

It's been another busy year for Hawstead Community Council. We've brought to the community a number of events since last May as follows:

- Queen's 90th Birthday Tea Party – free to villages and wholly funded jointly by Hawstead Community Council and Hawstead Parish Council
- Summer BBQ
- Monthly Friday Games Nights
- Hawstead Village Fete & Produce Show
- Christmas Seniors Lunch
- Christmas Village Drinks Party
- Christmas Craft Fayre
- Pot Luck Italian Supper.

We have had very positive feedback on most of the above village events and, subject to finances, we hope to continue in a similar vein for the next 12 months.

On the down side, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain resident support for our events, be it helping stage them or encouraging residents to attend them. Those who do come along seem to appreciate them, but it does appear to be the same core group of people and rarely anyone 'new'. We had to cancel the Christmas Quiz in 2016 due to lack of support (although it was subsequently staged in a private home and greatly enjoyed nevertheless), and the Pot Luck Supper welcomed 24 residents only (although again we had a lovely time). Our monthly Games Nights attract around 12 residents on each occasion. The night is enjoyed by those who turn up but we would like to see it much better supported to justify its continuation.

Following a £500 grant from Angela Rushen, early in 2017 we purchased three event tents to replace the tea tent which was storm damaged at our 2016 fete. Their smaller size and ability to be joined together will hopefully provide us with greater flexibility for multiple use and easier management of putting them up/bringing them down.

Hawstead Community Council also funded the children's tickets for the Christmas Pantomime and plan to do the same for 2017. In addition, we supported the Macmillan Coffee Morning by making posters and offering the hall at no hire charge.

The Community Council is very grateful for the ongoing support – both practical and financial – of the Parish Council during the past year. The Community Council finances continue to hold steady, and we've had another break-even year to 13 April 2017. Income and expenditure matched each other almost exactly at around £23,000, with our balance at the bank holding steady at around £10,250. Our biggest expenditure areas were cleaning/caretaking and management of bookings for the hall, totalling around £6,500.

Hiring the hall as a wedding venue continues to generate just over half of our income, with the rest being made up of fund raising events like the summer fete, and regular use of the hall by the bowls club, yoga group, wine club and numerous business meetings. We continue to put considerable effort into raising the profile of the hall as a venue for hire whilst ensuring it remains available for villagers, providing a focus for village life.

We urgently need more Hawstead Community Council members so that we can continue to offer – and even expand upon – the range of village events. Unfortunately we remain without a Secretary and hope that we find someone soon who is prepared to put themselves forward. Please encourage all residents to consider becoming more actively involved in our endeavours to bring our community closer together.