

Charsfield Parish Council Induction

Welcome to Charsfield Parish Council! This guide gives you some basic information to ease you into the role.

1. Role of A Councillor

Parish and town councils and councillors make a massive difference to local people's quality of life. They are passionate about their communities and seek to make a change to help improve their residents' lives.

1.1 What parish and town councils do

Charsfield Parish council is a small council, and these are examples of things we do;

- Revision and testing of the village emergency plan (flood, total power loss, etc.).
- Campaign to reduce speeding in Charsfield, especially on the B1078 in the village 30mph sections (working with Police, etc.).
- Further developing Charsfield's local history. Planning for preservation and a digital archive of the many local historical documents about Charsfield.
- Going digital: move Charsfield to a .gov domain in line with Gov requirements, to make all this easier to access for everyone.
- Working with the Village Hall and Recreation Ground teams for the longer-term village benefit.
- Giving the community a voice on planning matters with principal authorities and developers

Larger Parish and town councils run numerous services, depending on the council size. These include delivering services (such as car parks, celebrations and festivals, community buses, community centres, litter bins, parks and open spaces, public toilets and street lights), improving the quality of life (such as community hubs, neighbourhood plans, funding community projects and services, suitable housing, setting up dementia-friendly groups, solar panels, tackling loneliness and youth projects), and giving the community a voice on planning matters with principal authorities and developers, local police and health services, and the government.

1.2 What parish and town councillors do

Councillors are elected to represent the local community, so you must live or work in the parish or town council area. Becoming a councillor is a rewarding experience as you can make a change in your community to help improve residents' lives. A councillor's role can include developing strategies and plans for the area, helping with problems and ideas, representing the community, working with other local community groups, making decisions, and talking to the community about their needs and what the council is doing.

A councillor's role has three main areas:

- **Decision-making** — Councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered, and what policies should be implemented by attending meetings and committees.
- **Monitoring** — Councillors ensure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by monitoring how well things work.
- **Getting involved locally** — As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities often depend on what a given councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

1.3 Some of the tasks a Councillor may undertake

The day-to-day work of a councillor may include the following:

- Attending council meetings.
- Joining meetings of local organisations and bodies that affect the wider community, such as the police, the Highways Authority, schools and colleges.
- Taking up issues on behalf of residents, such as making representations to the principal authority.
- Running surgeries for residents to bring up issues.

1.4 Charsfield Parish Council Website and Useful Information

Our website is here, and you can find lots of useful information - <https://charsfield.org.uk/the-parish-council/>

1.5 Who is on Charsfield Parish Council and contact information

We can have up to 7 councillors. There is an election every 4 years. Here you can find their names and contact details here - <https://charsfield.org.uk/parish-council-and-councillors/>

We ask each Councillor to complete a few sentences about themselves, preferably with a small picture. This is then on our website and helps residents understand who we are as a team - <https://charsfield.org.uk/parish-council-and-councillors/>

There is also a Parish Clerk who organises meetings and manages the finance of the Parish Council.

1.6 Meeting dates, Agendas and Minutes

We have around 6 meetings a year and adhoc extraordinary meetings if an urgent matter such as a significant planning application. The dates are here, along with agendas and minutes - <https://charsfield.org.uk/parish-council-meetings/>

Please send an apology to the Parish Clerk if you can't attend a meeting.

Unlikely to be a problem, but each Councillor needs to be aware that they must attend at least one meeting in every six month period or they will auto-disqualify themselves as a Councillor as per Government democracy rules.

1.7 Finance

Every year the council create a budget and then apply for a precept, which is a demand for a specific sum of money to be collected through the council tax system, which the parish council then uses to fund its operations.

The Parish Clerk tracks monthly spend and creates a 'Budget versus Actuals' tracker. You can financial information here - <https://charsfield.org.uk/the-parish-council/tparish-council-finance/>

Charsfield is a small parish and the budget and finance numbers are commensurate with that.

1.8 When you join the Parish Council

When you join the Parish Council you will need to;

- Sign a Declaration of Acceptance of office form in the presence of the Chair or Parish Clerk
- Enter your register of interests at <https://roi.cmis.uk.com/QuestionSets/ROIListByGroup/1>

1.9 Core Documents

There are a set of core documents that outline how we work. They are derived from a council template and reviewed every year.

Each Councillor needs to have a basic understanding of these documents and know where to find them for reference as and when required.

Code of Contact – outlines the ethical and professional standards expected of Councillors.
<https://charsfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Local-Government-Association-Model-Councillor-Code-of-Conduct-2020-reviewed-July-2025.pdf>

Standing Orders – describes the rules governing how the Council operates.
<https://charsfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Charsfield-Standing-Orders-2025-modified-April-2025-Published-1.pdf>

Financial Regulations – describes how the Council manages finances.
<https://charsfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Charsfield-Financial-Regulations-2025-modified-April-2025-Published-1.pdf>

1.10 Training

We anticipate each new Councillor will attend the Councillor Basics workshop. Your clerk can book this through for you. There is a fee payable covered by the Council's budget. The format is 2 online workshops of 2 hours long.

It is good to read the 'The Good Councillors Guide'. The Parish Clerk can send you an electronic copy.

1.11 Managing Information

We manage information in accordance with GDPR. See how we manage data here;
<https://charsfield.org.uk/2021/05/08/parish-council-gdpr/>

2. Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you have covered everything you need to know.

Section	Activity	Timeframe	Complete Yes/No	Date Complete
1.1, 1.2, 1.3	Understand the role of a councillor.	First month		
1.6	Put the Parish Council meeting dates in your diary.	First month		
1.8	Sign the 'Declaration of Acceptance' at your first Parish Council meeting. The clerk will provide the form.	First month		
1.8	Enter your register of interest.	First month		
1.5	Create your own bio and photo (optional) to put on the website. Send it to the clerk.	3 months		
1.4	Familiarise yourself with the Parish Council Website.	6 months		
1.5	Get to know the other councillors.	6 months		
1.6	Read past minutes to get a sense of key topics.	6 months		
1.9	Core document – scan read the core documents to have a basic understanding of these documents and know where to find them for reference as and when required.	6 months		
1.10	Training – ask to be booked on the next councillor training course.	6 months		
1.9	Flick through the 'The Good Councillor Guide' which is the latest SALC guidance for Councillors. Your clerk will have the latest copy.	First year		
1.7	Finance – have a look at this year's budget and recent reconciliation – ask the clerk for the latest.	First year		
1.11	Managing Information – have a look at how we manage information in accordance with GDPR.	First Year		

Hope you have found this document useful. If you think anything needs adding or changing, please contact the Parish Clerk on the details at the foot of this document.