

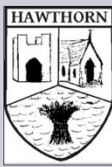


## Hawthorn Parish Council

Chairman : Cllr. Diane Hughes

Parish Clerk : Lesley Swinbank BSc MBA, Fellow SLCC  
Springwell House, Sedgefield, Co. Durham. TS21 2HS  
07950 944275

[clerk@hawthornparish.co.uk](mailto:clerk@hawthornparish.co.uk)



LOCAL COUNCIL  
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# Annual Parish Meeting 7pm Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## Hawthorn Parish Council

Notice is hereby given that the  
Annual Parish Meeting  
will be held at  
7pm  
on  
Monday March 16<sup>h</sup>, 2026  
in the  
Hawthorn Community Centre

### AGENDA

1. Welcome by Chairman of Hawthorn Parish Council
2. Apologies
3. Presentation of the Community Recognition Award
4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025
5. Matters Arising
6. Reports
  - a. To receive the Annual Report
  - b. To receive the report from the County Councillor
  - c. To receive the report from the Chair of the Community Centre
  - d. To receive the Police Report
  - e. Any other reports
7. Any other business

*Cllr. Sheila Irving*

Chairman  
Hawthorn Parish Council  
1<sup>st</sup> February 2026

**All local government electors for the Hawthorn Parish are  
entitled to attend and speak at the meeting.  
Light refreshments will be served from 6.45pm**

**Thank you for attending the Annual Parish  
Meeting of the Parish Council.**

**The Monthly Meeting will follow on immediately after  
this meeting at approx. 7.30 pm**

## Chairman's Report

### Thank you for attending our Annual Parish Meeting

We are very pleased to welcome you to the Community Centre for the Annual Parish meeting of 2026.

Our Christmas tree switch on at Christmas 2025 was very successful and once again because of the cold weather we decided to hold the music session inside the Community Centre. Councillor Vest led the Christmas carol and Christmas song session which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Another successful event was when members of the Parish Council and several residents attended the full cabinet and planning committee meeting at Durham County Council in October 2025. This meeting was held in order to make a decision on the 81 houses which were proposed by Bellway, and if successful would have been built on land to the east of the B1432 and north of West Lane. Residents, and the Parish Council presented documents which objected to the proposal and after consideration by the full cabinet and planning department it was agreed to refuse the application. The Developer was advised not to appeal against the decision. The Parish Council and residents have worked hard to prevent the proposed development so congratulations to all for the help and support which was given.

Although success has been achieved with the refusal to develop the proposed houses, there are now a number of applications to place BESS installations and solar farms of a considerable size within the boundary of Hawthorn. The Parish Council has already objected to the BESS installation near to South Hetton, which is in the Hawthorn Parish boundary, but there are several more applications for solar farms stretching from north of Hawthorn to Easington Village. These applications are being registered with Durham County Council. The EDAG (East Durham Action Group) has been formed to address these applications and the Parish Council will work with them.

Finally I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council, particularly Councillor George Vest the Vice Chairman of the Council for the support and help. My thanks also go to our Clerk Lesley Swinbank for the vast amount of time, work and advice which she has given to the Parish Council members and the Community. Her work has been very much appreciated and she will be sadly missed when she retires from the Parish Council in March 2026. We all wish her well for the future.

## **Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting for Hawthorn.**

This report includes the Agenda for the Parish Meeting together with the Parish Council's Annual Report and draft Annual Accounts which will be presented at the meeting. The report covers the activities of the Parish Council over the past year .

Our aim is to give residents information about their Parish Council and what we do, how we are rising to the challenges ahead, and how we will focus on community needs for the next year.

### **General information**

The Parish Council looks after and serves the village of Hawthorn. This is a total population of about four hundred and twenty. We are the first tier of local government and have 7 Councillors.

The Parish Council holds Quality Gold Status – only 1 of 63 in the country – and which demonstrates that it is efficient, effective and meets all standards expected of a local council.

The council produces is now a 'paperless' council and no longer produces newsletters each year. Instead the electronic newsletter- the Hawthorn Community Round Up is produced monthly and forwarded to all residents who have signed up to receive it.

The agenda for each meeting is posted at least 5 days before the meeting on the two village noticeboards and on the Parish Council website at [www.hawthornparish.co.uk](http://www.hawthornparish.co.uk)

Our council meetings are open to all; everyone is very welcome to come along and give their views and comments during 'Public Participation' on what we are doing and what we are trying to achieve for Hawthorn.

The Parish Clerk of the ;last 12 years , Lesley Swinbank has recently left us and we are now actively seeking a new Clerk. In the meantime we can be contacted by e mail on [clerk@hawthornparish.co.uk](mailto:clerk@hawthornparish.co.uk). Full information on all aspects of the council's work is on the website at [www.hawthornparish.co.uk](http://www.hawthornparish.co.uk). You can also register on our Hawthorn Round Up and receive regular communications and information from us in regard of council information, planning applications, events etc. E mail the Clerk as above and you will be added to the circulation.


The Parish Council website at [www.hawthornparish.co.uk](http://www.hawthornparish.co.uk) is continually updated. This includes the agenda for the next meeting, minutes of previous meetings and all council policies, protocols and financial information. It also includes a Community Page and all groups and organizations are able to have their information / details posted on this.

## Finance

Hawthorn Parish Council has a turnover of <£25,000 and is subject to the statutory Transparency Code. This ensures all information including accounts are published on the council's website. This includes the full accounts to date for 2025/2026 and previous years, including the Annual Returns, and all income and expenditure. The draft unaudited accounts are shown below and give an idea of the overall balances at the end of the current financial year.

### Year ending 31st March 2026

<b>Brought Forward</b>	<b>3,964</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Precept	12,100
LCTSG	0
Interest	303
Grants / other	5,958
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,361</b>
<b>Payments</b>	
Administration	2,143
Capital	0
Chairman's Allowanc	25
Community and ever	816
Donations	20
Open Spaces	3,050
Salaries	3,652
Training	0
<b>Vat</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,909</b>
<b>Closing Balances</b>	<b>12,415</b>



**Did you know?**  
Over the past 7 years the Parish Council has received nearly £80,000 in grants for the benefit of the local community.

The precept for 2026 / 2027 is £ 16,030. This will result in a Council Tax of £51.98 which is a zero increase in the Council Tax Band D.

(It should be noted that the Parish Council receives no contribution from the business rate or other contributions from central government unlike the County Council.)

The Annual Parish Meeting of the Hawthorn Parish Council was held at 7pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in the Community Centre.

## MINUTES

### Present

Cllr. Diane Hughes (Chair)

Cllr Sheila Irving (Vice – Chair)

Cllrs. Alan Askew, Maxine Smith, Gary Thompson, Sheila Wilson, Carolyn Winter

Lesley Swinbank ( Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public : 8

### 1 Welcome by Chairman of Hawthorn Parish Council

The Chair, Cllr. Diane Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2 Apologies

None

### 3 Presentation of the Norman Hughes Award

The Chair presented Sara Carter with the Norman Hughes Award – for her work and time spent for the Hawthorn Community.

### 4 Speaker: Solarig's Battery energy storage system proposal

Solarig had been unable to attend – but have indicated they will attend a future monthly meeting of the Parish Council.

### 5 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2024

**RESOLVED**

**To approve the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting.**

### 6 Matters Arising

None

### 7 Reports

#### 7.1 To receive the Annual Report

**RESOLVED**

**To approve the Annual Report**

#### 7.2 To receive the report from the County Councillors

None received

#### 7.3 To receive the report from the Chair of the Community Centre

Cllr. Sheila Wilson gave the report.

This included:-

- a) Details of the Centre's AGM which was held recently
- b) The membership campaign
- c) Looking for grants to fund a new smart tv for the centre.

Cllr. Wilson also expressed thanks from the Centre to the Parish Council for their financial aid over the past year.

**RESOLVED**

**To receive the report.**

**7.4 To receive the Police Report**  
No report

**7.5 Any other reports**  
None

**8 Any other business**

This item was taken at Item 4.

**8.1 Battery Storage Application**

Residents attending said they were looking for support in regard of opposing the recent application for a Battery Storage on land between South Hetton and Hawthorn.

The application involves 160 storage units.

This is on a green field site and will have significant impact on noise, visual amenity and wildlife.

Cllr Sheila Irving said she will be attending the consultation event the following evening in Murton.

**RESOLVED**

- a) To receive the information
- b) The Clerk to request further information from DCC and also clarify the overall situation regarding planning permission etc.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.45p.m.