STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Councillor Induction Pack

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Introduction

Welcome and congratulations on your election to serve as a member of Stilton Parish Council. This guide is to help you understand your new role as an elected member.
You will be provided with a dedicated e-mail account which must be used for all Parish Council related correspondence. All future correspondence will be sent to that address, including your summons' to meetings (agendas). Please check this account on a regular basis, and respond when requested to do so. A disclaimer statement will automatically be added to all of your outgoing emails.

The Council

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 is the council's 'Proper officer' and is answerable only to the Council acting as one body, the employer.

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.

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 Parish Council website)
- Act collectively as employer.

Role of the Chairman

The Council must have a Chairman, responsible for ensuring that the agenda is adhered to and that meetings run smoothly and on time. The chairman ensures that all councillors have the opportunity to speak at meetings and 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 and 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.
Our Clerk has obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) and holds the statutory position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO).

Powers of the Council

The powers which have been vested in Parish, Town and Community Councils by Acts of Parliament, relevant to Stilton Village, are summarised here as a guide to Councillors and others. Each description is brief and is intended to be a general indication.

Local Councils have a wide range of powers and duties. The following table sets out the ones that currently relate to Stilton Parish Council:-

Function	Powers & Duties	Committee, sub-committee or Working Group
Allowances for councillors	There is a Chairmans allowance within the annual budget	Parish Council
Burial grounds & cemetery	SPC has responsibility for three areas – Garden of Remembrance, Cemetery and Church Graveyard to the rear of the church.	Cemetery Working Group
Bus shelters	SPC maintains bus shelters throughout the village	Amenities Committee (AMC)
Conference and community facility	SPC manages and maintains the Stilton Pavilion and Community Field	Pavilion Committee (PVC)
Contracts	SPC has the power to enter into contracts	Parish Council
Conduct	SPC promotes and maintains high standards of conduct	Parish Council
Ditches and ponds	SPC Ditch Squad monitors and maintains areas affected by high rainfall	Ditch Management & Ditch Squad Programme/Amenities Management Committee (AMC)
Employment of staff	SPC employs the Clerk who is also RFO (Responsible Financial Officer), Pavilion Administrator, Cleaner and Caretakers	Staffing Sub-committee (SSC)
Litter	SPC empties and maintains a small number of litter bins throughout the village. There are also a number of HDC bins.	Amenities Management Committee (AMC)
Lifesaving equipment	SPC manages and maintains the defibs situated in the Telephone Box at the centre of the village near The Pump and at the entrance to the Pavilion.	Parish Council
Neighbourhood Planning	SPC are currently formulating a Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Newsletters	SPC print and distribute a Summer and Winter newsletter in hard copy and electronically releases a monthly newsletter via social media and notice boards	Editorial Working Group/Parish Council
Open Spaces	SPC own a number of open spaces throughout the village	Amenities Committee (AMC)
Planning applications	SPC reviews planning applications and submits to HDC acceptance/refusal or comments based on local knowledge	Planning Working Group/Parish Council
Precept	SPC reviews village precept as part of the budgeting process each year. **Only the Parish Council has the power to approve the annual precept**	Finance, General Purpose and Communication Committee (FGPC)/Parish Council
Traffic calming	SPC has power to provide traffic signs and contribute financially to traffic calming schemes (with permission from Highways)	Traffic and Parking Working Group
War memorials	SPC maintains and protects a village memorial	Amenities Management Committee (AMC)
Website	SPC provides a village 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	Editorial Working Group

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, agrees the budget for the Parish Council each year, allocating monies for necessary services throughout the village. It seeks to provide its residents with a safe, pleasant and enjoyable village in which to live.

Stilton Parish Council has several committees who report back to full council for authorisation of all expenditure and decisions. From 01/04/26, the Amenities Management Committee will have delegated authority to authorise payments related to amenities.

- **Financial and General Purpose Committee** has a wide range of duties. It reviews the budget for Council for the forthcoming financial year, which it submits to Full Council for ratification. The FGPC meets quarterly. Reporting to the FGPC (and Parish Council) is the **Staffing Sub-Committee**. It's meetings are called when needed to discuss matters relating to staff.

- **Pavilion Committee** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Pavilion and its surrounding area.

- **Amenities Management Committee** is responsible for the day-to-day management of village amenities in particular the Cemetery, New Churchyard, Garden of Remembrance, The Parish Room, green spaces, Skate Park and children's play areas.

Stilton Parish Council also has a number of working groups whose membership is made up of both councillors and non-councillors. This enables people living in the village to be involved without standing as a councillor. They report back to the committee as specified in the terms of reference.

- Green Spaces
- Cemetery
- Editorial
- Grants
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Planning
- Traffic & Parking

There is also a Ditch Squad Programme which monitors potential problems following heavy rainfall.

The Terms of Reference and membership of each committee and working group is published on the council website.

Staff

The Parish Council currently employs 5 part-time members of staff:

- Julianne Lawrence, Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO),
- Deputy Clerk
- Cleaner (Julie Thompson)
- 2 caretakers (Victor Marjoram and Andrew Beaver).

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. This applies to yourself and all members of the public. Contact can be made via email clerk@stiltonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Important Documentation

Code of Conduct

Please read and familiarise yourself with the Council's Code of Conduct, a copy of which can be viewed on the Stilton Parish Council website.

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. The completed form should be returned to the Clerk.
In addition to the register 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.

Good Councillor's Guide

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

Policies

All current adopted policies are available to view on the Stilton Parish Council website. The documents are generally reviewed annually in May.

Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the written rules of a local council and are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting and can be viewed on the website.

Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations are the formal written rules that govern how a Parish Council manages its finances and ensure compliance with the law, safeguard public money and ensure transparency and accountability.

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. A schedule of meetings for the year is provided.

The Annual Parish Meeting

This is a meeting of the electors of Stilton. It is open to all the electors in Stilton 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 Parish 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:

- election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman
- appointments of members of any committees;
- appointment of members to serve on working groups
- the checking of the inventory and asset register of council property;
- review of existing policies and procedures.

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 Committee meetings but do not have voting Rights (unless substituted for an absent committee member). 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.

Finance

The Council's financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March each year. The Council's main source of income is the precept (money raised for it via Council Tax). Secondary income comes from renting the Pavilion on regular and ad-hoc basis, playing field/football clubs and burials.

An Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) is submitted each year by the RFO.

Planning

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to Huntingdon District Council (HDC). The Planning Working Group is tasked with considering these applications and submitting comments to the full monthly meeting, providing its recommendations. Full council then debate and decide upon the response to be submitted to HDC.

Training

Being a new councillor can be a steep learning curve so there is a councillor training budget in place, a resource enabling you to attend a wide range of courses to provide you with the knowledge both general and specific depending on your involvement in the various sub-committees and working groups. Working with your strengths and previous knowledge there will always be something you can bring to the benefit of the parish council.

HOT TOPICS

This section to be completed prior to sending the induction document to alert the new councillor what the hot topics are at the time of them joining…

LGR – Local Government Reorganisation

Document Review
Reviewed: 12 May 2026
Next review date: May 2027