

Shepherdswell *with* Coldred Parish Council

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PACK

Contents

1.	The Council.....	3
2.	Code of Conduct.....	5
3.	Guidance / Training.....	5
4.	Policies and Documents.....	6
5.	Meetings	6
6.	Finance.....	7
7.	Planning.....	7
8.	APPENDIX 1.....	8

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council
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Website: www.shepherdswellcoldred-pc.gov.uk

Welcome to Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council – I look forward to working with you during your term of office!

The contents of this welcome pack form the basis of your induction to Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council.

Please do not hesitate to ask me about any aspect of this pack or Council matters that puzzle you as you start to get involved. All councillors have been new at some time and I will do my best to answer any queries you may have, no matter how trivial you may feel they are. A fresh pair of eyes often raises very good points that can improve what we do and how we do it!

I will arrange for you to have a dedicated e-mail account which may be used for all Parish Council related matters. All future correspondence will be sent to that address, including agendas/materials for Council meetings. Our [Social Media Policy](#) includes guidance on the use of email. The Council has a dedicated Facebook page, that is administrated by myself and two Councillors from the Communications Working Group.

I will add your details (photo and contact phone number) to the Parish Council website which is available at <https://shepherdswellcoldred-pc.gov.uk>.

The website provides access to many Council documents, including our [Standing Orders](#) and [Financial Regulations](#). These define, in great detail, how the Parish Council manages its affairs.

The information in the remainder of this document is divided into sections. The latest versions of the documents referred to throughout this pack are available on the website and links have been provided. Please advise me if any links are broken or the information appears outdated.

1. The Council

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council is a busy Council. We are the first tier of local government and play an important role in promoting the villages of Shepherdswell and Coldred, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Councillors do not represent political parties and are simply unpaid volunteers serving their local community.

We have responsibility for the following areas and services:

- Cemetery in Shepherdswell;
- The Village Greens in both Shepherdswell and Coldred
- Shepherdswell Recreation Ground
- Reed Meadow
- Meadow View Road

We also have oversight of the following facilities, which are managed by local volunteers:

- Shepherdswell Village Hall
- Allotments at Reed Meadow
- Scout Hut / Youth Zone at the Recreation Ground
- Village planters.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council does not have responsibility for the following services:

- Highways, including parking, and public rights of way;
- Bins and waste collection;
- Street cleaning, including maintenance of verges;
- Housing issues;
- Health and social services;
- Schools and education; and
- Libraries.



These are dealt with by both [Dover District Council](#) (the second tier of local government) and [Kent County Council](#) (which is the third and top tier of local government). They both have comprehensive websites where many routine issues can be reported. The illustration on our website provides more information on this.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council does not act as the planning authority, although we are consulted on each application which is submitted within the parish and sometimes beyond. Dover District Council is the Planning Authority and all planning applications, current and historic, are available on [DDC - Public Access to Planning Applications](#). You can search using a reference number if you know it, or by line of an address.

Councillors

The Parish of Shepherdsweil with Coldred comprises of two wards – Shepherdsweil with 9 Councillors and Coldred with 3, giving a total of 12 Parish Councillors.

Our website displays a photo and contact email address for each Councillor. Councillor contact details are also listed in the Shepherdsweil & Coldred News.

The next routine elections to Shepherdsweil with Coldred Parish Council will take place in May 2027.

Committees

The Parish Council meets once a month but delegates a number of its functions to committees and the Parish Clerk. This means that matters tend to be discussed in detail by the appropriate committee, which recommends actions for approval by full Council. Conversely, strategic decisions made by Full Council may be cascaded to a committee and/or the Parish Clerk for implementation.

A list showing the membership of Committees is on our [website](#). This is reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council which is held in May each year.

Staff

The Parish Council employs one member of staff, Mrs Jan Hancock, who serves as Parish Clerk, Burial Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). She works 17 hours per week on a flexible basis. Jan is employed by the Parish Council as a corporate body, meaning that no individual councillor has authority or responsibility for her employment. The Council has a Personnel Committee, which oversees staffing matters on behalf of the Council but all formal employment decisions must be made by the full Council, and councillors must not direct or manage the Clerk individually.

The Council has appointed a local grounds maintenance company to maintain the village greens, recreation ground, cemetery and other areas owned by the Parish Council. We also have a small works contractor who maintains/upkeeps our villages.

Acronyms

As a new member of the Council, you are likely to see and hear many acronyms at meetings and in e-mails. This can seem very daunting if you are unaware of the terminology. Whilst not an exhaustive list, Appendix 1 sets out some of the more common acronyms used by councillors.

2. Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

Please read and familiarise yourself with the [Council's Code of Conduct](#). Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council has adopted the Kent Code of Conduct. Any complaints about a Shepherdswell with Coldred councillor are handled by Dover District Council's Monitoring Officer

[Register of Interests](#)

Please complete this as soon as possible but in any event within 28 days of your election / co-option to the Council. An electronic version of the form is available on DDC website at [Parish council forms - DPI](#)

The completed form should be returned to me. If you have any questions, please also contact me in the first instance.

[Declarations of Interests](#) - form

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.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council also provide an opportunity for Councillors to request dispensation to relieve from restrictions on participating in discussions and in voting register their interests by completing the form linked above. This is agreed by Council and reviewed annually.

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) provide regular general and specific training sessions for Councillors which cover the Code of Conduct.

3. Guidance / Training

A copy of the Good Councillor's Guide can be found [here](#). This provides a straightforward overview of the role of a local councillor.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council is a member of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). [KALC](#) is a member-based organisation that exists to promote the rights and interests of Town and Parish Councils across Kent. KALC also provides professional support for member councils in all aspects of their work and when necessary, can provide formal, legal advice on a wide range of council related issues. KALC is affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

Training

KALC runs a comprehensive programme of training aimed at supporting the core work of Town/Parish Clerks, Councillors and Chairs. They are suitable for both new and experienced Councillors and include sessions by experts in planning and local government finance.

Please consider attending an introductory course as soon as possible, and any others you feel would assist you in your role as a councillor. Please let me know which course(s) you wish to attend. The cost of attending will be covered by Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish

Council, which has provision in the budget for this.

4. Policies and Documents

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council has a number of policies and documents which are available on our website. The two main documents are our [Standing Orders](#) and [Financial Regulations](#). These define, in great detail, how the Parish Council manages its affairs.

Policies and documents are reviewed routinely, typically each year, by the relevant committee and/or full Parish Council.

5. Meetings

A schedule of meetings is available here. The Parish Council meets once a month, usually at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of the month, in Shepherdswell village hall. The only exception to this is our July meeting, which we hold on Coldred Village Green. The council does not meet in August or December.

Agendas are sent out by e-mail, together with a meeting pack containing draft minutes from previous council and/or committee meetings and reports relating to the agenda items. Hard copies are not provided. These documents are also available in the member's area of our website.

All meetings are open to the public and start with "Public Airtime". This is when any member of the public can ask a question or raise an issue. It lasts a maximum of 15 minutes, although the Chair may choose to extend the time if a number of people wish to speak. It is important to note that this is the public's only opportunity to participate in the meeting, other than at the Chair's discretion.

If the Council needs to discuss a confidential matter e.g. competitive tenders, this is conducted at the end of the meeting. The press and public must leave before this part of the meeting commences.

The May Council meeting is termed the Annual Meeting of Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council. This is the meeting at which Councillors elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year and appoint members to Committees and outside bodies. The website includes a list of current [Committee Membership](#).

An Annual Parish Meeting is also held in May each year for the benefit of all residents. The Council Chair delivers an address describing activities over the previous year and local organisations are encouraged to attend and participate.

The Parish Council holds a surgery, usually from 1200-1400hrs on the last Friday of each month in the village hall. Each Councillor is asked to attend, to represent the Council, on one month of the year.

All Councillors are expected to attend all full Council meetings. If you cannot attend, please make sure that you let me know in advance. If you do not attend meetings for a period of 6 months without providing a reason(s) that is accepted by the Council, then you cease to become a Councillor.

6. 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 by DDC as part of Council Tax). The Council agrees how much precept it will request for the forthcoming financial year at the December meeting of full Council. This will be based on a recommendation by the Finance Committee, which meets early in November. The Finance Committee reviews the budget and considers other costs and income incurred by full Council before proposing a precept.

The Financial Report summarising the Council's income, expenditure, assets, leases etc at the end of the previous financial year is available on our [website](#).

7. Planning

DDC are the Planning Authority who decide all local planning applications. All documents submitted as part of a planning application are available on the [DDC website - Public Access to Planning Applications](#). You can search using a reference number if you know it, or by line of an address.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to DDC for sites within the Parish, and for some sites outside the parish which may impact us e.g. within neighbouring parishes.

Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council has a planning committee who take responsibility for responding to these consultations and report to full council monthly.

Although planning matters can seem daunting at first, and it is undoubtedly a wide and complex field, courses such as those run by KALC provide a good grounding and include sessions aimed at those with no prior knowledge. Other Parish Councillors, can also share their experience and provide guidance. Providing local insight and "insider knowledge" can be very useful for a DDC Planner who may only be aware of the site through Google Maps and what the applicant has told them!

The Department for Local Communities and Local Government has produced a '[Plain English guide to the Planning System](#)' which was published in 2015. Although there continues to be much discussion about planning reforms, the guide nevertheless still provides a useful summary of the overall system. Due to DDC's charging schedule, Shepherdswell with Coldred does not receive Community Infrastructure Levy payments for developments within the parish. Instead DDC seeks "Section 106" contributions from the developer, some of which the Parish Council can access to fund local projects such as improving our green spaces.

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

With very best wishes for your time on Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council.

Jan Hancock - Parish Clerk

8. APPENDIX 1

List of Acronyms for new Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Councillors

Acronym	Full Name
AGAR	Annual Governance and Accountability Return
CGR	Community Governance Review
CILCA	Certificate in Local Council Administration
DDC	Dover District Council
EA	Environment Agency
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HIP	Highway Improvement Plan
KALC	Kent Association of Local Councils
KCC	Kent County Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
LGA	Local Government Act
LGR	Local Government Reorganisation
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PROW	Public Right of Way
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer
S106	Section 106
SLCC	Society of Local Council Clerks
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
VGA	Village Green Association