

# Hawkhurst Parish Council

## Five-year Strategy 2019-2024

### March 2019

This strategy has been prepared as part of the Council's commitment to provide Best Value and Quality Service. This means continuously reviewing the needs of the parish and improving the services provided and the way they are delivered. This plan will run from April 2019 – March 2024 and will be reviewed and updated annually.

#### Vision

To improve the quality of life for the people of Hawkhurst.

#### Mission

To establish community pride, to provide quality services and continuous improvement.

#### Key Aims

1. To be open, accessible and responsive.
2. To seek continuous improvement and best value in all services.
3. To work in partnership with all stakeholders for the benefit of all.
4. To protect the environment.

#### 1. Communications

**Take a proactive approach to communicating using all media available with local residents and stakeholders and provide easy to use feedback. To do this the Council will:**

- i) Develop and implement a communications plan.
- ii) Actively seek the views of residents and stakeholders.
- iii) Actively promote the work of the Council.
- iv) Develop new council website.
- v) Improve social media presence.

#### 2. Affordable Housing.

**Working with stakeholders the Council will seek to provide the correct mix of affordable and social housing for people with a local connection and wish to remain within the community and contribute towards its welfare and growth. To do this, the Council will:**

- i.) Seek to implement findings from the most recent Housing Needs Survey.
- ii.) Continue to seek appropriate sites to meet local needs where ever possible.
- iii.) Work with TWBC Housing to improve opportunities for local people.

### **3. Leisure, Sports & Recreation.**

**Working with stakeholders the Council will respond to the growing demand for quality leisure, sports and recreational facilities. The Council will:**

- i.) Review the leisure and recreation provision to establish what current facilities the public use and what improvements they would wish to see.
- ii.) Annually review and maintain the play equipment. Replace and upgrade damaged and worn out equipment.
- iii.) Seek to enhance cycle ways and footpaths.
- iv.) Seek to upgrade the tennis courts to a Multi-Use Games Area.
- v.) Manage the allotments to meet local need.

### **4. Community Facilities.**

**Modern communities require modern facilities. Working with stakeholders the Council will:**

- i) Review the current suitability of the existing halls and the requirements for future users.
- ii) Build a new community hall at King George V Playing Field.
- iii) Work closely with the Hawkhurst Community Trust 2018 to develop a business plan to operate the new community centre and achieve the object of the Trust.
- iv) Manage the Cemetery to meet local need.
- v) Seek to improve community facilities such as Medical Centre, Library, ICT infrastructure and utility services.
- vi) Seek to increase public car parking in Highgate area.

### **5. Community Safety.**

**The Council wishes to see the reduction in crime and perception of crime. Working with stakeholders the Council will:**

- i.) Maintain good liaison between the Parish Council and the KCC/Kent Police.
- ii.) Consider measures which need to be taken in the interests of community safety and crime prevention.
- iii.) Maintain LED footway lighting to preserve energy efficiency.
- iv.) Work with KCC to develop a new Zebra Crossing between Tesco's and Bowles Lodge.
- v.) Encourage Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Hawkhurst.
- vi.) Ensure all Council decisions take into account the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998\*.

### **6. Environmental Services & Amenity Provision.**

**The Council acknowledges the growth of the village but is concerned that there is insufficient growth in community infrastructure and support services including utilities, education and healthcare. Working with stakeholders the Council will:**

- i.) Seek to maximise developer contributions for community benefit
- ii.) Work to encourage growth in recycling for both residents and commercial businesses.
- iii.) Review the street cleaning provision periodically.
- iv.) Have periodic dialogue with the County Council to request they review the frequency of drain inspection and drain clearance regularly.
- v.) Meet regularly with local healthcare and education providers.

## **7. Public Transport and Highways.**

**The Council is concerned at the overall growth of traffic in the village and the quality of public transport provision. Working with stakeholders the Council will:**

- i.) Support the implementation of traffic and pedestrian safety improvements.
- ii.) Seek to minimise the impact of HGVs.
- iii.) Seek to deliver a range of alternative public transport initiatives.
- iv.) Support speed reduction initiatives.
- v.) Periodically review the provision and condition of bus shelters and street furniture.
- vi.) Seek to undertake a feasibility study into the reclassification of the A229.

## **8. Voluntary Organisations.**

**The Council recognises the invaluable work carried within the community by a range of voluntary organisations. The Council will:**

- i.) Guide and support relevant agencies to those in need as requested.
- ii.) Encourage and support art and leisure activities in appropriate ways.
- iii.) Support voluntary groups to achieve their social activity contribution to the community.
- iv.) Encourage grant applications.
- v.) Encourage the provision of the contact details of all voluntary groups in the village via the website.

## **9. Be business friendly**

**In conjunction with stakeholders, support and welcome local business and employment opportunities, especially for local people. The Council will:**

- i.) Encourage business to locate in the business hub.
- ii.) Support retail provision in the village and oppose change of use planning applications
- iii.) Support the promotion of training, support and grant aid opportunities for local businesses.
- iv.) Support an annual business function.
- v.) Lobby for improved ICT connectivity to support local business e.g. a local business hub.
- vi.) Support the promotion of tourism.

## **10. Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan.**

**The Council recognises the community's desire to have more say in local planning decisions. To do this the Council will:**

- i.) Maintain and annually review Hawkhurst's Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- ii.) Check and comment on every planning application to ensure the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan is appropriately applied.
- iii.) Monitor TWBC planning decisions in relation to the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- iv.) Undertake a major review when the TWBC Local Plan 2016 – 2033 is consulted upon.

**11. Parish Council Structure & Operations.**

**The Council is aware of the increasing demands upon its resources and the increased responsibilities Councillors have. To meet these challenges, the Council will:**

- i.) Review policy, procedures and contracts as appropriate.
- ii.) Annually review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- iii.) Deliver a training programme for Councillors and staff.
- iv.) Engage with and involve residents in their community.
- v.) Monitor and report on how we are doing.

*\* Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.*

*“Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.”*

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

Approved by Council at meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019