

Hawthorn Parish Council Business Plan

2017 - 2021



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1. Introduction and aims

This is Hawthorn Parish Council's Business Plan for the next three years.

It sets out the Parish Council's vision, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities.

The aim of the Plan is to give Hawthorn's parishioners and residents a clear understanding of what their parish council does and what it is trying to achieve. It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next three years and until the next parish council elections in 2021.

This business plan is a live document which will be reviewed annually and which will be used to drive the budget process, plan activities and enable the parish council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

2. Why produce a Business Plan?

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way, and to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making.

The recent parish council elections have now taken place and the council is at the beginning of its four year term of office. It is, therefore, an ideal time to begin work on the plan. Moreover a plan will underpin all grant and funding applications and furthermore enable the parish council to apply for Quality Gold Status which is the benchmark for all local councils and demonstrates to all that the council is efficient and effectively run.

At the same time the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and also clarify what it doesn't or is unable to do and what issues fall under the responsibility of the principal local authority - Durham County Council.

The Hawthorn Business Plan is a statement of intent. However it will not be set in stone and will be subject to future budget constraints and future changes in legislation which affect all local authorities. Any changes will be reflected in an updated plan. This plan will be available for all residents and will be accessible on the Parish Council website.

3. Overview of the Council

There are two tiers of local government within Co.Durham, each with different roles:-

Hawthorn Parish Council is the first and most local tier, and with an important role to play in promoting Hawthorn and representing both the interests and work of its residents and organisations.

Durham County Council (DCC) is the second tier and is responsible for services such as education, highways, health, social services and environment as well as the strategic planning policies for all development including housing and employment sites via its Local Plan.

4. Hawthorn Parish Council Responsibilities

These include:-

- Management and maintenance of the village green and open spaces
- Management and maintenance of the Glencot play area
- Provision and maintenance of of seats and benches
- Provision of community grants
- Provision of dog poo bags
- Submitting comments on all planning applications
- Funding and delivery of parish events and support and facilitation of groups providing parish events ie
 - Christmas Tree and Lights
 - Carols around the Tree
 - Snowman Competition
 - Sunflower Competition
 - Big Lunch
 - Open Garden Walk
 - Community Bulb Planting
 - Flowerpot Festival
 - Photograph Exhibition
 - Hawthorn Dene Walk

and support for the Trail Run, Litter-pick etc.

The Council represents the parish on a number of external organisations including:-

- Hawthorn Community Centre
- East Durham Local Council Committee
- East Durham AAP
- County Durham Association Small Councils Committee

The Council also looks to reflect the views of our community by liaising with other public bodies and commenting on key strategic issues such as housing, highways, planning etc.

Moreover the parish council considers community engagement to be of paramount importance and ensures all residents are kept fully informed of all decisions and proposals that may affect them. This is done via

- The monthly electronic newsletter - the Hawthorn Round Up
- A quarterly newsletter delivered to all residents
- The council website at www.hawthornparish.co.uk

5. Councillors

Residents elect seven parish Councillors every four years - the next election will be May 2021. The Council then elect the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council each year at the Annual Meeting of the Council which is held each year in May.

Hawthorn Parish Councillors are not paid.

6. Council Meetings

Hawthorn Parish Council meets each month (except August) on the third Monday. The agenda for each meeting is posted on each of the two notice boards and on the Parish Council website with a minimum of 3 clear days notice, although in practice five clear days is usually given. There is a time for public participation at each meeting when all residents are able to give their views and comments.

In addition to the monthly meetings and the annual meeting of the council , there is also the ‘Annual Parish Meeting’ which is generally held in March. This is the opportunity for all residents to come along and hear what the parish council has done over the previous year, ask questions and also hear reports from the Police, County Councillors, Community Association and any other groups and organisations.

The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and which lay down the rules by which the council is expected to operate and conduct its business. In addition the council has a number of adopted policies and protocols which ensure meetings operate efficiently and effectively. All of these are available on the website.

7. Council Management and Services

Hawthorn Parish Council is responsible for several open spaces including the play area and village green. In addition it organises a number of community events and works closely with the community association which now manages the community centre.

The Council employs one part-time officer - the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk administers the council and carries out all of the council’s decisions. The Clerk is the Parish Council’s ‘Proper Officer’ - a statutory requirement of all parish councils is to employ this person.

The Hawthorn Parish Clerk also administers the council website and electronic and written newsletters. The Clerk is also the council’s Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for ensuring the annual return and audit are prepared for acceptance by the council. It should be noted that Hawthorn Parish Council was one of the first paperless councils in the country and only the minute book and annual returns are now in hard copy.

All other work ie grass cutting, seat maintenance, play equipment inspections etc is undertaken by contractors.

The council also relies on volunteers who help out at various village events.

8. Financial Information

Hawthorn Parish Council is funded directly through a precept collected via the Council Tax on the residents of Hawthorn. The precept for 2017 / 2018 is £8,509, representing a Band D Council Tax of £42.25 per year. (In this document we tell you what you can expect to get for your money and you can decide whether or not it represents good value for money.)

The expenditure for the Parish Council includes the salary of the Parish Clerk, grants and donations to local groups, local events, general maintenance of the open spaces and play area and additional capital projects and equipment. These include the defibrillator, smart TV and wireless internet in the community centre, together with the new laptop, printer and scanner for the council. These new items have been funded from successful grant applications.

A further application was made in 2017 to Awards For All for £10,000 for a ‘Community Plant’ Project and which included a new community greenhouse, self watering planters, extensive bulb planting and new seats and benches. At the time of writing , the outcome of the application is awaited.

Full details of all transactions, income and budgets and estimates are on the website.

9. Parish Council Governance

Hawthorn Parish Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council, to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The Parish Council aims to:

- Be well informed about the needs and opinions of our residents by consulting them on major issues
- Improve services to the public by encouraging Councillors and Clerk to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training
- Ensure we give Councillors the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy
- Be a good and fair employer
- Continuously promotes public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently
- Be an effective custodian of the Council’s property and documents

10. A Focus for our Action Plan

The Parish Council has identified key priorities which we wish to concentrate on over the next three years. These form the basis of the Focus for our Actions Plan.

The major objectives are further broken down into Action Items and projects which are then defined more fully as resources become available .

The Business Plan can be viewed in detail at www.hawthornparish.co.uk

11. Plan of Hawthorn



HAWTHORN BUSINESS PLAN

12. Hawthorn Budget Estimates 2017 / 2018

	Est 2015 / 2016	2016	2017	2016/2017	2017/2018
REVENUE ACCOUNT					
Balance carried forward		£8,306		£8,575	£9,103
Receipt	£6,824	£6,824	£7,792	£7,792	£8,509.00
CTSG	£240	£240	£253	£253	£122.00
Vat Prev Year	£200	£270	£100	£540	£380.00
Bank interest	£7	£5	£5	£0	£0.00
Transparency Code Grant		£748	£0	£0	£0.00
Bulb planting donation		£100	£0	£140	£0.00
Total	£7,271	£8,187	£8,150	£8,725	£9,011
Expenditure					
	Est 2015 / 2016	Actual 2015 / 2016	Est 2016 / 2017	Actual 2016/2017	2017/2018
General Administration					
Clerk's salary	£1,200	£1,600	£2,200	£2,200	£2,226
Postage, telephone	£600	£180	£150	£130	£130
Travel expenses	£300	£528	£500	£500	£500
Insurance	£500	£484	£450	£475	£475
Internal audit	£110	£100	£100	£100	£100
External audit	£0	£30	£0	£30	£30
SGI Commission	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100
fire of Hall	£230	£0	£250	£250	£250
Bank interest / co	£45	£60	£0	£0	£0
Sections					700
Total Administration	£3,085	£3,082	£3,796	£3,705	£4,511
Community Engagement					
Web-site / e mail	£500	£100	£270	£26	£30
Newsletter / Print	£250	£250	£250	£180	£180
WiFi Community Centre					400
Total Community	£750	£350	£520	£206	£610
Training / Subscriptions					
Chairman's Allow	£250	£20	£100	£100	£50
Clr. Training	£250	£100	£150	£50	£50
Subscriptions	£200	£200	£200	£200	£200
Total Training / S	£700	£320	£450	£350	£300
§137					
Donations	£500	£1,000	£1,000	£600	£500
Total §137	£500	£1,000	£1,000	£600	£500
Open Spaces					
Grasscutting	£410	£1,000	£600	£1,400	£1,400
May Area Inspect	£500	£700	£600	£400	£400
General Open Spa	£150	£180	£200	£500	£500
Jog Bags	£0	£70	£70	£50	£25
Tree Work				£400	£100
Total Open Space	£1,060	£1,950	£1,470	£2,350	£2,425
Events					
Christmas Tree an	£340	£500	£500	£400	£350
Sunflower / Potat	£150	£90	£90	£55	£55
bulb Planting	£100	£100	£100	£140	£0
Snowman Compe	£50	£20	£30	£75	£50
Photograph Exhib	£90	£0	£100	£10	£10
Big Lunch / Open	£170	£220	£200	£226	£200
Total Events	£900	£930	£1,020	£906	£665
TOTAL Expenditu	£5,995	£7,632	£8,250	£8,597	£9,011
CAPITAL ACCOUNT					
Balance fwd				£2,000	£980
Capital Income / Grants					
Jeffib Grant				£1,000	
Smart TV/ Wifi Grant				£1,376	
Total				£2,376	
Capital Expenditure					
Defibrillator				£1,200	
Jeffib / Christmas tree wiring				£120	
Smart TV				£1,376	
Total Capital Expenditure				£3,396	

13. Focus and Action Plan : Administering the Council

Focus :	Proposed Action	Implication	Timescale
Administering the Council			
efficiency To continually review operational	orders & financial regs To continue operating to standing	practices Already included in working	Ongoing
Efficiency of the action and business plans	To ensure financial regs on a regular basis and also add to the website	practices transparency	Oct 2017
Review of the action and business plans	To continue to review on a regular basis and add to the website	Improve transparency	Oct 2017
General Power of Competence	To achieve GPOC	Enable HPC to provide additional services and facilities	Achieved June 2017
General Power of Competence	To continue monitoring estimates and budgets	Enable HPC to provide additional services and facilities	Achieved June 2017
To maximise grant opportunities	To continue to seek all relevant grant opportunities	Facilities ongoing transparency	Ongoing
LCAS	To achieve Quality Gold Standard	Successful applications will provide additional capital schemes which otherwise would not be possible	Ongoing
Staff appraisals	To establish a staff appraisal system	Demonstrates meeting all requirements / benchmark	December 2017
Insurance	To replace AON insurance	Already achieved for 2017	Ongoing
Planning	To replace AON insurance	To ensure new insurance quote etc for 2018 implemented	June 2018
Transparency Code	Continue and improve participation in planning matters	Ensure local feelings are taken into account	Ongoing
To keep under review legal powers and opportunities	To ensure compliance	Statutory requirement	Ongoing
Contingency Plan	Ensure compliance	Statutory requirement	Ongoing
Councillor Training	To create	Ensure arrangements if need arises	June 2018
Protecting the Parish	To encourage all councillors to take advantage of all training available	To ensure Cllr are fully knowledgeable	Ongoing
	The council will continue to have close liaison with the Police	To ensure communication both ways	Ongoing

Resources required

- **Funding - the revenue budget provides all monies to support the council's normal running costs**
- **The capital budget will be used as necessary for new projects - and to top up when a grant is not sufficient**
- **Grants will be applied for whenever and wherever possible**
- **Sponsorship will be sought as appropriate**

14. Focus and Action Plan : The Local Environment

Focus :	Proposed Action	Implication	Timescale
The Local Environment			
Community Plant Project	To continue with extensive spring bulb planting , new seating, flower tubs	To make Hawthorn a more attractive place to live and visit.	2017 - 2021
Dog Fouling	To continue providing free dog poo bags for local residents	To encourage less fouling on the streets and lanes	Ongoing
Litter	To hold 2 x yearly litter picks	To encourage less litter dropping	Ongoing
Open spaces and greens	To continue to ensure all greens and open spaces are well cared for	Continual management	Ongoing

Resources

- **Grants and sponsorship needed for the Community Plant Project**

15. Focus and Action Plan : Community Engagement and Events

Focus :	Proposed Action	Implication	Timescale
Community Engagement and Events			
Communicating with Residents and Visitors	To continue with the newsletters	Ensure all residents are fully informed	Ongoing
Hawthorn Round Up	To encourage all residents to sign up	Currently 60% circulation - looking to increase to 90%	2017 -2021
Website	Continual Improvement	All information to be available	2017 - 2021
Social Media	To consider having Facebook, Twitter etc	To be able to communicate with all sections of the community	2017 - 2021
Events	To continue and build on community events for all sections of the community	To engage all	2017 - 2021
Consultation	To develop more online community consultation	To have better understanding of what all want to see	2017 - 2021
Community Centre	To continue with support for the centre and continue to help obtain grants.	Sustainability of centre	Ongoing

Resources

- Time -
- Financial - budgets include funds for all current activities