

TOPIC NOTE 1 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Councillors bring different skills, have different attitudes and give different reasons for becoming a councillor but all need to work as an effective team with the Chair as team leader.

1. Councillor Duties

As a councillor you have the following duties which are set out in law:

- You must, within 28 days of taking office, sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, agree to abide by the council's adopted Code of Conduct, and register any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- You must attend meetings when summoned to do so and have sole responsibility for disclosing any pecuniary interests before an item is discussed.
- You must inform the Clerk of any intended absences in order that it can be recorded and approved.

If a member does not attend any meeting of the Council, Council Committee or Sub-Committee for six consecutive months he/she automatically ceases to be a member of the authority. If a member has special reasons for not being able to attend meetings there may be circumstances under which the council can extend the period. The council can only extend the period before the six months have elapsed.

- You are entitled to vote at meetings.
- You can resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair.

2. Role of the Councillor

- To set the council's budget and thereby the precept
- To develop policy and make policy decisions
- To represent the community by protecting and promoting community interests
- To act as a custodian of the public purse
- To abide by the council's Code of Conduct and other Policies and Procedures
- To act collectively as employer.

Beware of What a Councillor Cannot Do!

A Councillor on his/her own cannot:

- Make a decision on behalf of the council
- Instruct the clerk in their duties
- Write to the press or use social media on council matters unless agreed by council
- Represent the council as and wherever they wish
- Resign by walking out of a meeting (A resignation must be put in writing to the Chair)

3. Role of the Chair

The Council **must** have a chair, responsible for ensuring that proper decisions are taken in council meetings, that meetings run smoothly and on time. The chair ensures that all councillors have the opportunity to speak at meetings and that procedure is followed in accordance with Standing Orders. If, during the meeting, there is a tied vote the chair can use a casting vote to decide the question.

- The chair can be the public face of the council representing the council in a civic capacity.
- The chair is elected at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, which is held in May of each year.

BBHPC also has a role of Vice Chair to whom the above applies.

4. Role of The Clerk

The Clerk is the professional officer employed by the council to provide advice and administrative support. The Clerk prepares the council for taking decisions, before, during and after the meetings, implements decisions and protects the council as a corporate body. Responsibilities range across organising meetings and events, managing facilities and finance to promoting the council and public relations. The Clerk is supported by a Deputy Clerk. BBHPC also has a Community and Facilities Officer.

The current Clerk, Lucinda, is 'qualified', having obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration. The current Deputy Clerk, Olivia, is also working towards this qualification.

The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) provides a valuable support network together with advice.

5. Role of the Council as a Whole

The council is a corporate body, a legal entity separate from that of its members. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole council. The council has been granted powers by Parliament including the important authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money.

Services can include traffic calming, community safety, street lighting, playing fields, rights of way, allotments, cemeteries, litter, war memorials, seats and shelters. Where asked to do so the Planning Authority will notify the council of any planning applications arising within the parish, upon which the council can comment.

The services currently undertaken by Broadbridge Heath Parish Council include:

- Provision and maintenance of the following play areas, including play equipment, fitness equipment, all weather games area, seating, bins and dog bag dispensers (where applicable):
 - Village Centre recreation ground
 - Charrington Way recreation ground
 - The Ducky/The Common
 - Singleton Road
- Provision and maintenance of The Ducky Pond including dipping platform
- Provision and maintenance of Top Common nature area, including interpretation board
- Maintenance of open spaces, including wildflower areas (see map)
- Provision and maintenance of Weston Avenue Allotments site
- Provision and maintenance of the flagpole at the Memorial
- Maintenance of The Triangle including planting and seating
- Provision and maintenance of benches at the Cricket Club and Tennis Club
- Village gateways signage into Broadbridge Heath village
- Use, care and maintenance of two notice boards (one at the office and one at the Onestop)
- Provision and maintenance of parish council website
- Provision of grant funding
- Comment on notified planning applications
- Support for village businesses and community groups
- Liaison with community stakeholders

6. The Council as Employer

The Council has to deal with a range of employment issues which require clear and straightforward employment policies and procedures that help to deal with any issues quickly, fairly and consistently.

The Clerk is employed by the Council and answers to the Council as a whole. No one Councillor can act as line manager of the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk and the Community and Facility Officer report to the Clerk.

Employment related policies are published to the website.

The Officers' Contract of Employment are based on the National Association of Local Council/Society of Local Council Clerks model document.