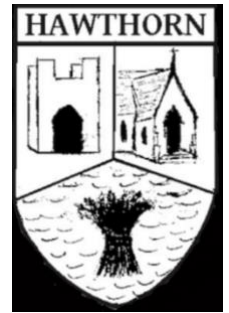

Hawthorn Parish Council

Business Plan :

2021 – 2025



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1. Introduction and aims

This is Hawthorn Parish Council's Business Plan for the next four 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 2025.

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 coordinated way, and to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making.

The parish council elections take place in May 2021 place and the council will be at the beginning of its four-year term of office. It is, therefore, an ideal time to update the previous Plan of 2017 – 2021 and begin work on the 2021 – 2025 Plan. Moreover, a plan will underpin all grant and funding applications and furthermore enable the parish council to re-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 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 i.e.
 - Christmas Tree and Lights
 - Carols around the Tree
 - Snowman Competition
 - Sunflower Competition
 - Big Lunch
 - Open Garden Walk
 - Community Bulb Planting
 - Flowerpot Festival
 - Photograph Exhibition

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 seven 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 organizes 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 i.e., 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 2022 / 2023 is £8,516 which represents a Band D Council Tax of £42.50. (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.

Further successful grant applications were made in 2017 and 2019 to Awards for All for £10,000 and £8,500 for a 'Community Plant' Project which included a new community greenhouse, self-watering planters, extensive bulb planting and new seats and benches, and a 'Keeping the Community in the Know' which included new solar powered noticeboards.

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



12. Hawthorn Budget Estimates 2022 / 2023

	est 21/22	anti year end	2022 / 2023	
Balance carried forward	£7,664	£9,500	£8,000	
Comm Plant	£2,800	£1,500	£800	
Noticeboards	£10,000	£0	£0	
Transp Grant	£1,200	£1,200	£800	
TOTALS	£21,664	£12,200	£9,600	
Income				
Precept	£8,228	£8,228	£8,516	
LCTRS	£260	£253	£318	
Vat Prev Year	£300	£298	£600	
Bank Interest	£10	£1	£1	
From reserves	£250	£0	£1,000	
Total Income	£9,048	£8,780	£10,435	
Expenditure	est 21/22	anti year end	2022 / 2023	
General Administration				
Clerk's salary	£2,700	£2,700	£2,750	
Postage, telephone, admin etc.	£140	£140	£140	
Travel expenses	£500	£400	£530	
Insurance	£490	£490	£490	
Internal audit	£100	£100	£100	
FOI Commissioner	£40	£40	£40	
Hire of Hall	£220	£220	£220	
Elections	£350	£2,500	£1,500	
Total Administration	£4,540	£6,590	£5,770	
Community Engagement				
Web-site / e mail	£130	£140	£140	
Newsletter / Printing	£200	£0	£75	
Total Community Engagement	£330	£140	£215	
Training /Subscriptions				
Chairman's Allowance	£75	£55	£55	
Cllr. Training	£120	£100	£100	
Subscriptions	£250	£250	£250	
Total Training / Subs	£445	£405	£405	
Grants				
Donations	£400	£200	£200	
Total	£400	£200	£200	
Open Spaces				
Grasscutting	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	

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Play Area inspections	£300	£300	£350	
General Open Spaces	£260	£290	£300	
Dog Bags	£0	£0	£0	
Trees	£100	£200	£200	
Total Open Spaces	£2,660	£2,790	£2,850	
Events				
Christmas Tree and Lights event	£500	£350	£400	
Sunflower	£45	£45	£45	
Bulb Planting	£100	£0	£0	
Snowman / Dec house Competition	£100	£0	£0	
Big Lunch / Open Garden Walk	£200	£0	£100	
Platinum Jubilee			£450	
Total Events	£945	£395	£995	
Capital				
Community Centre	£0	£0	£0	
Total Capital	£0	£0	£0	
TOTAL Expenditure	£9,320	£10,520	£10,435	
Balance Income /Expen	-£272	-£1,740	£0	
Community Tax Calculation				
Precept	£8,228		£8,516	
Tax Base	200.6		£200	
Band D (Precept / Tax base)	£41.02		£42.50	3.60%

13. Focus & Action Plan

Focus :	Administering the Council		
Aims	Objectives	Implication	Timescale
To ensure all HPC's policies and protocols are adhered to and updated as and when necessary	To continue operating to standing orders & financial regs	Already included in working practices	Ongoing
Review of the action and business plans	To continue to review on a regular basis and also add to the website	Improve transparency	Ongoing
To adhere to all new legislation	To ensure website accessibility	The Clerk to ensure compliance	Ongoing
To continue monitoring estimates and budgets	To continue to review on a quarterly basis	Ensure ongoing transparency	Ongoing
To maximise grant opportunities	To continue to seek all relevant grant opportunities	Successful applications will provide additional capital schemes which otherwise would not be possible	Ongoing
Insurance	To obtain new quotes and accept as appropriate	The Clerk to undertake	April 2020
Planning	Continue and improve participation in planning matters	Ensure local feelings are taken into account.	Ongoing
Transparency Code	To ensure compliance	Statutory requirement	Ongoing
To keep under review legal powers and opportunities	Ensure compliance	Statutory requirement	Ongoing
Contingency Plan	To create	Ensure arrangements if need arises	April 2020
Councillor Training	To encourage all councillors to take advantage of all training available	To ensure Cllr are fully knowledgeable. Training included in Budgets	Ongoing
Clerk : Training	To encourage the Clerk to take advantage of all relevant training	To ensure the Clerk is fully knowledgeable and up to date with all relevant information Training included in Budgets	Ongoing
Protecting the Parish	The council will continue to have close liaison with the Police and the DCC Ward members	To ensure communication both ways	Ongoing

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Focus :	Community Engagement & Events		
Aims	Objectives	Implication	Time
To improve Communication	To continue to develop all means of consultation / communication	In budgets	Ongoing
To commence the 'Keeping you in the know' Project	To purchase the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New solar noticeboards • lectern information board • Banners 	As per £8,600 received from Awards 4All	Completed
To ensure all residents are fully informed	To continue the electronic Hawthorn Community Round up and aim to deliver to 80% of local residents	No additional cost	Continual monitoring
	To continue to produce 4 x Newsletters each year. Summer to be AS in colour	In budget	Ongoing
To provide Community Events	To hold:- Christmas Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas tree / lights • Carols around the Tree • Switch on event • Snowman Competition 	Annual Cost	Ongoing
	To hold Big Lunch Day Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Garden walk • Flowerpot Exhibition • Photographic Exhibition • Treasure Trail 	Annual Costs of £250 in budgets	Ongoing
	To hold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Sunflower Competition 	Annual cost of £50 in budgets	Ongoing
	To hold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VE Day Celebrations 	Courtesy of grant of £960 from the Community Fund	Ongoing
	To hold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawthorn Spring Clean 	No cost – all equipment provided by DCC	Ongoing
	To hold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open walk around Hawthorn Dene 	No cost	Ongoing
	To work with Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Day 	Poppy wreath £25	Ongoing
To re-introduce Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	To publicise and launch new scheme at Annual Parish Meeting	No financial implication	Ongoing

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Focus :	The Local Environment		
Aims	Objectives	Implication	Timescale
Open Spaces and Greens	To continue to ensure all greens and open spaces are well cared for	In budgets	Ongoing
To tackle litter and dog fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor adequacy and position of litter and dog poo bins • To review providing free dog poo bags <p>To organise / support litter picks – including the Spring Clean Initiative</p>	<p>Budget implications</p> <p>Additional litter bins at £450 each plus installation</p> <p>Dog poo bags £100</p>	Ongoing
To urge DCC to review Speed limit on Stockton Road	To work with DCC	No financial implication	Ongoing