

Welcome to Corscombe, Halstock and District Parish Council

Below you will find a brief outline of your Parish Council's democratic process. By understanding what we do, and the limitations placed on us we hope you will better understand the role we play in the community.

The parish consists of the villages of Corscombe, Halstock and East and West Chelborough and their surrounding districts and lies within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within Dorset.

The basic responsibility of the Parish Council is to represent the concerns and wishes of the whole community and to report back to residents on issues affecting the parish.

A Parish Council is a democratically elected body established by legislation. Parish Councils were first established under the Local Government Act 1894. They are the first tier of local government supporting the democratic process. The Parish Council is a corporate body, and a legal entity, and is accountable to the local community.

The Local Government Act 1972 substantially revised the powers available to parish councils. For example, it provided them with the opportunity to raise money through taxation, known as the precept, as well as a range of other statutory powers, and duties. The Localism Act 2011 allowed parish councils to have more flexibility to make a difference to the community, however small.

The Parish Council as a whole is responsible for ensuring that they achieve the best value for this money, and that it is spent in the interests of the community. Accounts are prepared each year, checked by the internal auditor, and forwarded to be audited nationally. To ensure transparency and enable the smooth running of the council a range of policy documents have been produced and can be found on the Parish Council website CHDP.org.uk.

A Parish Council does not have any statutory responsibilities for services such as waste collection, street parking or planning, these lie with Dorset council but the Parish Council is consulted.

Meet the Parish Council

The Parish Council does not have a permanent office nor any full-time staff. The Clerk works from home and councillors are volunteers. Contractors are employed to undertake other works including grass cutting and hedge maintenance. Specifications are drawn up and quotations always sought.

The Clerk

The Clerk is employed by the council under the Local Government Act 1972. C ' to ensure that the council carries out its activities properly and lawfully. As its principal advisor it can

do this by providing independent advice, support and clear guidance to all Councillors, including the Chairman, so that effective decisions can be made.

The overall responsibilities of the Clerk are varied but may include implementing decisions made by the council, overseeing projects, monitoring and implementing policies, responding to correspondence, and attending training courses. In addition to routine administration, the Clerk has several statutory duties to perform, such as sending each Councillor a summons to attend the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings and the annual Parish meeting in May, as well as a posting the agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting and ensuring minutes are prepared and displayed as soon as possible after the meeting.

In the case of Corscombe, Halstock and District Parish Council the Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), ensuring that its financial activities comply with legislative requirements and proper practices. They undertake preparation of annual budgets, proper recording of VAT, and ensuring obligations for insurance are properly met. There are several statutory duties that the RFO exercises, including: annual preparation of accounts for external audit and maintaining a separate account of income and expenditure.

The Councillors

All councillors sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertake to observe a Code of Conduct when dealing with matters on behalf of the community. Every authority is required to adopt a code of conduct which sets out rules governing the behaviour of its members. Councillors also complete a Register of Interests, a copy of which is held by the Electoral Officer at Dorset Council and can be found on the Parish council website CHDPC.org.uk

The Parish Council has 12 elected/co-opted councillors. Councillors contribute to the work of the Council by suggesting ideas, influencing policy, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the Council to make decisions. One of the key areas for the Parish Council is planning, however, while the Parish Council comments on planning applications the decisions are made by Dorset Council. Environmental issues are also very firmly part of the council's ethos and reflect the growing concerns of the community. Councillors are required to attend the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings and the annual Parish meeting in May.

Individual Parish Councillors cannot make decisions on behalf of the Council, but they can actively lead and engage with local projects. Parish Councillors have no powers outside of the Council meeting. Diversity is encouraged. Councillors from different backgrounds better represent the whole community and possess different skills, attitudes, and interests. Parish Councils also represent the community at other local government meetings or on local bodies/organisations and Councillors may be asked to serve on certain groups or attend functions on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Chairman

The Local Government Act 1972 requires that a chairman be elected annually by the council. They will remain in this role, unless they resign or are disqualified, until the next annual meeting of the council.

The Chairman acts as a figurehead in the community in which they serve. This can be achieved by undertaking various responsibilities, such as: promoting public involvement in council activities. The Chairman is responsible for representing the council as a whole and, as such, when acting in an official capacity should only express the agreed views of the council. Within Council meetings, their

main duty is to chair them, ensuring, with the assistance of the Clerk, that they run smoothly, are conducted properly, and that the decisions made at them are lawful and fair. It is also the duty of the Chairman to provide the casting vote at a meeting, should there be an equality of votes during the decision-making process.

The Parish Council actively supports training of its Clerk and councillors and Corscombe, Halstock and District Parish Council is a member of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC). Training and support are provided through the Association.

What matters to you!

A councillor can serve for four years or if co-opted until the date of the next election which will be in 2024. There is no limit on the number of times a councillor can be elected.

The elections coming up in May 2024 offer a great opportunity for the community to play an important part in the running of the council, by identifying potential councillors and nominating candidates for election and voting to elect councillors to represent their interests or standing for election themselves. Standing as a Parish councillor can make a real difference to the community you live in.

The responsibilities of a councillor are;

- shaping the long-term development policy for the Parish, and as part of the planning process, commenting on planning applications in the Parish;
- working in partnership with other Parishes, local authorities and agencies;
- helping the Council to make decisions on behalf of the local community
- ensuring all statutory duties and policies are adhered to

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, you become someone your community will look to for help, guidance, and support – a community leader with the ability to influence decisions for the benefit of the local community. Seeing your community change for the better, as a result of decisions you have helped to make, is something that can give you a real sense of achievement and pride. For more details on standing for election please contact the Clerk.

Please come and talk to your Councillors and Clerk for more information or attend the Parish Council meetings where you will be able to speak on topics on the agenda. Remember you can contact the Clerk and ask for something to be added to the agenda.

A hard copy or large print version is available on request.

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Powers and Duties of Local Councils

Local Councils have a wide range of powers and but very few duties.

Duties

A duty is an activity that must be carried out (Mandatory) e.g. local councils must appoint a chairman and a clerk.

Powers

Statutory powers, granted by Parliament give local councils the choice or opportunity to take action and are therefore discretionary.

The powers which have been vested in Parish, Town and Community Councils by Acts of Parliament are summarised below as a guide to Councillors and others. Each description is brief and is intended to be a general indication. It is not a complete list of every single power and duty.

Like all powers given to public bodies the powers of local councils are defined in detail in legislation and these details may include a requirement to obtain the consent of another body (for example the approval of the County Council to the provision of a car park).

Local Councils must exercise their powers also subject to the provisions of the general law (for example planning permission is necessary for a sports pavilion).

Table of details

The following table describes the powers and duties held by local councils for a number of functions. It also provides details of the regulations under which statutory provisions are made. Information on all these details should be in the hands of the parish council Clerks. Where a function is marked with an asterisk (*) a council also has the power to give financial assistance to another person or body performing the same function.

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Accounts	Duty to appoint a Responsible Financial	Local Government Act (LGA)
	Officer to manage the council's accounts	1972, section 151

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Acceptance of office	Duty to sign declaration of acceptance of office (councillors and chairman)	LGA 1972, section 83
Agency arrangements	Power to arrange for the discharge of functions by another local authority	LGA 1972, section 101
Allotments	Power to provide allotments duty to provide allotment gardens if demand exist	Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908, subsections 23, 26 and 42
Baths and washhouses	Power to provide public baths and washhouses	Public Health Act 1936, subsections 221-223, 227
Borrowing	Power to borrow money for statutory functions	LGA 1972, Sch 13
Burial grounds, cemeteries and crematoria*	Power to acquire and maintain	Open Spaces Act 1906, subsections 9 and 10

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Power to provide	LGA 1972, section 214
	Power to agree to maintain memorials and monuments	Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970, s 1
	Power to contribute to expenses of maintaining cemeteries	LGA1972, section 214(6)
Bus shelters*	Power to provide and maintain bus shelters	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953, section 4
Byelaws	Power to make byelaws for public walks and pleasure grounds	Public Health Act 1875, section 164
	Cycle parks	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, section 57(7)
	Baths and Washhouses	Public Health Act, 1936, section 233

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Open spaces and burial grounds	Open Spaces Act, 1906, section 15
Charities	Power to appoint trustees of parochial charities	Charities Act 1993, section 79
Christmas lights	Power to provide to attract visitors	LGA 1972, section 144
Citizens Advice Bureau	Power to support	LGA 1972, section 142
Clocks*	Power to provide public clocks	Parish Councils Act 1957, section 2
Closed churchyards	Power (and sometimes duty) to maintain	LGA 1972, section 215
Commons and common pastures	Powers in relation to enclosure, regulation and management, and providing common pasture	Inclosure Act 1845; Local Government Act 1894, section 8(4); Smallholdings

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
		and Allotments Act 1908, section 34
Community centres	Power to provide and equip community buildings	LGA 1972, section 133
	Power to provide buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or educational objectives	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 19
Conference Facilities*	Power to provide and encourage the use of conference facilities	LGA 1997, section 144
Consultation	Right to be consulted by principal councils if directed by Secretary of State (England) or by Welsh Assembly (Wales)	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, section 21; LGA 1972, section 33A
Crime prevention*	Power to spend money on various crime prevention measures	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, section 31

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Drainage	Power to deal with ditches and ponds	Public Health Act 1936, section 260
Entertainment and the Arts*	Provision of entertainment and support for the arts including festivals and celebrations	LGA 1972, section 145
Flagpoles	Power to erect flagpoles in the highways	Highways Act 1980, section 144
Free Resource	Power to incur expenditure not otherwise authorised on anything which in the council's opinion is in the interests of the area or part of it or all or some of the inhabitants	LGA 1972, section 137
Gifts	Power to accept gifts	LGA 1972, section 139
Highways	Power to maintain footpaths and bridleways	Highways Act 1980, subsections 43 and 50

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Power to light roads and public places	Parish Councils Act 1957, section 3
	Power to provide parking places for vehicles, bicycles and motor-cycles	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, section 57
	Power to make a dedication agreement for a new highway or widening of an existing highway	Highways Act 1980, subsections 30 and 72
	Right to veto application to magistrates court to stop up, divert or cease to maintain a public highway	Highways Act 1980, subsections 47 and 116
	Power to complain to a local highway authority that a highway is unlawfully stopped up or obstructed	Highways Act 1908, section 130
	Power to plant trees etc. and maintain roadside verges	Highways Act 1980, section 96

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Power to prosecute for unlawful ploughing of a footpath or bridleway	Highways Act 1980, section 134
	Power to provide traffic signs and other notices	Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984, section 72
Interests	Duty to declare an interest	LGA 1972, section 94
Investments	Power to participate in schemes of collective investment	Trustee Act 1961, section 11
Land	Power to acquire land by agreement, to appropriate land and to dispose of land	LGA 1972, subsections 124, 126 and 127
	Power to acquire land by compulsory purchase	LGA 1972, section 125
	Power to accept gifts of land	LGA 1972, section 139

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Power to obtain particulars of persons interested in land	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 16
Lighting	Power to light roads and public places	Parish Councils Act 1957, section .3 and Highways Act 1980, section 301
Litter*	Power to provide litter bins in streets and public places	Litter Act 1983, subsections 5 and 6
Lotteries	Power to promote lotteries	Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976, section 7
Meetings	Duty to hold annual parish meeting	LGA 1972, Schedule 12 paragraph 23
	Duty to hold annual parish council meeting	LGA 1972, Schedule 12 paragraph 7

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
	Power to convene a parish meeting	LGA 1972, Schedule 12 paragraph 14
Mortuaries and post-mortem rooms	Power to provide mortuaries and post-mortem rooms	Public Health Act 1936, section 198
Newsletters	Power to provide information relating to matters affecting local government	LGA 1972, section 142
Nuisances*	Power to deal with offensive ponds, ditches and gutters	Public Health Act 1936, section 260
Open Spaces	Power to acquire and maintain open spaces	Public Health Act 1875, section 164 Open Spaces Act 1906, subsections 9, 10
Parish documents	Power to give directions as to custody of parish documents	LGA 1972, section 226

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Parking facilities	Power to provide parking places for motor vehicles and bicycles	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subsections 57 and 63
Parks and pleasure grounds	Power to acquire land or to provide recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces and to manage and control them	Public Health Act 1875, section 164; LGA 1972 Schedule 14 paragraph 27; Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 section 44
Public buildings and village halls	Power to provide buildings for offices and for public meetings and assemblies	LGA 1972, section 133
Public conveniences	Power to provide public conveniences	Public Health Act 1936, section 87
Publicity	Power to provide information about matters affecting local government	LGA 1972, section 142
Records	Power to collect, exhibit and purchase local records	Local Government (Records) Act 1962, subsections 1 and 2

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Recreation*	Power to provide a wide range of recreational facilities	Open Spaces Act 1906, section 9-10, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 19
	Provision of boating pools	Public Health Act 1961, section 54
Seats and shelters*	Power to provide roadside seats and shelters	Parish Councils Act 1957, section 1
Town and Country planning	Right to be notified of planning applications	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, paragraph 8 of Schedule 1; paragraph 2 of Schedule 1A (Wales)
Town status	Power to adopt town status	LGA 1972, subsections 245 and 245B

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Tourism*	Power to contribute to encouragement of Tourism	LGA 1972, section 144
Traffic calming	Power to contribute to the cost of traffic calming measures	Highways Act 1980, section 274A
Transport*	Power to (a) establish car-sharing schemes; (b) make grants for bus services; (c) provide taxi-fare concessions; (d) investigate public transport, road use needs; (e) provide information about public transport services	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, section 26, Transport Act 1985, section 106A
Village signs	Power to use decorative signs to inform visitors	LGA 1972, section 144
Village greens*	Power to maintain, to make bylaws for and to prosecute for interference with village greens	Open Spaces Act 1906, section 15; Inclosure Act 1857, section 12; Commons Act 1876, section 29

Function	Powers and Duties	Statutory Provision
Village Halls*	(see Community centres and Public buildings)	
War memorials	Power to maintain, repair and protect war memorials	War Memorials (Local Authorities Powers) Act 1923, section 1 as extended by LGA 1948, section 133
Water supply	Power to utilise any well, spring or stream to provide facilities for obtaining water from them	Public Health Act 1936, section 125