



Heslington Parish Council Induction Pack

Who is this pack for?

For newly elected or co-opted councillors, or for people thinking of becoming a Parish Councillor

What is a Parish Council?

This is the most local tier of local government. It provides a link from individuals and groups in the community direct to City of York Council (CYC). It is the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue.

What does a Parish Council do?

Parish and town councils' powers are generally equivalent to those of district councils. In practice, most lack the capacity to undertake the provision of public services and concern themselves with environmental, community and amenity issues in the locality.

The only power that is available exclusively to parish councils, and not to other tiers of government, is the power to obtain and supply land for allotments, if local demand cannot be met.

How are Parish Councils funded?

The funding for Parish Councils is allocated by the local council (CYC for Heslington) from the area's council tax. This is called an annual precept.

The income and expenditure for the next financial year are calculated in the form of estimates and this amount is added to the local council tax and then returned to the parishes in two yearly instalments.

Parish Councils may raise money from other sources if they so wish. They may

- apply to the ward for funds for specific purposes

- accept gifts from parishioners
- raise money from grant-making bodies or Government initiatives.
- set up lotteries to raise funds locally, though they must hold a licence from the Gambling Commission under section 98 of the Gambling Act 2005.
- set up a public subscription for a specific purpose, to be subscribed to by electors in the parish.

Who are the Parish Council?

Heslington Parish Council (HPC) has a quota of 9 councillors. They are democratically elected but can be co-opted.

Criteria for being a Parish Councillor:

- A citizen of Britain or the Commonwealth
- At least 18 years old on the day that he or she is nominated
- Registered to vote within the parish
- A resident in the parish, or within three miles of the parish, or working full time in the Parish for at least 12 months prior to the nomination or election day

A person is disqualified from holding office as a Parish Councillor if:

- They hold a paid office, or other place of profit in the council
- They are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order
- They have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to more than 3 months imprisonment within the last five years
- They incur illegal expenditure (when acting as a councillor) of over £2,000, or are found guilty of using corrupt or illegal practices

There is a professional clerk to the Parish who is accountable to the Parish Council via the chair. The Clerk to Heslington Parish Council holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification. This provides a broad knowledge of all the aspects of a clerk's work - roles and responsibilities, the law, procedures, finance planning and community involvement.

The Clerk to the Council will be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer.

A job description will always list the duties in detail but as a useful summary:

- ensures that the Council conducts its business lawfully
- administers the Council's paperwork/post meeting work
- ensures that meeting papers are properly prepared and the public is aware of meeting times
- implements the Council's decision

- keeps property registers and other legal documents
- keeps up to date by training /qualification
- responsible Financial Officer responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances.

The Parish Council employs a Lengthsman part-time. The lengthsman's role is to keep the village tidy and litter free, to inform the HPC of repair jobs that need doing or issues that the HPC might need to act on.

What comprises Heslington Parish?

Heslington Parish is partly in the Fulford and Heslington Ward and partly in the Hull Road Ward of City of York Council. The map below shows the Parish boundaries. It comprises the church of St Paul's, the village of Heslington and surrounding farmland interspersed with a number of farmsteads and individual houses and also includes most of the University of York (East and West Campuses), and the Science Park as well as most of Elvington Airfield.

Heslington Parish has a population of 6216 which includes 5742 aged 18-64 (2021 census). As well as individual dwellings there are houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), student halls of residence, residential care facilities and almshouses within the parish. There are also amenities including shops, a post office, 2 public houses, a village meeting room, a scout hut, a sports field and a children's playground.

Within the Parish, there are a number of designated Green Spaces, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Heslington Tilmire a site of importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) on Elvington airfield and allotment sites.

What does the HPC enact, influence or comment on?

HPC works alongside City of York Council on many matters including

- Road and footpath maintenance
- Street furniture e.g. lighting
- Planning applications as a statutory consultee
- Heslington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HPNP)
- CYC's Local Plan
- Promoting the Village Design Statement (VDS), Article 4 Direction and the Conservation area which covers a substantial part of the centre of the village
- The Village Meeting Room is owned by HPC and managed via the Meeting Room Committee

The HPC is represented in local community committees for

- Yorkshire Local Councils Association
- Heslington East Community Forum
- Good Neighbourhood Forum
- Ouse and Derwent Drainage Board
- Heslington Sportsfield

- Alms House
- Meeting Room

It works closely with the local police team on law enforcement.
It gives support to numerous village groups and organisations.

What happens at HPC meetings?

The Parish Council meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday of each month, in The Village Meeting Room.

Before the meeting:

- The agenda is made available at least three days prior to the meeting by the Parish Clerk and posted on the village notice board and HPC website
- Minutes of the previous meeting are circulated to councillors and amendments requested
- There is dissemination of correspondence, planning applications within the Parish and any other HPC related information sent out in between meetings. If these are not itemised on the Agenda, they will be discussed at the following meeting.

At the meeting

- There is a public session, at the discretion of the Chair, followed by a public meeting.
- A closed session may follow if, for example, there are Terms of Service, Terms of Tenders to be discussed.
- At least 3 councillors are required to attend for the meeting to be quorate
- Minutes are taken by the Parish Clerk

Members of the public may attend Parish Council meetings and if there is a public session, may raise concerns at the start of the meeting. When the public session closes, public may stay but purely in an observatory capacity during the public meeting. Only Parish Councillors may attend the closed session.

How does the HPC communicate with its electorate?

There is a Parish website <https://www.heslington.org.uk>

A Newsletter is delivered to all households 3 times a year and posted on the website and notice board.

The village notice board, on the gable end between Keepers Cottage and Home Farm on Main Street, displays Parish Council agendas, minutes, names of Councillors and contact details for the Parish Clerk and Ward Councillor. Other Parish notices may be displayed.

The Parish Clerk can be contacted through the website. Details are available in the newsletter, on the notice board, and on the website. The public can raise issues by post/email/phone.

What are the responsibilities of HPC members?

- Councillors must make every effort to attend a meeting. A Councillor who is absent from all meetings of the Council and any committees of which they are a member for a period of six months automatically ceases to be a member of the Council unless they have been given leave of absence by the Council before the expiry of that six-month period
- Undertake roles in working groups as required
- Follow up agreed actions from meetings or from correspondence between meetings
- Maintain a respectful professional attitude and encourage full and open participation
- Maintain confidentiality as required

Some Parish business correspondence requires a brief response between meetings. If there are larger projects, such as the York Local Plan, this may require actions and communications between meetings. Working groups vary in the range of activity required at different times. HPC representatives to our link organisations will attend their scheduled meetings or arrange a deputy via the chair when possible.

Maintaining clarity between roles

Councillors are elected to represent the interest of the whole Parish. It is expected that all councillors will make a full contribution to the work of the Council throughout their term of office. This will include:

- attendance at meetings of the Council
- attendance at meetings of committees and working parties to which they may be appointed
- being available to commit the necessary time to fulfilling this important and rewarding role within the community.

As a Councillor you will demonstrate an open mind for any issues that are discussed. If you have a personal interest in an issue, or you have already communicated about an issue to the authorities as an individual, e.g. a planning application that affects you, it is your responsibility to declare an interest at the HPC meeting when the issue is tabled. Being a councillor does not prevent you responding to an issue as an individual, but this must be shared with the HPC before they respond as a representative group, or should be acted on by individuals after the matter has been discussed in HPC. This complies with “the seven principles of public life” which are available from the Parish Clerk.

What training and support is available for new councillors?

This induction pack is intended for all new councillors as a brief guideline.

There are training courses arranged by Yorkshire Local Councils Associations on a range of topics available for both Councillors and Clerks.

Where can I find out more?

Heslington parish website www.heslington.org.uk for information about Parish Council business, policies and finances

National Association of Local Councils

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/1864-parliamentary-briefing-paper-2/file>

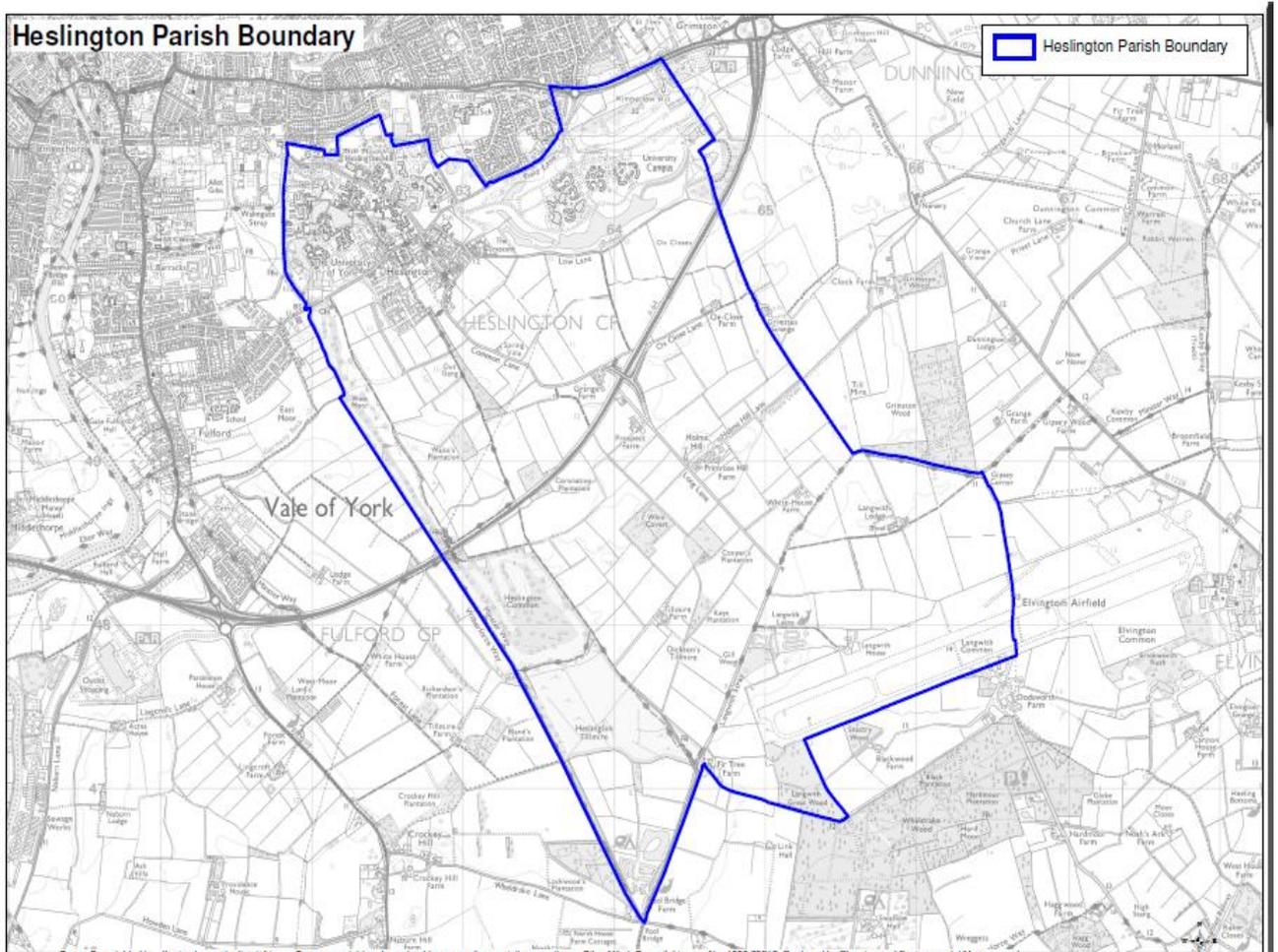
General information about parish councils

<https://www.localgov.co.uk/What-are-parish-councils/35176>

Yorkshire Local Councils Associations, Tel: 01937 228602.

E-mail admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk

Map of Heslington Parish Boundaries



Ward Boundaries in Heslington Parish

