

Annual Report 2025-26 Throwley Parish Council

Adam Jastrzebski, 3rd June 2026

A warm welcome to everyone at this Annual Parish Meeting 2026.

Our last Annual Parish Meeting took place just over a year ago on 20th May 2025.

I am pleased to present my Annual report for the last 12 months.

TPC Composition

The current composition of the TPC is as follows:

- Chairman – Adam Jastrzebski
- Vice-Chair – Di Lintott
- Councillors: Emma Brown, Paul Furneaux, Alan Murphy, Sarah-Jane Tormey, Frances Wilson
- Clerk: Marie Norris

There were five TPC meetings since May last year:

21/07/2025, 24/09/2025, 10/12/2025, 11/02/2026, and 08/04/2026.

The TPC internet domain is www.throwleyparishcouncil.gov.uk, where you can find the Agendas and the Minutes of the TPC meetings as well as some other useful information (please note that the dating of the Latest News is wrong).

TPC Responsibilities

TPC responsibilities have been summarised in the document “What a Parish Council does” presented at the previous meetings and published on the TPC website.

Some important points from that document:

- We have the legal right to be informed about planning applications - we are consulted on this but all decisions are ultimately made by Swale Planning.
- We are providing a list of contacts which you can use to report an issue to the authority which has the duty, power and resources to address it. When we can become really helpful is when the responsible authority fails to respond in a reasonable time or its response is inadequate. Then, we shall intervene on your and community behalf.
- We would strongly advise that the issues arising between neighbours are best resolved without us getting involved. If necessary, we can act as a go between but we do not have any arbitration powers or duties.
- Our very limited budget very much constraints what we can practically do. For example, we would like to reduce the driving speed limit through the Throwley Forstal, but the cost of it is prohibitive.

Finances

Throwley is an incredibly small parish and our precept is very small. For many years the precept stayed practically unchanged. It was increased by 10% to £4,226 in the previous financial year and only by 2.5% to £4,331.65 this financial year.

Our end-of-financial-year 2025-26 bank balance was **£5,418**, which was **£230 more** than the bank balance at the end of the last financial year. That shows that our budget is approximately balanced, although we need to have more savings for the tree works on the Throwley Forstal green which may be needed soon. However, we have some reserves to survive moderate expense increases.

Main Actions, Events and Discussion Topics

- **New Throwley website:** www.throwleyparishcouncil.gov.uk – completed.
- **Throwley Notice Board on WhatsApp** – shared with other community groups.
- **Village sign restoration** – still work in progress.
- **Road closures, pot holes, verges, fly tipping** – continuous monitoring, coordinating the reports, and interventions in KCC and SBC.
- **Defibrillator and CPR training for Throwley** – in Eastling village hall, 19 July 2025 – very successful event. Thanks to TEA (Throwley Fete) for covering the costs.
- **Throwley lanes cleanup on 8th March 2026** – a very successful annual event organised by TPC, Sian Lewis and other volunteers from Throwley, who prepared and donated a delicious lunch afterwards. 61 people took part and every single lane in Throwley was cleaned up. Many thanks! Also, thanks to Cllr Terry Thompson from Swale Borough Council for providing £370 grant to purchase new litter Picking equipment.
- **Local Government Reorganisation** – Chairman participated in the Swale meetings about LGR and reported to TPC. The survey and consultation documents were submitted. LGR will redefine governance for Parish Councils, changing relationships and local decision-making processes. Various proposals have been submitted. For details, see [Devolution | Kent Association of Local Councils](#) and [Local Government Reorganisation and devolution - Kent County Council](#). The Government decision is expected in July 2026, but it can be delayed until September 2026.
- **Swale Local Plan Consultation** – TPC has responded, including a comment on the Regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan Review, which focuses on the overarching vision, objectives, and development management policies, rather than specific site allocations. However, these policies will have a direct impact on future proposals affecting rural parishes such as Throwley.
- **Resilience – Preparing for the Unexpected** – Government initiative to make us better prepared to deal with various emergencies: flooding, fires, power cuts, water cuts, storms, gales, heavy snow, fuel shortage, communication outage, etc. See our website www.throwleyparishcouncil.gov.uk for the useful information and guidance.

- **Meeting with the local Beat Police Officer PC Gary Morris 24th April 2026 –**
Throwley remains a relatively safe area but it is very important to report any incidents or concerns to the police. PC Morris advised that blockage of our country lanes due to lack of proper diversion routes when A251 is closed should be discussed with relevant KCC officers. For further information, see the April 2026 Parish Council Minutes on the website.

The Throwley Broadband Project

The campaign for better broadband in Throwley is continuing, with the strong support and direct involvement of our MP Helen Whately.

Optical fibre, with speeds up to 1000Mbps, is the solution to our current and future broadband needs. Access to the Internet is now considered as important as water and electricity are. It has been shown how vital it is during the pandemic times. However, about half of the properties in our Parish have broadband speeds through telephone cable well below 10Mbps, which is inadequate for current needs. Therefore, many of these households use fixed wireless (e.g. Vfast) or mobile broadband (e.g. EE, Vodafone), which are unreliable and not really very fast. Some others have moved to the more expensive but faster satellite Starlink system.

Just a reminder of the fight so far:

Round 0

- Autumn 2014 – the quest for a better broadband for Throwley has started. I made representations to Parliamentary Committee on Rural Broadband and started negotiations with KCC and Openreach.
- 2017 – success! Optical fibre line was laid between the Eastling telephone exchange and Throwley Forstal. Fibre-enabled broadband services with speeds up to 80Mbps became available to about 40 households and the footprint for further growth of the network was established.

Round 1

- 10/11/2020 – Throwley Community Superfast Fibre Broadband Project launched to provide fast broadband to the remaining parts of the Parish.
- 17/11/2020 – Project submitted to Openreach. 92 properties have registered, including 30 businesses. 54 properties with the download speeds below 3Mbps.
- 05/01/2021 – Openreach included all 161 (later increased to 164) premises connected to the Eastling exchange distribution points. Estimated project costs to community £324,761.
- 19/02/2021 – Last day of the submission of the projects for the approval by the Government Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). Openreach claimed they submitted on time, but the project has not been considered within the original scheme.

Round 2

- April 2021 – New £5bn ‘Project Gigabit’ launched by Government. Throwley qualifies but Kent is not on the priority list. Throwley project resubmitted.
- Summer 2021 – Openreach and DCMS blaming each other for the delay with project approval.
- February 2022 – with the four months delay, KCC launched the voucher scheme.
- However, Openreach did not include Throwley in the scheme.
- Instead Openreach applied to DCMS for Throwley to be included in the so-called “priority build area”.

Round 3

- According to the update of the Project Gigabit published on 30/08/2022 (www.gov.uk), the Kent area is subject to Procurement negotiations between Openreach and DCMS, with estimated contract award in July-September 2023.
- However, the contact person in Openreach had changed. The new person had no knowledge about the Throwley project or about the Procurement.
- Openreach started commercial installation of the fibre optic cables in some parts of Throwley Parish, including along Bagshill Road to the SEW water station and to some properties in Belmont area.

Round 4

- 17/01/2024 - Our MP Helen Whately has arranged a meeting in the Parliament with Dean Creamer and his team, the Chief Executive of the BDUK, who was responsible for implementation of the Project Gigabit in UK, concentrating on rural areas, such as ours. I presented the case for Throwley.
- In January 2024, BDUK awarded CityFibre a £112 million contract to provide around 50,000 hard-to-reach premises in Kent with access to gigabit-capable broadband (see [Project Gigabit network build contract - Kent - GOV.UK](#)). Throwley was part of that project. However, there has been no visible action from CityFibre regarding the project since then.
- In March 2026, I had a meeting with the CityFibre Planner and their Engineer at Throwley Forstal. I saw their plans then and the costs of their implementation would have been very high. Everything would have to be build from scratch.
- 26/05/2026 – It was announced that BDUK and CityFibre are cutting their Project Gigabit contract in Kent. The original target was for 50,000 hard-to-reach premises to get gigabit-capable connections. This has been reduced to just 9,000 properties, all in the earlier stages of delivery. The provision for Throwley has been removed from the contract.
- Unfortunately, I have anticipated from the beginning that CityFibre would struggle to deliver as they had no footprint in our area and would loose the commercial battle with BT/Openreach who owns most of the infrastructure here.

Round 5 Helen Whately is arranging another meeting with BDUK. We are not giving up!