



Hawkwell Parish Council

Annual Report for the Civic Year 2025/26

My second year as Chair has again passed by so quickly, it has been an extremely busy but productive year.

The start of the civic year saw several residents demand a Parish Poll asking, “do you support the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Hawkwell parish to help protect the village from unsustainable housing developments?” A poll was duly held and just over 700 parishioners (7.8% of the electorate) voted in favour. Council agreed to set up a working group to assess the feasibility of undertaking a successful Neighbourhood Plan. The working group, consisting of Members and residents, is in the process of undertaking this important piece of due diligence work.

Council has discharged its duties throughout the year, maintaining and making capital improvements in its open spaces, where budgets permitted. These works included renovating footpaths in Magnolia Nature Reserve and in Spencers Park as well as having playground games lined in Magnolia Park playground. Further lining works were completed to the basketball court and carpark at Magnolia Park. Council also worked closely with Essex County Council (ECC) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to divert a stretch of the bridlepath that runs through Magnolia Nature Reserve. This was required due to badger activity which had made a section of the bridlepath unstable. During the year, Council acquired an old telephone kiosk and is in the process of having it refurbished as a museum depicting Hawkwell’s history, with the aim to have it installed on Hawkwell Common.

Council had previously installed flower planters on the railings at the Main Road shopping parade. Continued thanks go to those Councillors who lovingly tend to them and keep them stocked according to the seasons.

In November, Members again erected a Remembrance Garden on the green close to the White Hart Pub and British Legion. Thanks go to all those involved in the making and painting the figures and making more poppies for the display. The temporary display received much positive feedback from the community, and the aim is to continue erecting the temporary display at Remembrance time.

As Chair, I was honoured to represent the Council at several civic functions during the year, including the summer garden party in July and the Holocaust Memorial Day. My wife and I also

attended the civic dinner at The Lawn in March. One of my most important roles as Chair, was laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the Parish at the Royal British Legion.

Council once again distributed Christmas food parcels and biscuits to the elderly of the parish who are living alone. Thanks to all the Councillors and staff involved in this initiative, which we know from all the cards and calls received, is much appreciated by the recipients.

I would like to thank the Clerk and Deputy in the Parish Office, who have kept me updated and on target throughout the year. Thanks also to our regular contractor, for all their work keeping our parks and open spaces looking their best.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the support of my fellow Councillors, who have helped me fulfil the role of Chair. I have decided to step down as Chair due to health reasons at the end of the 2025/26 civic year but will remain on Council supporting the ongoing work.

We always welcome residents of the parish to come along to our meetings to observe the workings of the Council, and perhaps, who want to join us as Councillors. We are very short on numbers, which can impact Council business if meetings are not quorate. We usually meet for one or two evenings a month, so if you are interested, or would like more information, please contact the Clerk for details.

Cllr Steve May
Chair