

BINGLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Bingley Town Council, Myrtle Place, Bingley, BD16 2LF



Councillor Induction and Access Policy

Date of review: 4th October 2022

Next review date: September 2025

Introduction

Bingley Town Council recognises that councillors bring a range of strengths and life experiences to their new role and wishes to ensure that they are quickly helped to feel part of the existing group so that their talents can be harnessed for the benefit of the individual, the Council and the residents that it serves.

This policy provides an induction procedure that outlines how the Council should welcome new councillors and ensure that they are prepared for their role and are able to make an effective contribution to the Council's work.

The induction may involve providing information about how the Council operates in practice, seeking information about what a councillor may need to enable them to serve effectively and explaining what they should expect from their fellow councillors and Council staff.

To assist this policy, the Council will run seminars in the period leading up to the ordinary four-yearly elections that explain to prospective candidates the realities of life as a councillor.

Induction

As soon as is practicable after election, the Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk should contact new councillors in order to deal with the necessary formalities. Where more than one councillor has been elected at a similar time, it is preferable to arrange for a group induction course, for example with Yorkshire Local Councils Associations (YLCA).

Formalities include:

- Declaration of Acceptance of Office – this must be signed before a person can act as a councillor.
- Register of Interests – Bradford Council must be notified of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other disclosable interests.

If the councillor does not already have one, they will be provided with a copy of 'The Good Councillor's Guide' published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) (or an online link).

Other documentation

Councillors will be expected to familiarise themselves with essential policies and procedures (available on the website) including:

- The Council's Code of Conduct¹ (the purpose of the Code of Conduct is to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of the office, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect councillors, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and councillors' specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government).
- The Nolan Principles² (Seven Principles of Public Life, namely: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership; these apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder, including all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services).
- Standing Orders.
- Financial Regulations.
- Equality Policy.
- Budget for the current year.
- List of all councillors and contact details.
- Committee structure and membership.
- Schedule of meetings.

The Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk will also ensure that certain practicalities are completed, including:

- Setting up of email address.
- Identification badge – to be worn when on official Council business.
- Photograph and contact details for the Council website.

It will be important for new councillors to familiarise themselves with the difference between the **duties** of a Council and the **powers** available to a Council. There is a useful summary in the Good Councillor's Guide.

¹ Bingley Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct can be found here:
<https://bingleytowncouncil.gov.uk/documents/lga-model-councillor-code-of-conduct/?wpdmdl=230781&refresh=633e9ea2d67a61665048226>

² More information on the Nolan Principles can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

The Council is a corporate body and decisions are taken collectively in properly constituted meetings or by the officers of the Council. The role of an individual councillor is to attend Council meetings, represent constituents and undertake any additional responsibilities the Council has agreed by resolution. Councillors should take care not to issue any order, instruction or direction or make any inspection of land or premises, unless authorised by the Council. The Town Clerk will endeavour to advise in which situations it is appropriate for a councillor to act as an individual.

Communication

New councillors should be signed up to receive updates from the Council's website and will be expected to familiarise themselves with all the documentation on the site.

Role of the Council's paid officers

The Town Clerk of the Council and other paid staff are employed by the Council and their responsibilities are to the Council as a whole and not to individual councillors. The role of the Town Clerk is to provide advice and administrative support and to facilitate and progress the decisions of the Council and its committees.

Access needs

Every councillor should meet individually with the Chair and the Town Clerk for an informal welcome and to discuss any individual needs. Councillors should speak to the Town Clerk about any help they might need to enable them to undertake their duties. The Council will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of councillors, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Councillors will be expected to work with the Council to put any necessary measures in place.

The work of a council can be very varied, and there is a need for a range of skills if the council is to be effective. However, councillors should be advised, if not already aware, that their role will, as a minimum, involve a number of meetings, regular engagement with members of the public and a good deal of reading.

Council meetings will be arranged in venues with good physical access. The Council's Standing Orders state that meetings will not exceed 2.5 hours in length. Communication within the Council is mainly by email, and most residents will expect to be able to contact their councillor in this way.

Expenses

The role of the parish councillor is usually unpaid, although the Council can choose to pay allowances, including a specific allowance to the chair. Expenses can only be claimed for travel to specific training and to external meetings outside Bingley parish and for minor out-of-pocket expenses.

Training

New councillors may be asked to attend training on some specific issues shortly after they take up their role, for example on the Code of Conduct.

Ongoing support

Where requested, the Council will endeavour to identify an experienced councillor to provide advice and support for new councillors.