

# **Hurworth Parish Council**

## **Business Plan 2015-2020**

### **1. Introduction**

Following a comprehensive survey of every house in the parish a detailed analysis of feedback was carried out and a detailed Parish Plan drawn up by Hurworth Parish Council (HPC) in 2010 following further consultation with residents in the form of a number of presentations and other communications.

In the following five years the plan has been implemented as detailed in this business plan the purpose of which is to determine the route forward for the next 5 years.

In the plan ten major topics were considered, being:-

1. Planning and Housing
2. Parking and congestion
3. Traffic Danger
4. Transport
5. Police and Security
6. Services
7. Leisure
8. Health and Well- being
9. Environment
10. Communications

Each of these topics was thoroughly examined and the data interrogated to identify the most sought-after and 'like to have' requirements. These were then prioritised.

The Parish Plan has been revisited each year and updated with the progress made and newly emerged requirements embraced.

### **2. The progress made in the five years 2010-2015**

In order to achieve the objectives, set measurement controls, and the monitoring mechanisms need to be established and implemented. Using Performance Key Indicators (KPI's) we were able to monitor both performance and quality.

The **essential resources** requirements were identified as:-

- **Funding** – in 2010 HPC had very little monetary resources
- **Procedures** – no procedures were in place in 2010
- **Skills** - Making good use of councillors skills, and developing them further
- **Cash Management** - put in place an efficient and effective cash management system
- **Web Site** - establish a parish council community web site
- **Transparency** - Make the parish council transparent and evoke community support and involvement
- **Relationships** - Establish good relationships with 'partners'.

**During the period from 2010 to 2015, the following has been achieved:-**

**Funding** – HPC has increased the precept to create an appropriate and workable revenue intake to cover budgeted expenditure

Grants and sponsorship have been obtained to fund many of the projects undertaken, thus not depleting the cash base.

**Procedures** – A comprehensive set of business and operational procedures have been created, agreed and passed by the council and are now in full operation.

## **Councillor skills and involvement –**

A parish council structure has been put in place where councillors are assigned specific areas of responsibility. This ensures that each ‘topic’ is monitored and all councillors play an active part in the running of the council. Where specific training requirements have been identified it has been provided.

## **Cash Management**

A three year Financial Management system is now in place, with monthly planning and budget control.

## **Web site**

A web site is in place, updated continuously and in accordance with NALC Best Practice.

## **Transparency**

HPC adheres to total transparency practice, and intends to continue this, even after recent changes in the legislation.

## **Relationships**

Good relationships have been nurtured, and now exist with all the council’s major partners, including Darlington Borough Council (DBC), StreetScene and the Police.

## **Project Progress**

A number of the Objectives detailed in the Parish Plan have now been achieved, and these will form the foundation for further advancements in the next five year Plan.

### **3. HPC Business Plan 2015-2020**

Hurworth Parish Council is committed to maintain the momentum developed since 2010 and identify and develop every opportunity to increase the impact of the services it delivers to its stakeholders

#### **3.1 Aims and Objectives**

The following Objectives have been identified:-

- Community Facilities Sustainability
- Extensions and Improvements to the community facilities
- Bio Diversity and Eco Protection
- Move forward into a Neighbourhood Community
- Encourage care of Good Health and Well-Being
- Speed, parking and traffic management
- Improve amenities for the disabled
- Continue and improve our participation in Planning matters
- Protect the Parish Security by working closely with the Police and Neighbourhood Watch
- Establish a Youth Council, and support youth activities
- Support and encourage community events
- Consider methods of providing community transport
- Prepare the council to undertake more services if the Devolution Act downloads services from DBC.
- Put the HPC Contingency Plan into readiness mode.
- Encourage and support the small businesses in the Parish
- Better define the boundaries of the council’s Duty of Care responsibilities
- Formalise a Succession Plan within the council.
- Review the Management of the Allotments, and consider further expansion to develop more plots.

These major objectives are further broken down into Actions Items and Projects, which will become better defined as they are directly addressed.

### 3.2 Resource requirements to support this Plan:-

- a. **Funding** – there are adequate funds in hand to support the council’s normal running costs and provide some funding for ‘Projects’, as shown in the latest Three Year Plan to March 2018.  
Grants will be sought whenever applicable.  
  
Sponsorship will be sought to support the major community ‘Events’
- b. **Procedures** – Procedures are in place to support the processes foreseen to achieve our objectives. Monitoring of costs and running expenditure will be continuous.
- c. **Councillor Skills and Commitment** - Changes in the council make-up following the 2015 election and the possibility of another election in 2016, make councillor development more challenging. As at November 2015, HPC has a strong core of councillors, but we are aware that several may not offer themselves for re-election at a future election. The council will look out for potential new councillors at all times to ensure effective succession management.  
Training, coaching and further in-house counselling will continue and a councillors and staff development system is going to be implemented in early 2016.
- d. **Cash Management** – Rigid cash management will continue and will support the plans to meet the Five Year Objectives. .  
*Please follow the link.*
- e. **Relationships with our ‘partners’** is an essential factor in the council’s progress into the next five years, and every effort will be given to ensure these relationships flourish.

**3.3 Current Action Plan** - The specific Actions and Projects planned for 2015-16 have been tabled and are detailed in the HPC Action Plan – see link.

### 3.4 Achieving the HPC Objectives 2015-2020

#### Actions required:-

#### 1. Community Facilities Sustainability

HPC will continue to provide financial assistance to support major community events and to ensure the members assist in the leadership and organisation of these events. The Funds raised from the Hurworth Country Fair and Village Hall outdoor concert provide a major revenue stream to support the community organisations involved, thereby providing long-term sustainability for Hurworth Grange and Hurworth Village Hall.

#### 2. Extensions and Improvements to the community facilities

- HPC will assist in the management of the community associations and help obtain grants or sponsorship to extend or improve the community facilities. Specific projects will be addressed on an ongoing basis and Project Plans put in place. Several projects have been identified.

- Work with the schools to provide recreation facilities in their out-of-hours times. The use of a MUGA is a prime objective.

### **3. Bio diversity and Eco protection**

- HPC's Tree policy will continue to be maintained, ensuring that all trees in the parish are cared for, and any trees felled will be replaced.
- HPC's policy to preserve the environment will continue, and the council will encourage and support the efforts of EPICH.
- HPC's policy of duty of care will continue and be further defined to ensure Open Spaces are tendered.

### **4. Move forward into a Neighbourhood Community**

- Detailed plans will be drawn up by the Working Party and this will be considered by the full council.

### **5. Encourage care of good health and well-being**

- Parish walks will resume next year and community involvement encouraged
- The exercise area can be extended and new equipment installed if demand dictates.
- Further support will be given to the Police Carousel meetings addressing drugs and alcohol abuse.
- Further First Aid courses will be organised in 2016 and 2019.
- HPC will co-operate with DBC Countryside Dept. with the development of the cycle path linking Darlington and Hurworth.

### **6. Speed, parking and traffic management**

- HPC will continue to monitor speeding, and may install further monitors and/or monitoring points if required.
- The council will continue their policy of encouraging the introduction of 20mph limits at the school entrances.
- Further examination of the parking problems and providing practical solutions will be undertaken.
- Establish a close liaison with DBC Traffic Warden Division to control parking restrictions in Hurworth villages.

### **7. Improve amenities for the disabled**

- The council will endeavour to get more dropped kerbs installed.
- The Working Party which has been established to look at disabled entry into Hurworth Grange will be tasked to provide and implement a solution.
- The circular walk project will continue, if it is proved to be feasible, the land owners agree, and funding can be obtained.

### **8. Continue and improve our participation in Planning matters**

- HPC will continue to monitor all Planning Applications, and attend DBC Planning Policy meetings and consultation seminars.

### **9. Protect the Parish Security by working closely with the Police and Neighbourhood Watch**

- The council will continue a close liaison with police, and also try to rejuvenate the Neighbourhood Watch in the parish.

### **10. Establish a Youth Council, and support youth activities**

- This is a firm objective, and work needs to be done to set up a structure through the Youth Leaders based at All Saints Church Youth Club.

### **11. Support and encourage community events**

- HPC will continue to support the major community events and display leadership qualities in guidance and participation.
- Further new events will be identified and encouragement to involve all age groups within the community. Events envisaged include a Santa Run, Gang Show, Youth Concert and Pantomime.

### **12. Consider methods of providing community transport**

- The termination of the evening bus service has caused inconvenience to various groups of people including students, people who work outside the parish and the older generation who have become isolated. A solution should be considered, which may require the purchase of a Community Bus.

**13. Prepare the council to undertake more activities if the Devolution Act downloads services from DBC.**

- HPC will prepare initial plans to undertake essential services in the event that DBC passes the responsibility to parish council within the next five years.

**14. Put the HPC Contingency Plan into readiness mode.**

- The new Parish Contingency Plan will be finalised, volunteers and services committed and the structure put in place. Once established the contingency plan will be tested from time to time to ensure delivery capability.

**15. Encourage and support the small businesses in the Parish**

- HPC will represent the businesses in the LEADER programme and hold regular meetings with the businesses to support their endeavours in the community.

**16. Better define the boundaries of the council's Duty of Care responsibilities**

- HPC has embarked on a policy of 'Duty of Care', and now needs to better define their responsibilities and budget for the costs.

**17. Formalise a Succession Plan within the council.**

- A Succession Plan is required and suitable training and mentoring provided to ensure a smooth and successful council operation.

The new Human Relations System to be implemented to assist and monitor councillor and staff development is expected to greatly help this objective.

**18. Review the Management of the Allotments, and consider further expansion to develop more plots.**

In addition to the operation management and care of the allotments, consideration will be given to:-

- Formation of an independent Allotment Association
- Creating additional allotment plots.

### **3.5 Timelines and Monitoring**

The above Action Plan for 2015-16 is underway, and is regularly updated as opportunities are identified and agreed actions have been completed.

The Finance Working Party Meeting in November 2015 will identify projects for 2016-17. These will be evaluated for demand, benefits obtainable and financial practicality, then either pursued or shelved. Longer term projects and new corporate objectives will also be discussed and noted for consideration and viability.

The Neighbourhood Information Centre project is expected to take four years to roll out, and will extend throughout the 2016-20 Plan.

### **3.6 Partners**

HPC will need co-operation from outside organisations, and in some cases partners to participate.

It is anticipated that HPC will be working with the following partners over the next five years, in order to achieve our Aims and Objectives, viz:-

- Darlington Borough Council – several departments
- Street Scene – community services (dog bins, grass cutting, etc.)
- Prestige Tree surgeons – preferred contractor
- Tees River Trust – environmental projects
- Leader group – small business and charity funding
- CDALC – Training and advice

- Specific businesses who sponsor events in the community funding

We are fortunate that we start this second Five Year Plan with excellent relationships with all these organisations, and we can look forward to progressive future for the parish.