

# **Sedlescombe Parish Council**

## **New Councillor Induction Pack**

## Getting Started

### Declarations of Acceptance of Office

On accepting office as a councillor, you will be required to complete a Declaration of Acceptance form. When you sign the declaration, you will undertake to observe the Council's Code of Conduct, including the Civility and Respect Pledge. so it is essential that you read through the code.

#### 1.2 Registering Financial and Other Interests.

As a member of a local authority, you are obliged under statutory requirements to complete a Register of Pecuniary Interests. The form is lodged with the Monitoring Officer of Rother District Council and your Clerk will also hold a copy. The register is a public document and is published online by both the parish and district council. It may also be inspected, upon request, by any member of the public and may be referred to where there is an alleged breach of the council's code of conduct.

The Clerk will provide you with a Register of Interest form for completion and returning to them within 28 days of your election to the council.

The responsibility to keep your register up to date is yours and you will still be required to disclose that interest in meetings should circumstances arise.

### Code of Conduct

As an elected member you are required to consider all matters with an open mind, in an open and transparent process, free from interest. The Parish Council have adopted a code of conduct for its members, which reflects its statutory requirement to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, as required by the Localism Act 2011.

This code applies whenever you are acting as a councillor or the public perceive you to be acting as a councillor.

#### [Link to the Code of Conduct](#)

### Standing Orders

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. They are used to confirm and council's internal organisational, administrative and procurement procedures and procedural matters for meetings. They are NOT the same as the policies of a council but they may be referred to them.

#### [Link to the Standing Orders](#)

### Council Meetings

There are currently three regular meetings:

- **Full Council:** The third Tuesday of alternate months, starting at 6.30pm in Committee Room 2 of Sedlescombe Village Hall. All members are summoned to attend.

- **Finance and General Purpose:** The third Tuesday of the alternate month the the Full Council meeting, starting at 6.30pm. Committee members to attend.
- **Planning:** Called as required. Committee members to attend.
- **Sports Executive Committee:** Called as required – roughly quarterly. Committee members to attend.
- **Neighbourhood Plan Review Committee:** Called as required. Committee members to attend.

In addition, there is an **Annual Parish Assembly**, usually held in May. All members are expected to attend.

The Chair for the Council and for each committee is elected at the first meetings in May.

Meetings take place at Sedlescombe Village Hall, Committee Room 2, The Sports Executive Committee meets at the Sports Pavilion.

Agendas and associated paperwork are sent out to councillors prior to the meeting by email and also uploaded to the website.

The Clerk a calendar of meetings can also be found on the website.

[Link to the Calendar of Council Meetings](#)

### **Attending your first meeting**

Having completed all relevant paperwork, the first meeting you attend will be the first meeting after your election / co-option to office.

### **Agendas and Minutes**

Statute requires a member of the council to be 'summoned' to a meeting. This formal notice will provide the date, time and place of the meeting. It will also include the agenda to give you details of all items to be discussed. It is important members take the time to read the agenda and any accompanying documents prior to the meeting to ensure they are familiar with the item.

After every meeting a set of minutes are produced. The minutes are a record of the meetings proceedings and resolutions and remain 'draft' until approved as a correct record of proceedings at the next meeting. It should be noted that the minutes are NOT a transcript of the meeting.

### **Public Participation in Meetings**

Although the council allows for public participation items at some meetings, where members of the public can raise issues and speak on items on the agenda they are NOT public meetings, but meetings held in public.

Guidance for members of the public who wish to speak at meetings are published on our in the Standing Orders.

## **Committees and Committee Structure**

The Council confirms its committee structures at the first Full Council meeting (MAY) annually but has the power to add committees through the year if required.

Councillors may receive copies of the papers relating to any of the councils committees, and, if the standing orders allow, may be able to attend and observe the meetings. However, you will not be able to participate or vote in committee you are not a member of, unless you have been appointed as a substitute to that committee by another member who is unable to attend.

All committees have a Terms of Reference and a clear set of responsibilities, these are available on the website.

[Link to Terms of Reference](#)

## **Roles of the Members and the Clerk**

### **Members**

Members are collectively responsible for making council policy, for which they are accountable to the electorate. Members are not directly involved in the day to day provision of services to the public although members may be asked to pursue council matters on behalf of the clerk.

Members have no executive authority,(the Parish Council is a corporate body in law)and will need to deal with matters either through their collective council or in liaison with the clerk. There is no circumstance where an individual member can issue an instruction to the clerk or a contractor. A member must never act 'on behalf of the council' unless previously agreed at a council meeting and when speaking with individuals make it clear that you speak as a councillor and not on behalf of the council, unless previously agreed at a council meeting.

### **The Clerk**

The clerk is an employee of the council as a whole and cannot take instruction from individual members. They are the professional adviser to the council on matters of policy and the executor of council policy, i.e. carrying out the instruction of the council. The clerk takes no part in the decision making of the council except to provide independent and unbiased information to support the council in its decision making.

## **Overview of The Parish Council**

The Parish Council strives to look after the interests of the community of Sedlescombe.

The Parish Council own and manage numerous assets:

Sedlescombe Sports Pavilion and Sports Field

The Village Green – broken into three parts.

East View Terrace Kick Around.

Other assets are itemised on the Councils Asset Register.

[Link to the Fixed Asset Register](#)

### **Public Playing Field and Recreation Ground Trust**

All Councillors are Sole Trustees responsible for its management.

[Link to more information about the Public Playing Field and Recreation Ground Trust](#)

### **Finance**

Each year a sum of money called a 'precept' is collected through council tax. This amount is requested from Rother District Council and is calculated when the budget is set.

How the Council deals with Finances is outlined in its Financial Regulations.

[Link to The Financial Regulations](#)

### **Other Council Policies**

The Council has other policies used for guiding the running of the council.

[Link to Council Policies](#)