



# Councillor Induction Pack

## HORSFORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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## COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PACK

**Welcome and congratulations on your election to serve as a member of Horsforth Town Council.**

**This guide is to help you understand:**

- **Your obligations as a councillor**
- **Your role as an elected member**
- **The council's rules and procedures for the conduct of its business.**

We provide a dedicated e-mail account which must be used for all Town Council related correspondence. All future correspondence will be sent to that address, including your summons' to meetings (agendas).

Your online Outlook mail account has been set up so that it will include a standard signature on each message, which refers recipients to the Town Council's privacy policy. *Please make sure that the same signature is included on any messages sent from mobile or other devices.*

The information in the remainder of this document is divided into sections. The latest versions of the documents referred to throughout this pack are available on the Town Council website. Please ensure you read through the policies and documents.

### **1. The Council**

This short note has been prepared with the intention of giving Members of the Council some guidance as to the respective roles of both Members and the Clerk in helping the Council to function, and on how these roles work in practice.

It is helpful for all councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities to avoid any misunderstanding.

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

The Clerk provides advice and implements the council's decisions. The Clerk's statutory title is 'proper officer' and is answerable only to the Council acting as one body, the employer. The Clerk also holds the statutory position of Responsible Finance Officer.

#### **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 Horsforth, upon which the council can comment.

#### **Councillors 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.

- Attend meetings when summoned to do so and have sole responsibility for disclosing any pecuniary interests before an item is discussed.
- 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 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 Chairman.

### **Councillors' Role**

- To set the council's budget and thereby the precept
- Develop policy and make policy decisions
- Represent the community by protecting and promoting community interests
- Act as a custodian of the public purse
- Abide by the council's Code of Conduct and other policies and procedures. (These can be found on the Town Council website. )
- Act collectively as employer.

### **Role of the Chairman**

The Council **must** have a chairman, responsible for ensuring that proper decisions are taken in council meetings, that meetings run smoothly and on time. The chairman 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 chairman can use a casting vote to decide the question.

The chairman can be the public face of the council representing the council in a civic capacity.

The chairman is elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council, which is held in May of each year.

The Council also has a role of Vice Chairman to whom the above applies.

### **The 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.

A Clerk has obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

### **Powers of the Council**

The powers which have been vested in Parish, Town and Community Councils by Acts of Parliament are summarised here as a guide to Councillors and others.

Each description is brief and is intended to be a general indication. 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).

Local Councils have a wide range of powers and duties. The following table sets out the main ones; it is not a complete list of every single power and duty.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Powers &amp; Duties</b>
Allotments	Duty to provide allotments. Power to improve and adapt land for allotments, and to let grazing rights
Allowances for councillors	Power to pay councillors
Baths and washhouses	Power to provide public baths and washhouses
Burial grounds, cemeteries and crematoria	Power to acquire and maintain Power to provide Power to agree to maintain monuments and memorials Power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries
Bus shelters	Power to provide and maintain shelters
Bye-laws	Power to make bye-laws in regard to pleasure grounds Cycle parks Baths and washhouses Open spaces and burial grounds Mortuaries and post-mortem rooms
Clocks	Power to provide public clocks
Closed churchyards	Powers as to maintenance
Common pastures	Powers in relation to providing common pasture
Conference facilities	Power to provide and encourage the use of facilities
Contracts	Power to enter into contracts
Community centres	Power to provide and equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objectives
Conduct	Duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct
Crime prevention	Powers to install and maintain equipment and establish and maintain a scheme for detection or prevention of crime Power to contribute to police services e.g. PCSOs Duty on Parish Councils to consider crime reduction in every policy and action
Ditches and Ponds	Power to deal with ditches, ponds, pools and gutters by draining them or preventing them from being harmful to public health Power to carry out works for their maintenance or improvements or to pay others to do this
Dogs	Power to make a Dog Control Order Power to take enforcement action against those who commit an offence against a Dog Control Order
Entertainment and the arts	Provision of entertainment and support of the arts
Employment of staff	Power to employ staff
Flyposting and Graffiti	Power to take enforcement action against those that fly post or graffiti
General Power of Competence	Power to do anything that an individual may do (eligible Councils only)
Gifts	Power to accept
Graffiti	Power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti offences in the area

Highways	<p>Power to maintain footpaths and bridle-ways  Power to light roads and public places  Provision of litter bins  Powers to provide parking places for bicycles and motor-cycles, and other vehicles  Power to enter into agreement as to dedication and widening  Power to provide roadside seats and shelters</p> <p>Consent of parish council required for ending maintenance of highway at public expense, or for stopping up or diversion of highway  Power to complain to highway authority as to unlawful stopping up or obstruction of highway or unlawful encroachment on roadside wastes  Power to provide traffic signs and other objects or devices warning of danger  Power to plant trees and lay out grass verges etc. and to maintain them</p>
Investments	Power to participate in schemes of collective investment
Land	<p>Power to purchase or sell land in or outside the council area  Power to accept gifts of land</p>
Lifesaving equipment	Power to provide lifesaving appliances
Litter	<p>Provision of receptacles  Power to take enforcement action against those that litter</p>
Lotteries	Powers to promote
Neighbourhood Planning	Power to create a Neighbourhood Plan and other development mechanisms
Newsletters	Power to publish information about the council, its services and the services provided in the area.
Open spaces	Power to acquire land and maintain
Parish documents	Powers to direct as to their custody
Planning applications	Power to be notified of planning applications affecting the area and comment
Precept	Power to raise a precept
Public buildings and village hall	Power to provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies
Public conveniences	Power to provide
Public rights of way	Power to repair and maintain public footpaths and bridleways in the council area.
Recreation	<p>Power to provide and maintain recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces.  Power to provide and contribute to recreational activities in the area</p>
Roads	<p>Power to consent or not to consent to the local highway authority stopping maintenance of a road or stopping up/diverting a road  Power to complain to the local highway authority about the obstruction of rights of way and roadside waste  Power to plant and maintain trees and shrubs and lay out grass verges in the area  Power to provide and maintain seats and shelters on roads and land bordering any road in the area</p>

Sustainable communities	Able to be represented on a panel of representatives to be consulted on proposals that would contribute to sustainable communities
Tourism	Power to encourage visitors and provide conference and other facilities
Traffic signs	Power to provide traffic signs
Traffic calming	Powers to contribute financially to traffic calming schemes
Transport	Powers in relation to car-sharing schemes, taxi fare concessions and information about transport Powers to make grants for bus services
War memorials	Power to maintain, repair, protect and alter war memorials
Water supply	Power to utilise well, spring or stream and to provide facilities for obtaining water from them
Website	Power to provide a website to give information about the council, its services and the services provided in the area by other local authorities, government departments, charities and other voluntary organisations

The Town Council does not:

- Have responsibility for highways, bins or housing issues. These are dealt with by Leeds City Council. They have an excellent website where many routine issues can be reported: [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk). We often recommend carrying out a google search to find the correct area of the site (e.g. report fly-tipping in Leeds City Council area).
- Act as the planning authority, although the Council is consulted on each application which is submitted and on the drawing up of the Local Plan. Leeds City Council is also the Planning Authority. The '[Public Access' section of Leeds City Council's website](#) is an excellent archive of all planning applications. You can search using a reference number if you know it, or by line of an address.

A lot of information about the Town Council is available on its website:  
[www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk).

A copy of the Council's last annual report is included so that you can read it and get up to speed with what's been happening recently.

### Area

Please see below a link to the map that defines the five wards of Horsforth.

### [horsforthward.pdf](#)

The list of polling stations for Horsforth is as follows:

Horsforth	Broadfields	HOG HOH
	Brownberrie	HOB
	Hall Park	HOE HOJ

	Victoria	HOD HOK	HOI
	Woodside	HOC	

## 1.2 Councillors

There are 22 Councillors on Horsforth Town Council. A list of Councillors and their contact details will be provided to you.

It has been agreed that all Councillors will be provided with an e-mail address which will be their main method of contact. We do *not* publish other contact details such as telephone numbers or addresses. These are provided for internal use only (by staff and other Councillors). Your details will be added to our website, together with a photo.

The next routine elections to Horsforth Town Council will take place in May 2027.

## 2. Full Council and Committee Structure

**Full Council** reviews the work and decisions of all Committees and ratifies those decisions. It agrees committee and working group membership and oversees Council spending. It agrees on the budget for Horsforth each year and allocates monies for community events, some infrastructure maintenance such as benches and the Town Clock, and Christmas lights. It takes regular updates from the local police for Horsforth and discusses and decides on business that does not fall into the remit of a committee, for example, reviewing the internal audit each year. The Full Council meets every other month.

Horsforth Town Council has several committees and working groups, each with specific roles, responsibilities and duties:

- **The Community & Environment Committee** is responsible for assessing and administering the grants and sponsorships to community groups throughout the year. It also grants the Good Citizen and Young Achiever awards each year. The committee oversees the Horsforth Matters newsletter, via communication with the Editorial Working Group. Over the years the Community & Environment has purchased and maintained the hanging baskets and flower troughs across Horsforth, partly through sponsorship of Horsforth in Bloom and litter picks have also been organised by members of the committee to keep the town looking clean, which has helped Horsforth be regarded as the best place to live in Leeds.
- Horsforth Town Council is a statutory consultee for all new planning applications made to Leeds City that sit within the Horsforth Boundary. **The Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee** review all new applications to ensure that the character of Horsforth and its conservation areas are preserved. They also monitor licencing applications within Horsforth and will object to any establishment seeking to extend their opening hours by one hour or more per day. All traffic schemes planning by Leeds City Council are reviewed and discussed by PLT who support or object as appropriate. PLT report to full Council on a regular basis to ensure that Horsforth Town Council keeps abreast of any planning, licensing or traffic issues that will have a major impact on Horsforth. The committee meets monthly and members of the public are welcome to attend.

- **The Financial and General Purpose Committee** has a wide range of duties. It reviews and prepares the budget for Council for the forthcoming financial year, which it submits to Full Council for ratification. It monitors spending by Council by undertaking regular checks and audit of all expenditure and bank accounts; any extra spending that is not specified in the budget but is deemed as necessary has to be approved by F&GP Committee before the committee asks for ratification at Full Council. The committee also assesses the Council's annual statement of accounts, and reviews the internal Audit report each year. The committee reviews all Council policies and procedures and financial regulations to ensure that they are up to date with current legislation. Finance & General Purpose Committee also consider all complaints against the Council and respond appropriately. Safety issues also fall within its remit, including community safety, crime prevention and home safety schemes where appropriate for Horsforth.
- **The Community & Environment Committee** is responsible for assessing and administering the grants and sponsorships to community groups throughout the year. It also grants the Good Citizen and Young Achiever awards each year. The committee oversees the Horsforth Matters newsletter, via communication with the Editorial Working Group. Over the years the Community & Environment has purchased and maintained the hanging baskets and flower troughs across Horsforth, partly through sponsorship of Horsforth in Bloom and litter picks have also been organised by members of the committee to keep the town looking clean, which has helped Horsforth be regarded as the best place to live in Leeds.
- **The Staffing and Employment Committee** meet on an ad hoc basis. Meetings are called when needed to discuss matters relating to staff of the Council. This includes human resources tasks such as recruitment, line management of existing staff with regular staff appraisals and consideration and review of employment law.

The Town Council is also represented on a number of external groups.

**Working groups** (also known as working parties) are formed on an ad hoc basis, to look at single issues or topics that are important to the community. Being smaller in membership than full council, working groups allow a closer focus on the issue that is then fed back to committee or full council so that the Council can make effective decisions. Working groups are normally groups that exist for as long as a particular issue is being reviewed. The working groups are not able to make decisions, only recommendations to the Full Council/Committees.

Currently we have the following working parties:

- **Community Infrastructure Levy** - reviewing avenues of spending for collected CIL monies.
- **Editorial** – focuses on the Horsforth Matters newsletter, the Community Directory downloadable document and review of the website.
- **Neighbourhood Plan** - review the agreed the agreed plan
- **3 & 5 Development Group** - overseeing the purchase and adaption of the buildings for Council and community purposes.
- **Remembrance Service Working Group** - oversee the planning of the Remembrance Service
- **Christmas Event Working Group** - oversee the planning of the Christmas Light Switch on
- **Annual Event Working Group** - oversee the planning the Annual Event

The terms of reference for each committee can be viewed on the website.



A list showing the membership of Committees is also provided. This is reviewed at each Annual Meeting of the Town Council which is held in May each year.

### **3. Staff**

The Town Council currently employs 2 members of staff:

- Becky Crabtree – Town Clerk – Full Time
- Steph White – Administration Assistant – Part time

If you have any queries during your term of office please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk who is always willing to help.

Phone: 07526 567591, Monday - Friday, 9am - 4pm.

The Clerk is also available to speak to at the Town Council office. Horsforth Town Council, Mechanics Institute, Town Street, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5BL

The office is open every Tuesday - Thursday ,10.30am - 3.30pm.

Email: [admin@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

The Clerk is your first point of contact for all matters including any complaints, or requests for action or matters concerning the business of the Council.

Becky Crabtree works from home on a Monday and Friday.

Becky Crabtree's email address is [clerk@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Steph White's email address is [stephwhite@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:stephwhite@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Both members of staff have access to [admin@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

### **4. Code of Conduct**

#### *Code of Conduct*

Please read and familiarise yourself with the Council's Code of Conduct, a copy of which is provided and can also be viewed online.

#### *Register of Interests*

**Please complete and return the Register of Interests form as soon as possible, but in any event within 28 days of your election / co-option to the Council.**

Guidance notes about how to complete it are also uploaded for you. If you have any questions then please contact Leeds City Council. Relevant contact details are provided in the guidance. The completed form should be returned to the Clerk.

#### *Declarations of Interests*

An opportunity is provided at the start of each meeting of the Council or its committees for you to declare any interests in items on the agenda.

This does not preclude you from declaring interests at other points during the meeting if it becomes clear that you may have a conflict of interests.

You may also wish to read the Department for Communities and Local Government's guide 'Openness and Transparency on personal interests – a guide for Councillors' which can be found online at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/240134/Openness\\_and\\_transparency\\_on\\_personal\\_interests.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240134/Openness_and_transparency_on_personal_interests.pdf)

YLCA provide regular general and specific training sessions for Councillors which cover the Code of Conduct.

## **5. Briefings / Guidance**

A copy of the Good Councillor's Guide is provided. This provides a straightforward overview of the role of a Local Councillor.

The Council is a member of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations.

Yorkshire Local Councils Associations is an independent membership organisation which includes over 500 local councils (parish, community, town councils and parish meetings) throughout North, South and West Yorkshire. The Associations are a federation of three 'county associations' which have agreed to work jointly and to deliver their services on a joint basis. Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils, YLCA works to support councils by giving members legal and technical advice, information and training relevant to their work and generally to support their work and governance. Advice is accessed by the Town Clerk as required, unless on staffing issues in which case the Chair / Mayor can also contact YLCA.

A copy of the latest training programme provided by YLCA is provided. Courses are provided which are suitable for both new and experienced Councillors.

Please consider attending a training course. The cost of attending, together with any reasonable expenses (e.g. travel) will be covered by Horsforth Town Council which has provision in the budget for this.

## **6. Policies and Documents**

All current adopted policies are available to view on the Town Council website.

Copies of the two main documents are provided: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Electronic copies, and copies of other, current documents can be viewed on the website.

Documents are routinely reviewed every year at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council meeting held in May. If new documents are produced then you will be sent copies to review prior to adoption at a Town Council or relevant committee meeting.

## **7. Meetings**

The first meeting you attend will be the first meeting after your election/co-option to office. An agenda and papers will be sent to you by email at least 3 clear working days before the meeting and you should familiarise yourself with the items for discussion.

If you have any queries regarding any item, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk.

The Town Council meets quarterly on a Thursday. A calendar of meetings is published each year and you should endeavour to attend as many meetings as possible. In addition, the Chairman may call additional meetings of Full Council as required. These are known as Extra Ordinary meetings and may be called giving 3 clear days' notice.

A schedule of meetings for the year is provided.

Full Council meetings are held in St Margaret's Parish Centre, Church Lane, Horsforth.

Meetings start at 7pm with a 15 minute public question or comment session. It is important to note that this is the public's only opportunity to participate in the meeting, other than at the Chairman's discretion.

Copies of all meeting minutes are available on the Town Council website.

A Councillor Surgery is held at 6.30pm before the Full Council meeting.

*All Councillors are expected to attend all Full Council meetings.* If you cannot attend please make sure that you let the Clerk know via email in advance of the meeting and give a reason for your absence. If you do not attend meetings for a period of 6 months without tendering your apologies and your reasons for absence being accepted, then you cease to become a Councillor.

### **The Annual Town Meeting**

This is a meeting of the electors of Horsforth. It is open to all the electors in Horsforth and is chaired by the Chairman of the Council.

Under statute, the Town Meeting is convened annually by the Chairman and must take place **between 1st March and 1st June.**

### **The Annual Meeting of the Council**

The Annual Meeting of the Council is held in May. (In the year of ordinary election of local councillors, the annual meeting must take place on the fourth day after the date of the election (i.e. of the date when the new or re-elected councillors take office) or within fourteen days thereafter. ) The agenda for this meeting includes:

- appointments of members of any committees;
- appointment of members to serve on outside bodies e.g. road safety committees, school governing bodies etc.;
- the checking of the inventory and asset register of council property;
- review of existing policies and procedures.

### **Committee meetings**

The Planning Committee meets every month at the Mechanics Institute. Other committee meetings are scheduled on an ad-hoc basis.

### **Agenda, Reports and Minutes**

The statute requires that you are 'summoned' to attend a Council meeting. This formal notice will give you the date, time and place of the meeting and will include an agenda to give you details of the items to be discussed and the level of discussion to take place i.e. whether you are considering what action to take, receiving a report, resolving to take action. It is important that you take the time to read these papers before attending the meeting to familiarise yourself with the issues to be discussed.

After each meeting, Minutes are prepared by the Clerk. The Council agenda, together with the Minutes of the last meeting, form the basis on which the Council conducts its business.

The Council also has a system of public participation time at its meetings, where members of the public can raise issues, speak to items on the agenda and question Council decisions.

If you wish to have an item put on the Agenda for discussion, please email the Clerk.

Non-Committee members are welcome to attend meetings, but do not have voting rights. Minutes of committee meetings are circulated with the papers for Full Council meetings and so it is unusual for non-members to attend committee meetings unless there is an item of special interest.

## **8. Finance**

The Council's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March each year.

The Council's main source of income is the precept (money raised for it via Council Tax). For the 2023-2024 financial year the precept was set at £126,036. A full copy of the Council's budget for the current year is provided.

You have also been provided with the latest Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and the set of accounts for 2022/2023.

## **9. Planning**

The Town Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to Leeds City Council. The Planning Committee is tasked with considering these applications and submitting comments in response to the consultations on behalf of the Town Council.

The Department for Local Communities and Local Government have produced a ['Plain English guide to the Planning System'](#), a copy of which is provided for your information.

You are also provided with a copy of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan which was accepted at a public referendum and adopted in early 2019. The Town Council worked with local community representatives and organisations to draw up the Plan for the town which helps Leeds City Council to decide on planning applications. The plan can also identify local projects which help to improve sustainability.

The Town Council intends to use the Neighbourhood Plan as the basis for its work over the next few years and a review of the plan is due to be held shortly.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions or queries as a result of your induction session.

With very best wishes for your time on Horsforth Town Council.

Becky Crabtree  
Town Clerk

Forms provided:  
Standing Orders  
Financial Regulations  
Calendar of meetings  
Recent minutes  
Code of Conduct  
Register of Interests Form to complete

Good Councillor Guide  
Cllr contact details  
Training information  
Finance information  
Annual Report

Adopted: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Review date: May 2024