4,604</u>	<u>£360</u>
Total Income	£191,340	£194,973
Total Expenditure	£180,353	£195,500