



CONTENTS



4	Message from the Town Clerk
5	Introduction
6	First Steps
8	Local Government
13	Littlehampton Town Council
31	Councillors
42	Meetings
49	Financial Management
52	Support for Councillors
53	Useful Contacts
54	Key Dates

Key Documents and Policies

55

MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN CLERK



Congratulations on your election as a councillor for Littlehampton Town Council.

Being a councillor is a wonderful opportunity to make a positive difference, working collaboratively to serve the best interests of the community.

I hope that you will find the next four years both rewarding and enjoyable.

Littlehampton Town Council provides services and facilities for local residents and is integral to building a stronger and more connected community.

Councillors represent their local community's needs and aspirations, and, by working together, make important decisions on behalf of residents and businesses.

This handbook, along with a tailored training programme, will support you to fulfil your statutory obligations and perform civic duties to the best of your abilities and with the honesty and integrity expected of an elected official. It will assist you in understanding the role of the Town Council and the services it provides as well as signposting to relevant information.

Whether you are a returning or new councillor, there are several formalities that need to happen within the first week following the elections. Please ensure you read pages 6 and 7.

I look forward to working closely with you to ensure we can deliver the services that our local community need both now and in the future.

I wish you the very best in your role as local leaders of our community.

Laura Chrysostomou

Town Clerk



lchrysostomou@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk



(1) 01903 732063



Being a councillor is both a privilege and a challenge. Whether you are a new or returning councillor, as a newly formed collective body, there will be a period of familiarisation that is required. The aim of this handbook is to provide all councillors with access to information and resources that enable you to fulfil your representative role as efficiently and as effectively as possible to the benefit of the local community you serve.

Purpose of this handbook and how to use it

This handbook is a useful resource for all councillors during their electoral term and includes links to other resources where more information is needed in relation to a particular issue.

This handbook is also available on our website for ease of access. If you have any queries, please let us know or check the list we have provided for other organisations that may be able to assist.





There are several things that you need to do to take up your duties as a Town Councillor. You will need to meet the Town Clerk, complete legally required forms and read important information and policies.

Book an appointment with the Town
Clerk – this must be done within the
first week following the elections
because in this meeting you will be
required to sign your Declaration of
Acceptance of Office, the Members
Code of Conduct and your Register of
Interests. It is also a great initial
opportunity for you to get to know the
Town Clerk.

Reading

Read this handbook thoroughly to familiarise yourself with the roles and responsibilities of councillors and staff, the policies that govern the Town Council and organisations that can assist you in your role.

- Code of Members' Conduct the Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of councillors as they carry out their work. The Code also contains the rules concerning the additional income, gifts and personal interests that must be declared by councillors and published in the Register of Members' Interests. The overarching aim is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillors and local government. Please ensure you read the Code (see page 55) in readiness for your meeting with the Town Clerk.
- **Policies** there are number of policies councillors must read and abide by. A list of the relevant policies can be found on page 55.



Forms to Complete

Whether you're a returning or new councillor, there are some important forms for you to complete within the first week. The following forms were included in your pack.

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\bigcirc	Declaration of Acceptance of Office – each councillor must sign this declaration in the presence of the Town Clerk before taking up their duties.	
\bigcirc	Declaration of Acceptance of the Code of Members' Conduct – having read the Code, councillors are required to accept and observe the code and sign a declaration to that effect.	
0	Register of Members' Interests - The main purpose of the Register is to provide information about any financial or personal interest which a councillor has, or any benefit which he or she receives, which others might reasonably consider to influence his or her actions or words as a Town Councillor (see page 34).	
0	Summons to attend meetings – this is you giving the Town Council consent to be sent meeting agendas to you electronically.	
0	Contact details – there are two forms to fill in; one so we have details to contact you and one for the finance department for you to claim the Members' Allowance. Councillors can choose whether their details are published in Town Council materials. All councillors must have a dedicated Town Council email address.	
0	Members' Allowance – councillors may claim a basic allowance which is currently £603.30 per annum. There is a letter in the pack which you need to complete if you choose to claim the allowance and return to the Deputy Town Clerk.	
0	HMRC new starter form – this form needs to be completed so that you can be added to the payroll to receive your allowance. There is a form in your pack for you to complete and return to the Deputy Town Clerk.	

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This section of the handbook gives you an overview of the structure of Local Government and the roles and responsibilities of the Town Council.

Government Tiers

Like many parts of England, there are 3 tiers of local government in Littlehampton; a county council, a district council and a town council. Each tier has its own areas of responsibility. Listed below are some, but not all areas. Some appear twice as they overlap.

Littlehampton Town Council: The most local tiers of government are the parish and town councils. The Town Council is an elected body, representing the residents of the Town. It has its own budget and although the Town Council itself has only limited powers, it can work with and make representations to the other Councils and public agencies to help find solutions to local issues and provide facilities and services which might not otherwise be addressed. Littlehampton Town Council is responsible for services such as allotments, Littlehampton Museum, public clocks, Rosemead Park, Southfields Jubilee Centre, Grant Aid, graffiti removal and the new Youth Centre in Wick.

Arun District Council: Each county is divided into several districts. District councils cover smaller areas and provide more local services. Arun District Council is responsible for some services in Littlehampton, including council housing, public toilets, leisure facilities, local planning and waste collection. They are also responsible for some parks and playgrounds.

West Sussex County Council: West Sussex County Council operates over a large area and provides services such as education, social services, highways and household waste recycling.

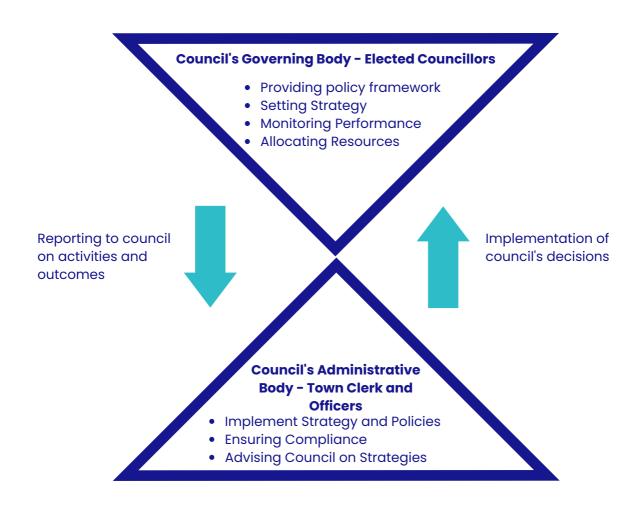
WHICH COUNCIL DOES WHAT



Overview of the Council

Littlehampton Town Council is a corporate body, a legal entity separate from that of its councillors. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole body. 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. (Source: NALC)

We play a vital part in representing the interests of the community we serve and improve the quality of life for our residents. We can influence other decision makers and support other organisations to meet local needs for example through our Grant Aid scheme.



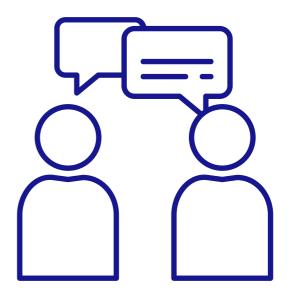
Fifteen elected councillors hold office as 'the council' for four years. The elected council's role may be compared to that of the board of a public company; the elected council steers the activities of the council but is not involved in the day-to-day running of the council. The 'shareholders' of a public company can be likened to a local community.

Councils delegate functions to specialist committees comprised of councillors. Committees provide councillors with the opportunity to participate in council decision-making at a more detailed level.

Councils employ staff to administer the council. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer and is the most senior member of staff at Littlehampton Town Council.

The Town Clerk is responsible to the council for implementing council decisions and policy and overseeing the day-to-day operation of the council.

The Town Clerk provides the link between the elected council and its employees. While all council staff have a duty to carry out council decisions, they are responsible to the Town Clerk, not the councillors. Individual councillors cannot direct staff in their day-to-day activities. However, this is counterbalanced by the responsibility of the Town Clerk to provide information, guidance and support to councillors to make good decisions.



Where does the Town Council get its money from?

Each year a sum of money called a 'precept' is collected through council tax. This money is invested back into the community to deliver, improve and develop facilities and services. Local councils can also apply for grants and loans and borrow money from the Public Works Loan Board.

Littlehampton Town Council raises additional income from allotment rentals, room and equipment hire, sponsorship, event income and from hosting weddings at the Manor House. This income offsets an element of expenditure.

The Rules

If a council does something which is not permitted by legislation then the council could face a legal challenge that it acted beyond its powers.

- A council must do what the law requires it to do
- A council may do only what the law says it may do
- A council cannot do anything unless permitted by legislation.

The crucial question is – does the council have a legal power to act? A council must always ask this question when making a decision, especially if it involves public money. (Source: NALC)



Policies

The council has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, all of which are reviewed regularly and the most important of which are available on the website. All can be obtained from the office.

As a councillor you should familiarise yourself with all policies and procedures relevant to the work of the council. There are several important documents you need to read to be able to participate actively in council discussions.

You can find a list of the documents you need to read and sign a declaration for in the Policies Section (see page 55).

LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

Littlehampton Town Council is the parish authority for the Town of Littlehampton, including Wick and Toddington which has a population of approximately 30,000. The Council is located at the Manor House, a Grade II Listed Building with a license for civil partnerships.

There are fifteen councillors who represent six wards: Beach (3), Brookfield (3), Courtwick with Toddington (3), River (3), Wick (1) and Wickbourne (2).

Our Mission Statement

We, the Members of Littlehampton Town Council, are committed to providing, maintaining and developing services and local initiatives which will improve the quality of life of the residents of Littlehampton and Wick.

Services and Functions

The Council provides a wide range of facilities and represents the interests of the town to other bodies whilst working in partnership with the District and County Council as well as other agencies and groups.

Services

- **Allotments**
- Youth Services external contractor
- Graffiti removal
- Floral Displays including some roundabouts and gateway planters
- Christmas illuminations
- **A**menity Team

Community

- Littlehampton Museum
- Grant Aid and Service Funding
 Agreements
- Events
- Town Centre Strategy
- Public clocks
- Bookings for Community Market Stall
- Sports Forum
- Visit Littlehampton tourism brand
- Noticeboards
- The Littlehampton Neighbourhood
 Plan 2014 to 2029



Venues

- Rosemead Park
- Southfields Jubilee Centre
- Manor House room hire, wedding venue
- ★ K2 Youth and Community Centre in Wick £1.5m project due for completion Winter 2023
- Stage by the Sea



Partnerships

Community Wardens – in partnership with Arun District Council **Town Centre free two-hour parking disc scheme –** in partnership with Arun District Council and Town Centre Traders.

Council Staff

Council services are delivered by council employees. The Town Clerk is the most senior employee of the council and your first point of contact. The clerk is supported by Deputy Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and other members of staff. The structure chart and outline of roles and responsibilities on pages 18 and 19 give an overview of the areas of responsibility. Contact details can be found on page 52.

Role of the Town Clerk

The clerk and councillors work as a team to provide a service for the community. The clerk provides advice and administrative support and takes action to implement council decisions. The clerk is not a secretary and is answerable only to the council as a whole. The clerk is the proper officer of the council in law. Legally councils can delegate decisions to clerks because they are trusted professional officers whose objectivity allows them to act for the council.

If you are ever unsure about anything you should consult the clerk.

Other council staff, although employed by the council, are managed by the clerk. No one councillor can act as the line manager of either the clerk or other employees.

During meetings the chair is in charge of the meeting, and the clerk or a deputy supports the council as it discusses business.

Clerks can recognise when something needs attention and if they cannot fix the problem, find a resolution.

The clerk's contact details can be found on Page 4.

Senior Management Team

Laura Chrysostomou is the Town Clerk and manages the senior management team directly.



Jon Short is the Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (section 151 officer). Jon oversees the Human Resources Department and all Finance Matters.



Juliet Harris is the Assistant Town Clerk. Juliet has oversight of the democratic services and a wide range of community functions including Littlehampton Museum, major projects, open spaces and allotments.



Sofia Chittenden is the Communications and Marketing Manager and oversees the council's Corporate Communications, Events and Town Centre functions.

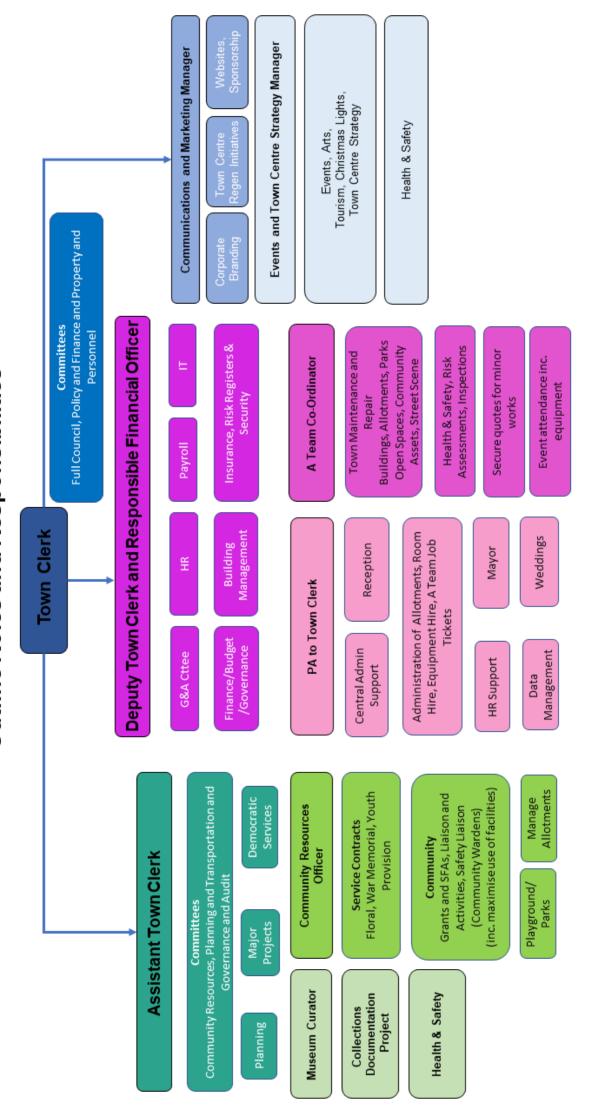
Contacting Staff

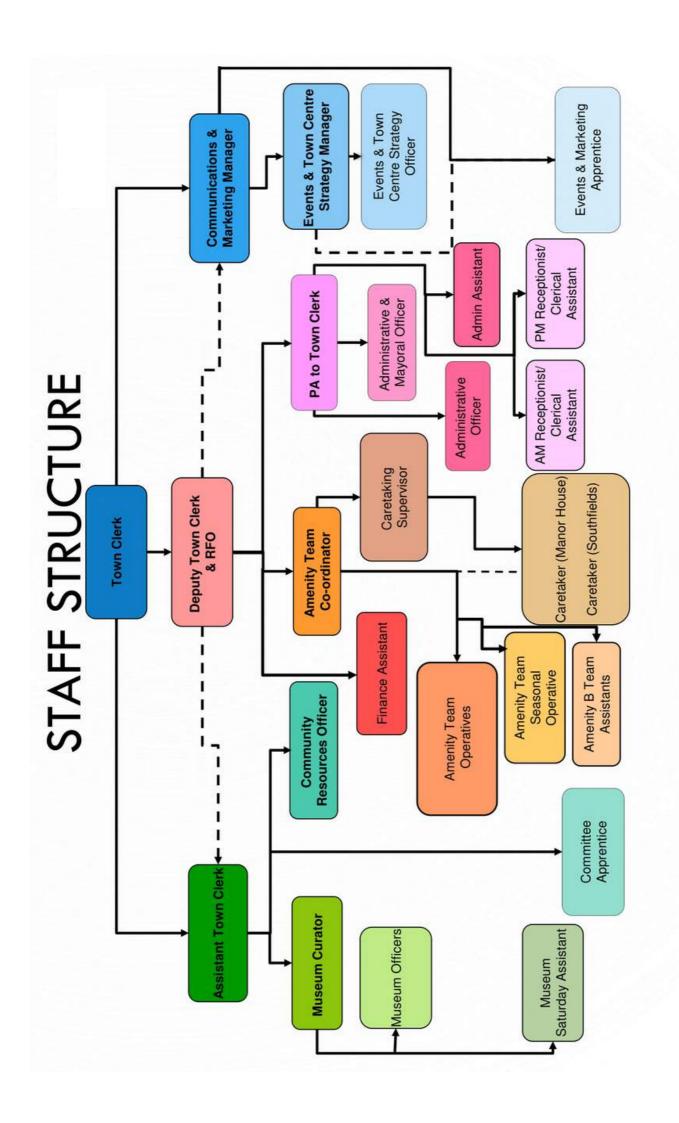
Most staff are contactable by direct line and messages can be left. Email is often the most efficient way to reach an officer.

The main reception at the Manor House is open Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 16:30. The Museum is also open on Saturdays from 10:30 to 16:30.

Only the Town Clerk is available for contact out of hours.

Outline Roles and Responsibilities





Council Services

The council offices are at the Manor House in Church Street and are open Monday to Friday. It shares the building with the Museum which is also open on Saturdays. Council and committee meetings take place in the New Millennium Chamber.

This section aims to help you gain an understanding of each service as well as serve as a point of reference to help you answer resident questions.

Allotments

There are six allotments sites across the town located at Fort Road, Trinidad (off Lyminster Road), Worthing Road (inc. accessible plots), Kingley Gate (inc. accessible plots), Mill Lane and Howard Road. All sites have water and are maintained by the Amenity Team.

All Littlehampton residents are eligible for a plot and can put their name forward to rent one. Rental prices vary depending on the plot size and are payable annually.

Each site has a plot holder who is the site representative on a voluntary basis. Alongside the Littlehampton Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association, they act as a link between plot holders and the council.

The Community Resources Officer is responsible for managing the allotments. The Admin Team deals with the rental process whilst the Amenity Team supports with inspections, clearance and general maintenance.

Allotment holders are encouraged to sign up to the allotments email newsletter which is produced in-house. It features the latest news and signposts readers to key information.

You can refer residents to our website to find out about renting an allotment and to apply for one via

www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/allotments



Team: Community Resources Officer, Admin Team and Amenity Team





Amenity Team

The Amenity Team is responsible for the maintenance of council buildings and sites and offers support to all departments. Managed by a Team Coordinator the team works with the Events Team to deliver events across the town. It is also responsible for graffiti removal.

The team has a base at Lineside Industrial Estate that includes a workshop, vehicle and equipment storage. The council owns a tipper van, an electric van and a tractor – all used by the team to carry out duties which include grass cutting and equipment inspection at Rosemead Park.

You can report graffiti (please include location and if possible a photo) to admin@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk

Business Support

The council works closely with Town Centre businesses on matters relevant to the local business community. It contributes funding to support the free twohour parking disc scheme.

Some of the projects the council has worked on include pedestrian signage in the town centre and seafront, improved Christmas illuminations, town centre events and initiatives such as loyalty cards.

In addition to contributing towards the public realm improvement works, the council has committed funds for the delivery of initiatives to increase footfall during the works and beyond. Working in partnership with the District Council, which has match funded the programme, projects such as arts trails, summer and Christmas events have been delivered successfully.

In 2022 the council created a Town Centre Strategy in consultation with key stakeholders including the local community. The Strategy will be delivered through a working group consisting of town councillors and officers, district council, police and business and community representatives.

The strategy can be read on our website www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/policies-and-strategic-documents



Team: Communications, Events and Town Centre Strategy Team



Committee: Policy and Finance and Community Resources

Events

The Events Team delivers a programme of over ten free events throughout the year. From major events such as Armed Forces Day, Screen on the Green and the Town Show and Family Fun Day, to a range of smaller events and activities including the Sandcastle Competition and Christmas Lights Switch on. The aim is to provide residents and visitors with an opportunity to have fun and relax at a wide range of activities for all ages, building community cohesion.

The council also offers free support to event organisers and sponsorship opportunities for local businesses. The team oversees the bookings for the free community market stall at the weekly market.



The Council's Museum Team also deliver a program of activities and events, providing opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the Town's rich and vibrant history.

All events are listed on the town council website, the tourism website Visit Littlehampton and the Littlehampton Museum website. An annual what's on guide, incorporating council and community-led events, is produced and distributed in March each year.

Details of our events can be found on our tourism website **www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk**

You can signpost organisations looking to book the community market stall, seeking support or wishing to list their event online, to the events team **events@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk**



Team: Comms, Events and Town Centre Strategy Team, Museum Team



Floral Displays

The council is passionate about bringing some extra colour to the Town for all of the seasons. The council funds a floral contract with a local professional company. The sites that we are responsible for are:

- 8 planters at the key "gateways" into the Town
- The roundabouts at the Sportsman, Beach Road, the Library and the junction of St. Flora's Road and Horsham Road
- Summer flowers which adorn Franciscan Way
- The Manor House gardens in Church Street.

Businesses can sponsor the planters with packages available for each area.



Team: Community Resources Officer



Committee: Community Resources

Grants and Funding

The Council aims to assist local organisations to achieve their respective aims and objectives where these benefit the Town and the local community. In addition, the Town Council endeavours to work in partnership to attract funding from local and national bodies to benefit local residents. The Town Council offers different grant programmes as a means of financial support:

Service Funding Agreements - renewed every three years, the funding supports a variety of organisations.

Grant Aid - funding for voluntary organisations serving the local community.

Sports Excellence Grants - funding for local sportspeople awarded by the Sports Forum with funds from the council.

Further information including a list of existing Service Funding Agreements and how to apply for grants can be found on our website www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/grants



Team: Community Resources Officer



Merit Awards

The town merit awards are presented annually by the Mayor at the annual Town Meeting to members of the public who, in the opinion of the council, have made a significant contribution to the town and the townsfolk. This could be through a combination of a number of factors involving the promotion of the town, enhancing its reputation, initiatives to improve quality of life for residents or a sustained contribution to a particular issue, which has wide reaching benefits for Littlehampton.

Members of the public are invited to nominate individuals or groups with a councillor panel meeting to select the winners.

> Details of past winners can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/merit-awards



Team: Mayoral and Admin Teams



Committee: Community Resources

Museum

The Museum is a cultural service provided by the council and has served the community for 90 years. Admission and helpful advice is free, and the Museum is located within the Manor House.

Visitors can enjoy exploring the galleries, where they can see a wealth of extraordinary Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman archaeology, beautiful fossils found in the region, and discover the story behind the town's journey from Roman settlement through to the prosperous Victorian era and the presentday.

Throughout the year, the team deliver events and activities within the Museum to attract visitors.

The Museum's programme and online exhibitions can be found online at www.littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk



Team: Museum Curator and Officers



K2

K2 is the new £1.5m youth and community centre being built in Eldon Way, Wick, opposite the existing Keystone Centre. This new build is part of a partnership project by the Town Council and Arun District Council to improve community facilities by replacing the existing Keystone Centre with a modern and versatile building, and an enhanced outdoor recreation area.

Construction is due to finish in Winter 2023.

Details for the project can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/keystone



Team: Assistant Town Clerk and Community Resources Officer



Committee: Community Centre Sub-Committee

Progress Newsletter

Progress Newsletter is our residents' newsletter published twice a year in Summer and Winter and distributed to local outlets. It publicises the services provided by the council, key news for the Town including housing and highways developments and showcases some of the community's achievements.

The content is managed by an Editorial Board made up of one representative from each political party, the Town Clerk and the Communications and Marketing Manager. The newsletter is designed and written by external contractors.

Officers produce an email newsletter which is sent to over 300 subscribers on average twice a month. Councillors are encouraged to join the mailing list, follow the link below.

> To sign up and view past newsletters visit www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/progress-newsletter



Team: Town Clerk and Communications and Marketing Manager



Committee: Policy and Finance and Progress Editorial Board

Public Clocks

The council has exercised its power to provide and maintain public clocks under the Parish Council's Act 1957 and currently has three in situ within Littlehampton:

- The clock in Wick Parade
- The clock which hangs above L Guess the jewellers in the High Street
- The most prominent of all is the town centre clock which is situated opposite Sainsbury's



Committee: Community Resources

Rosemead Park



Situated off Fitzalan Road and adjacent to the Littlehampton Academy, Rosemead Park is a popular area for children and well-liked by dog walkers.

The play area was refurbished and extended in 2020 to include areas for toddlers and older children, sensory equipment, a zip line and a basketball area.

The Park is the site for the popular annual Town Show and Family Fun Day event which attracts thousands of visitors. The Council's Amenity Team look after the park and ensure that it is clean and tidy through a regular programme of routine checks and regular grounds maintenance.



Southfields Jubilee Centre

A community centre located at Southfields Road, owned and managed by the Council, it is a great venue for a variety of activities.

The centre provides two halls, a perfect space for exhibitions, meetings, social events, recreational activities, education/training, workshops and seminars.

The space can be used by all members of the community from pre-school groups through to social activities for the elderly and is hired by public, private and voluntary sector. Current activities include fitness classes, private hiring by the NHS, and art groups.

> The full programme of activities can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/southfields-jubilee-centre



Team: Community Resources Officer, Admin Team, Caretaking Team and Amenity Team.





Sports Forum

The Sports Forum is supported by the council and aims to act as an advisory, consultative and co-ordinating body with Sport England, Sussex County Sport Partnership, sports clubs, schools, and other interested organisations in the town. The Sports Forum is made up of representatives from local clubs and sports providers and it offers members the opportunity to share information and express their views on current sporting issues. It is open to the public and there are no restrictions to the number of members and new members are always welcomed.

The Sports Forum is also responsible for organising an annual Sports Awards Ceremony. Clubs, coaches and family members of sportspeople are given the opportunity to nominate them for these awards. It also oversees the Sports Grants which provide much needed funds to local sportspeople seeking assistance in developing their sport further.

More details about the Forum can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/sports-forum



Team: Community Resources Officer



Committee: Community Resources

Stage by the Sea

The Stage by the Sea is a free to use community performance area located at the end of Banjo Road on the seafront.

The bespoke shell design propels both music and spoken word directly out towards the audience without the need for amplification making it an ideal venue for small and intimate events.

Further details including how to book can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/stagebythesea



Team: Bookings are managed by Arun District Council, promotion of activities is managed by the Communications and Events Team.



Venues for Hire

The council generates income from hiring rooms both at the Manor House and Southfields Jubilee Centre. The Millennium Chamber at the Manor House is a licensed wedding venue and can accommodate up to 100 people. Two further rooms are available for hire at the Manor House, one fully accessible and equipped for training sessions and more. Currently, one of the rooms is used as an outreach branch for a national bank.

More details about the venues available can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/venues-hire



Team: Admin Team

Visit Littlehampton

The council is committed to encouraging visitors to the Town and as part of its contribution to tourism it manages the Visit Littlehampton brand.

Visit Littlehampton is not just a brand for the council's marketing campaigns but it is a website where residents and visitors alike can find details on the Town's events and must-see attractions.

Local event organisers can list their event on the website free of charge. The website is currently undergoing a revamp with the new site due to be launched in Summer 2023.

More details can be found online at www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk



Team: Communications, Events and Town Centre Strategy Team



Youth Services

The council is committed to providing support and opportunities for young residents. It delivers a joint service with Arun Church through Arun Youth Projects (current contract due to end in August 2023 and a tender process is currently under way for a new 36-month contract).

Arun Youth Projects connect with local young people through youth clubs, focused projects and targeted support work. They run sessions at the Keystone Centre and Southfields Jubilee Centre on a weekly basis.



Team: Community Resources Officer



Committee: Community Resources

Current Projects

The council is involved in a wide range of projects including:

- K2 Building the new £1.5m youth and community centre in Wick
- Working with Arun District Council to deliver a project through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund that will see a consultant work with businesses in the town centre to promote and support growth
- Working with the developers in the north of Littlehampton to deliver two new allotment sites and a new community centre in Hampton Park.

The outgoing council reviewed progress on delivering several priorities in March 2023. The new council will review the progress of ongoing work in this respect, receive and consider the recommendations on further work made by the outgoing council and determine its priorities for the next four years.

The current council priorities can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/policies-and-strategic-documents

COUNCILLORS



- 1. Decision-making: through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
- 2. Monitoring: councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
- 3. Getting involved locally: as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

The day-to-day work of a councillor may include:

- going to meetings of local organisations and community groups
- going to meetings of bodies that affect the wider community, such as the police, the Highways Authority, schools and colleges
- taking up issues on behalf of members of the public, such as making representations to the principal authority
- running a surgery for residents to bring up issues.

Source: NALC



Role of a Councillor

You cannot act as a councillor until you have signed a formal declaration of acceptance of office. You must sign it before the first council meeting following your election in the presence of the Town Clerk.

As a councillor you have a responsibility to:

- attend meetings when summoned to do so; the notice to attend a council meeting is, in law, a summons, because you have a duty to attend
- consider, in advance of the meeting, the agenda and any related documents which were sent to you with the summons
- take part in meetings and consider all the relevant facts and issues on matters which require a decision including the views of others expressed at the meeting
- take part in voting and respect decisions made by the majority of those present and voting
- ensure, with other councillors, that the council is properly managed
- represent the whole electorate, and not just those who voted for you.

Source: NALC

A good working relationship between councillors, the Mayor, the Town Clerk and other council officers is fundamental to an effective council.

Representing your local area

A councillor's primary role is to represent their ward and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. As well as being an advocate for local residents and signposting them to the right people at the council, you will need to keep them informed about the issues that affect them.

To understand and represent local views and priorities, you need to build strong relationships and encourage local people to make their views known and engage with you and the council. Good communication and engagement are central to being an effective councillor.

As a local councillor, your residents will expect you to:

- respond to their queries and investigate their concerns
- communicate council decisions that affect them
- know your local area and be aware of any problems
- know and work with representatives of local organisations, interest groups and businesses
- represent their views at council meetings
- lead local campaigns on their behalf.

Community Leadership

Councils work in partnership with local communities and organisations – including the public, voluntary, community and private sectors – to develop a vision for their local area, working collaboratively to improve services and quality of life for citizens. Councillors have a lead role in this process.

Developing Council Policy

Councils need clear strategies and policies to enable them to achieve their vision for the area, make the best use of resources and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. As a councillor you will contribute to the development of these policies and strategies, bringing the views and priorities of your local area to the debate. How you do this will depend on the committees and forums you are appointed to (see page 42). However, the council's policy framework must be signed off by full council, on which every councillor sits.

Planning and Regulation

Councils are not just service providers; they also act as regulators. As a councillor you may be appointed to sit on the planning and transportation committee – considering issues such as planning applications for residential and commercial premises as a statutory consultee. In these roles, councillors are required to act independently and are not subject to the group or party whip. We will arrange special training for this.

Councillors Conduct and Interests

The seven Nolan principles apply to the conduct of people in public life. They are:

Selflessness - you should act in the public interest

Integrity – you should not put yourself under any obligations to others, allow them improperly to influence you or seek benefit for yourself, family, friends or close associates

Objectivity – you should act impartially, fairly and on merit

Accountability – you should be prepared to submit to public scrutiny necessary to ensure accountability

Openness – you should be open and transparent in your actions and decisions unless there are clear and lawful reasons for non-disclosure

Honesty - you should always be truthful

Leadership – as a councillor, you should promote, support and exhibit high standards of conduct and be willing to challenge poor behaviour.

Source: NALC

Code of Conduct

Each local council must adopt and publicise a code of conduct that is in line with the Nolan principles. The code deals with councillors' obligations about their conduct including the registration and disclosure of their interests.

Complaints (page 41) about councillors' conduct are dealt with by the principal authority (Arun District Council).

You must read the Code before your meeting with the Town Clerk as you will be asked to sign acceptance.

The Town Council's Code of Conduct can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/members-area

Councillors Interests

As a councillor, you must abide by rules that apply to the disclosure of some business or financial interests. These are called "disclosable pecuniary interests" or "DPIs". They include your employment, ownership of land, and business interests in your parish. Other interests are usually non-pecuniary or personal interests. This rule on disclosure also applies to your spouse, civil partner or cohabitee, as if their interests were yours. You should be aware that the register of interests does not distinguish between a councillor's interests and those that are held by your partner.

Any DPIs and any other disclosable interests that are referred to in the council's code of conduct must be disclosed to Arun District Council's monitoring officer within 28 days. We will provide you with a Register of Members Interests form to complete and return to the Town Clerk. These will be collated and passed to the monitoring officer who will ensure the register of interests are available to the public on both the District and Town Council websites. Your Register of Interests must be kept up to date and any changes recorded as soon as possible. If you have any queries completing this form please speak to the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

If an agenda item relates to one of your DPIs – such as the expansion of a supermarket chain in which you own shares – you must not participate in the discussion or vote. Also, if the interest has not been registered with the monitoring officer, you must disclose the interest at the meeting (or, for sensitive interests, disclose the issue but not the detail). You must then notify the monitoring officer within 28 days of the meeting.

The declaration of interests at meetings is intended to give the public confidence in the Town Council's decision making. Our agenda gives councillors an opportunity to declare an interest early in a meeting.

Hospitality and Gifts

The Council's Code of Members' Conduct provides that - you have a personal interest in any business of the council where it relates or is likely to affect the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift of hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25. You are required to provide details of the existence and nature of gifts or hospitality with 28 days of the adoption by the Council of its Code of Members' Conduct; or your election or appointment to the office of councillor (whichever is the later). These details will be published on the Town Council's website.

Staff are also required to report to the Town Clerk details of gifts/hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work

The Town Council is an equal opportunity employer and is fully committed to a policy of treating all of its employees and job applicants equally. The Town Council extends this positive attitude in respect of equality and diversity to our councillors, contractors, service users, and the community at large and in doing so is committed to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Whistle Blowing

The council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, councillors and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. The Whistle Blowing Policy (see Policies Section) is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the council without fear rather than overlooking a problem.

Role of the Mayor

The mayor is considered to be the voice of the council and the leader of the community.

Each year the council elects from amongst its councillors a Town Mayor and a Deputy Town Mayor. The Mayor has the same role and responsibilities as councillors but has additional responsibilities that reflect their leadership role.

The Mayor is elected by Town Councillors at the Annual Council Meeting which takes place in May and the Office of Mayor is for one year. The Deputy Mayor is the Mayor Elect and deputises for the Mayor when they are not available.

As the first citizen of Littlehampton, the position of Mayor is a busy and varied one. In addition to chairing the council meetings, the Mayor attends a variety of engagements throughout the civic year including the opening of premises, civic receptions and general visits. The Administrative and Mayoral Officer supports the Mayor and can offer advice on relevant points of etiquette, procedure and precedence.



The Mayor may choose to use their year of office to highlight a particular charity(ies) and fundraise. This is at the discretion of the individual and the fundraising can take place in many forms with past Mayor's organising their own events to raise funds whilst others have simply used their role to highlight the importance of their chosen charity. A discretionary fund is available to the Mayor which can be used to support a voluntary organisation or project, subject to certain criteria. More details can be found in the Financial Regulations document online.

The Mayor has a dedicated space in the car park at the Manor House and the use of the Mayor's Parlour for meetings with residents and to carry out duties.

You can follow the Mayor's Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/littlehamptonmayor

Managing Internal Council Relationships

Both councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another, but their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Officers are responsible to the council. Their role is to give advice to councillors and the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction of the Town Clerk. The Member and Officer Protocol Policy provides guidance on the relationships between councillors and officers (see Policies Section).

A good working relationship between councillors, the Mayor, the Town Clerk and other council officers is fundamental to an effective council. By working collaboratively, informed decisions can be made and positive outcomes achieved. Mutual respect, sharing of information and open debate are essential to a successful working relationship.

The Town Clerk is the crucial link between councillors and officers. Generally, requests for assistance or information should go through the Town Clerk, except where they have authorised another council officer to undertake this role. Individual councillors do not have the right to direct council officers in their day-to-day activities.

Managing External Council Relationships

The council works in partnership with other key stakeholders in the parish to deliver joint projects, services and local initiatives. It has in place several liaison groups and links with neighbouring parishes, the district and county council as well as local associations which provide forums for communication and discussion on strategic matters. It also works closely with local community groups to support work by various voluntary and charitable organisations in the parish. These are called outside bodies (see page 47).

Dealing with the Media

The council has a press and media policy which provides a framework to support the building of positive working relationships with media outlets.

Councillors and staff should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the council in all their dealings with the media. Confidential documents, exempt minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Town Clerk who may seek legal advice, before any response is made.

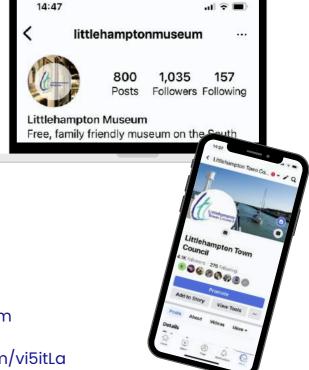
Social Media

Effective communication is vital for councillors. Social media can play a key role in achieving this, provided it is used in the right way.

The council has produced guidance on social media use by councillors offering 'best practice' advice on the use of social media accounts. A link can be found in the Policies Section. In addition, there are many useful guides on the subject on the Local Government Association's website – a link has been provided in the Support for Councillors Section. Staff have a separate Social Media Policy.

We encourage you to follow the Town Council's social media pages and where possible share the content to help promote its activities.

- Littlehampton Town Council Facebook www.facebook.com/littlehamptontc
- Mayor of Littlehampton Facebook www.facebook.com/littlehamptonmayor
- Visit Littlehampton Facebook www.facebook.com/visitlittlehampton
- Littlehampton Museum Facebook www.facebook.com/LittlehamptonMuseum
- Visit Littlehampton Instagram www.instagram.com/visitlittlehampton
- Littlehampton Museum Instagram www.instagram.com/littlehamptonmuseum
- Visit Littlehampton Twitter www.twitter.com/vi5itLa
- Littlehampton Museum Twitter www.twitter.com/Ltonmuseum



Read the Press and Media online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/members-area

Councillors Resources

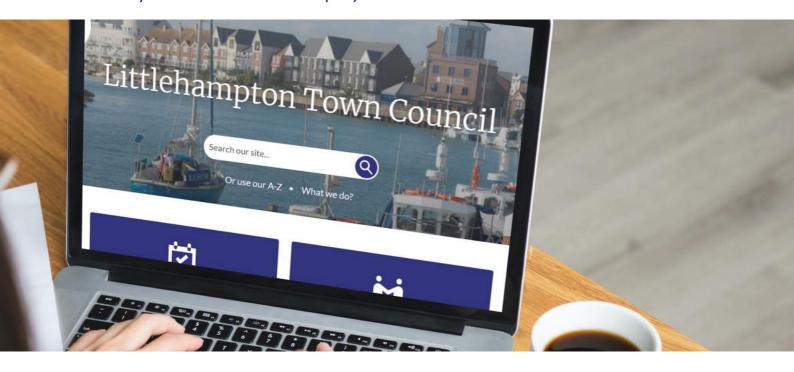
Laptops and Email

The council will provide each councillor with a dedicated email address which is to be used for all Town Council related business. In addition, a laptop will be provided to councillors to be used solely for Town Council matters, for example agendas which will be emailed in the first instance.

Arrangements will be made to give you the laptop along with guidance on how to use it. In addition to the laptop, you may wish to use your own mobile device to access Town Council emails, in which case staff can provide you with the support to enable it. This will be discussed with you in due course.

Sometimes informal meetings are held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Guidance and training will be provided.

Should you have any IT issues or need to report a lost, stolen or damaged device you can contact the Deputy Town Clerk.



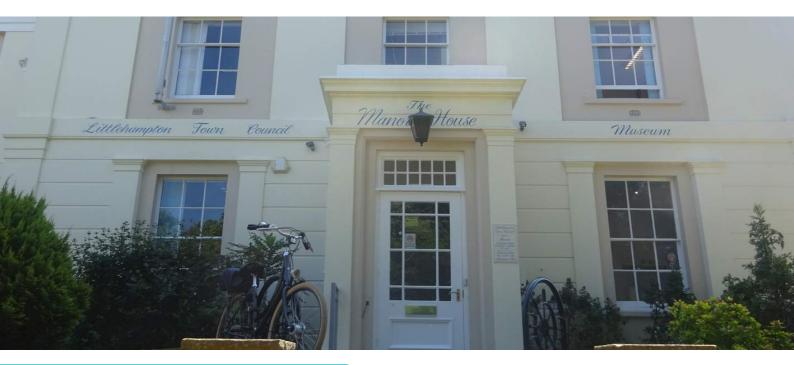
Car Park

Limited spaces are available adjacent to the Manor House which can be used for short visits to the building. For longer visits, it is suggested councillors use the pay and display car park. The Mayor has a designated space at the Manor House.

Access to the Building

Access to the Manor House is via reception, there are no swipe cards. During business hours you should report to reception where you can fill in a visitor pass before being allowed through to your meeting.

If you are attending a committee meeting, the access is via the side entrance which leads directly to the New Millennium Chamber.



Postage

Councillors may opt to have their council related post sent to the Manor House. The post is included in committee paper dispatches when they are sent out.

We will do our best to inform councillors when post is received, especially if it appears urgent but we strongly recommend that you contact the office periodically to check if anything is waiting for collection.

Councillors Profiles

All councillors will have their own profile on the council's website. It will display a photo, contact details (you can choose whether to publicise your own or use the council's), political party, ward, committee membership, membership of other councils and whether you represent the council on outside bodies. In addition, a small biography is included to give residents a glimpse of their representative's personality.

Please remember to tell us of any changes to your contact details.

Health and Safety

Your health and safety as a councillor is very important to us. It is essential that risks to health and safety are properly controlled through an effective health and safety management system and commitment at all levels within the organisation. Please familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety Policy (see link in Policies Section).



Feedback and Complaints

Complaints about councillors' conduct are dealt with by the principal authority.

Complaints about elected Town Council Members must be made direct to the Monitoring Officer, at Arun District Council. The address is Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5LF. The telephone number is 01903 737500.

Complaints specifically about the conduct of the Town Clerk should be sent to either the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who will conduct the investigation.

Members of the public can provide feedback on Town Council services online at

www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/feedback

MEETINGS

Council meetings are important because they are the mechanism through which councillors make decisions. Decisions of a council can only be made by resolution at a properly convened meeting. The chair is in charge of the meeting, and the clerk (or perhaps a deputy) supports the council as it discusses business.

Council meetings and committee meetings are formal events, not social occasions, and are public events which are advertised and the press and public have a right to observe, record and report on how the council operates.

Exceptions are when sensitive issues are discussed (such as legal, contractual or staffing matters) and then the council can agree to exclude the press and public for just that item of business – this is called 'exempt business'.

Committee Membership

Committee membership is approved at the Annual Council Meeting in May.

Calendar

A committee calendar is agreed 12 months in advance by Council and published online, please visit **www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/committee-meetings.**

Location

Meetings are held in the New Millennium Chamber. The meetings normally start at 18:30. The date, time and location will always be on the agenda.

Meeting Rules

Rules about the way meetings must be run, are set out by legislation and are contained within the Council's Standing Orders (see link in the Policies Section). It sets out the order of business, rules about debate, voting requirements and the procedure for public participation.

Agendas and Minutes

All council and committee meetings have agendas containing reports from the Town Clerk and recommendations. Meeting Agendas are published online. Minutes are taken and a draft prepared which is shared with the Chair of the Committee for comment. They are subsequently published on the website for information and will be approved by Council / Committee at the next meeting. All meeting papers are published and emailed to councillors a minimum of three clear days before the meeting.

It is important that you read the agenda to gain an understanding of what is required of you.

Attendance

If you are not able to attend a meeting you must send your apologies to the Town Clerk as soon as possible. If you fail to attend any meetings for six months, you will automatically cease to be a councillor unless the council approved your reason for absence before the end of the six month period.

Participating in a Meeting

The chair manages the meeting by introducing agenda items, inviting councillors to speak, focusing discussion and clarifying matters for decision with the support of the Town Clerk or their deputy.

Councillors vote for or against the proposal by a show of hands. Matters to be decided are called proposals or motions. Decisions, called resolutions, are recorded in the minutes.

When participating in the meeting, you go through the chair and must keep your contribution succinct and to the point.

Council Meetings

Council meetings are meetings of the full council. All councillors are expected to attend.

The Mayor presides over council meetings with support from the Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk.

At the Annual Council Meeting held in May the new Mayor is elected.

Committees

Committee meetings bring together a smaller number of councillors to concentrate on a specific function of the council and share the workload.

The council has five committees, each with designated areas of responsibility.

Community Resources

Youth Services, Littlehampton Museum (excluding the provision and maintenance of the building), Rosemead Park, Community Arts and Events, Allotments, Tourism, Leisure, Community Grants, Christmas Lights, Wick Community Initiatives.

The planting of roundabouts, floral displays and trees.

More details can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/committees/community-resources

Governance and Audit

The role of the committee is to promote a culture of openness, ready accountability and probity in order to ensure the highest standards of conduct of Councillors and employees.

More details can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/committees/governance-and-audit

Policy and Finance

The committee is responsible for the development of policy for recommendation to council, the annual review of the council's expenditure and income; the receipt of budget requests from other committees and the formulation of the council's annual budget for council approval.

It is responsible for the liaison with the police, healthcare, other local authorities and outside bodies. In addition, it oversees the council's work in the Town Centre and matters related to retail, employment and business.

It also oversees the Community Right to Challenge issues for approval by council, New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy and has oversight and delivery of the use of developer funding (Section 106) sums allocated to the Town Council.

More details can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/committees/policy-and-finance

Property and Personnel

It is responsible for the provision and maintenance of all buildings, land and capital equipment within allocated budgets including the Manor House. In addition, it oversees the acquisition and disposal of land as agreed by council and the production of an annual programme for the refurbishment and maintenance of council owned property.

The committee also oversees the conditions of service of employees of the Town Council and making recommendations to council on matters of Health and Safety.

More details can be found online at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/committees/property-and-personnel

Sub-Committees

Sub-committees are appointed by a committee to focus discussion on a specific topic among an even smaller group of councillors. Otherwise, they operate like committees.

There is currently one sub-committee, the Community Centre Sub-Committee. It is comprised of four councillors and is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the new youth and community facilities in Wick and North Littlehampton. The Sub-Committee supports and informs the work of Officers and the contractors appointed to build these new facilities within the budget and design constraints that have already been approved by Council. Should significant decisions be required, the Sub-Committee will make recommendations to Full Council.

Working Groups

Council and its Committees may appoint Advisory Committees or Working Groups to research, advise and report on a particular subject or matter and make recommendations based on its findings. They can be made up of Councillors and non-Councillors (with a few exceptions, non-Councillors cannot vote).

Working Groups or 'task-and-finish' groups are occasionally set up for a short-term purpose. They are not subject to the strict rules that apply to formal council meetings and do not need to be held in public.

A working group cannot make a decision on behalf of the council, but they can explore options and make recommendations to Committees or Council.

There are currently two Working Groups within the Town Council.

Allotments Working Group

The Working Group, comprising of four councillors and members of the Littlehampton Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association, (LALGA), meets five times a year to discuss ideas for improving the sites. Their comments and suggestions are then taken to the Community Resources Committee for consideration.

Christmas Lights

The Working Group, comprising of four councillors meet to discuss the town's illuminations contract. It reports to the Community Resources Committee.

Progress Editorial Board

The Editorial Board, comprising of one representative from each political party, meet via Teams to discuss the content of the newsletter. The Board has its own Terms of Reference and specific guidelines. It reports to the Policy and Finance Committee.

Town Centre Action Group

The Action Group, comprising of town councillors and officers, district council, police and business and community representatives, oversees the implementation of the Town Centre Strategy.

Annual Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting is not a council meeting. It is a meeting of the town electors and normally takes place in between 1 March and 1 June. The chair of the meeting is the Town Mayor and the agenda includes items such as presentations from local organisations. The Town Merit Awards are presented at the meeting.

Representation on Outside Bodies

A Town Council representative on an outside body is exactly that: they represent the council as a body rather than acting in a personal capacity. This means that a Town Council representative must always act in accordance with council policies and bear in mind the limitations of the council as a corporate body, as well as the opportunities which council involvement can offer to any outside group. Town Council representatives on outside bodies allow those bodies to tap into the expertise and knowledge of the council and councillors' links with other public sector organisations, such as the County and District councils and the Police.

The role of Town Council representatives on outside bodies and a list of organisations with council representatives can be found on our website (see link in the Key Documents Section).

Standing Orders

The Standing Orders are the written rules of the council. They are used to confirm a council's statutory requirements, 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 refer to them. A local council must have standing orders for the procurement of contracts.

The standing orders control the number, place, quoracy, notices and other procedures for committee and sub-committee meetings.

Standing orders help the council to operate smoothly. For example, a third of the councillors (or three, whichever is the greater) must be present for a committee meeting to go ahead; this is known as the quorum. Standing orders determine:

- the order of business
- the length of meetings and the duration of speaking time
- the schedule of meetings for the year
- · delegation to committees and officers
- voting requirements
- procedures for public participation.

A physical copy of the Standing Orders is available at committee meetings.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



As a councillor, you share collective responsibility for the financial management of the council. The council has planned for its finances to be administered by an officer known, in law, as the responsible financial officer (RFO). The RFO is Jon Short who is also the Deputy Town Clerk. Your role is to ensure that the RFO acts properly so that the council avoids the risk of loss, fraud or bad debt, whether through deliberate or careless actions. Robust financial checks and oversight are of great importance.

As part of its system of internal control, the council arranges for an Internal Audit where someone, acting independently of the council, scrutinises the council's financial systems, risk management and governance processes.

The findings of internal audit are reported to the council, so, together with regular feedback from the RFO on the accounts, all councillors should be aware of the council's financial position. This ensures everything is open and transparent and you have what you need as a councillor accountable for the council's finances.



Budget

The budget is an essential tool for controlling the council's finances. It demonstrates that your council will have sufficient income to carry out its activities and policies. By checking spending against budget plans on a regular basis at council meetings, the council controls its finances during the year so that it can confidently make progress towards what it wants to achieve.

The budget is discussed over a period starting in October and finishing in January when it is approved. All committees work on the budget and report to council for discussion and approval.

All committee reports include financial implications which outline the costs associated with the recommended activities.

The council's current budget can be found on our website at www.littlehampton-tc.gov.uk/policies-and-strategic-documents

Transparency

Transparency and openness is a fundamental principle behind everything the council does.

Greater openness and transparency is part of a wider transformation process across local government and provides local people with the information they need to contribute to local decision making, help shape public services and hold the council to account. The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 requires councils to publish certain information and can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015

The council has a publication scheme in place which explains information available to the public, its format and the processes for making it available. This is particularly relevant when handling Freedom of Information requests and making provision for the public to exercise their rights of inspection of the Town Council's Financial Accounts. The Publication Scheme can be found in the Policies Section.

We endeavour to publish as much information as possible on our website including agendas and minutes, details of our activities, expenditure over £500 and grant awards.

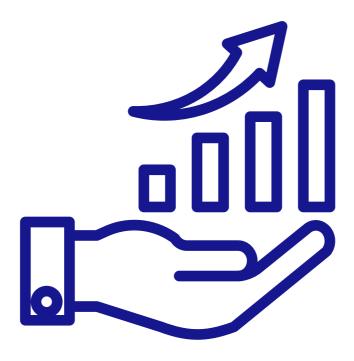
Value for Money

It is essential that the council is seen to provide value for money. This means ensuring that public money is spent efficiently to provide an effective service.

The financial regulations outline the council's procurement procedures.

Income

The council raises income from precept, allotment rentals, venue and equipment hire, weddings sponsorship, event income and grants. This income offsets an element of expenditure.





There are a number of organisations that provide support for councillors through the publication of useful guides and free training. We have provided links to key organisations and useful areas of their websites.

<u>Ask your Council – Raising awareness and encouraging good practice in Parish and Town Councils</u>

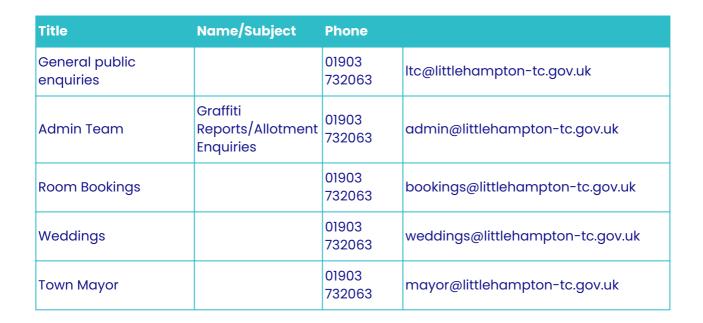
<u>Councillor e-learning - Local Government Association</u>

<u>Local Government Association – Councillor Hub</u>

National Associations of Local Councils – NALC works in partnership with county associations to support, promote and improve local councils.

<u>Social media guidance for councillors - Local Government Association</u>

USEFUL CONTACTS



You can reach officers by contacting reception on 01903 732063 and asking for the officer.



In addition to council and committee meetings councillors are always encouraged to attend Town Council events and activities as it offers an opportunity to engage with the local community. All Town Council events can be found on the tourism website www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk and below is a list of the key annual events.

Armed Forces Day

A national celebration of the achievements and contributions of past, present and future armed forces. The event is held on the last Saturday of June each year on East Green.

Sandcastle Competition

A fun event for families which takes place every August.

Screen on the Green

The outdoor cinema event is normally held on the third Saturday of August on the seafront.

Town Show and Family Fun Day

A celebration of the local community which includes a horticultural and craft show. The event is held at Rosemead Park on the second Saturday of September.

Christmas Lights Switch on

The start of the festive celebrations in Littlehampton. The event is held on the High Street on the third Saturday in November.

KEY POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS



Below is a list of the policies, guidance and important documents you need to read. All the listed documents are published on our website in the Members' Area - please let us know if you need printed copies. Please note that some of the policies require you to sign a declaration which can also be found on the website under Forms.

- · Code of Members' Conduct
- Committee Functions, Powers and Duties
- Committee Structure
- Communications Strategy
- Council Budget
- Council Priorities
- Data Protection Policy declaration (via webform)
- Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy declaration (via webform)
- Financial Regulations
- Guidance on Setting Up and Using Town Council emails
- Health and Safety Policy declaration (via webform)
- IT and Telecommunications Policy declaration (via webform)
- Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014 2029
- Member/Officer Protocol
- Members' Allowances
- Organisations with Town Council Representatives
- Press and Media Policy
- Public Question Time
- Role of Town Council Representatives on outside bodies
- Standing Orders
- Town Centre Strategy
- Whistle Blowing Policy



This handbook was produced by Littlehampton Town Council (2023)

Littlehampton Town Council The Manor House **Church Street** Littlehampton **West Sussex** BN17 5EW

