

The role and responsibilities of Parish Council members

Parish Councillors have a dual role:-

- To represent the views and concerns of the residents of the parish to the parish council itself and, through it, to Dorset Council as its principal authority;
- To report back to residents on issues affecting the parish.

The formal part of these roles is carried out by attending meetings and corresponding with the Parish Clerk. Individual councillors do not have, and cannot be given, powers to make decisions on behalf of the parish council. This applies to the Chair as much as to the other Councillors, although the Chair does have personal responsibilities in connection with the running of formal meetings.

The less formal part of the role of a council member involves listening and talking to people, including members of the parish electorate and local elected members of Dorset Council. This is likely to take up the majority of the Councillor's time. Specific "rules of behaviour" apply whenever activities of being a Parish Councillor are being undertaken. These are covered by the adopted Code of Conduct.

The requirement for each council member to complete a Register of Interests is a crucial element of complying with the required standards of conduct. It can be difficult to maintain an appropriate distance from local lobby or campaign groups. This is most likely to be the case in planning matters, an issue that should engage particularly those Councillors who are also elected members of the local planning authority.

Each May, as part of the Annual Parish Council meeting, Arne council members take on a number of "representative roles" for the purposes of liaising with a range of external organisations. The list of roles for 2024-25 is as follows:...

Chair of Arne Parish Council	S. Cranshaw
Vice Chair of Arne Parish Council	A. Patrick
Allotments	I. Duckworth
Arne Moor Project Including Drainage	I. Duckworth J. Ives
DAPTC	S. Cranshaw M. Sims
Emergency Resilience Group	I. Duckworth J. Ives T Brodie James
Flood Wardens	J Ives T Brodie James
Finance Group	Full Council
Furzebrook Village Hall	A. Patrick
Imerys Liaison Group	A. Patrick T Brodie James
Imerys Corfe River Project	I. Duckworth
Parish Website	I. Church I. Duckworth M. Sims

Planning Working Party	S. Cranshaw M. Sims J Ives T Brodie James
Purbeck Transport Action Group	I. Church
Ridge Residents Association	I. Church
Rights of Way Liaison Officer	I. Church
RSPB/NE Liaison	S. Cranshaw I Duckworth T Brodie James
SANG	I Duckworth T Brodie James
SID Coordinator	S. Cranshaw
Stoborough Primary School Liaison	S. Cranshaw
Stoborough Residents Association	J. Ives
Stoborough Village Hall	S Cranshaw T Brodie James
Swanage Rail Transport Liaison	I. Church
The Hayricks Committee	I. Duckworth M. Sims
Tree Wardens	S. Cranshaw A. Patrick M. Sims
Wareham and District Development Trust	S. Cranshaw
Wareham Joint Burial Committee	I. Church J Ives
Wareham Relief in Need and Sickness Charity	A. Patrick
Wytch Farm Oil Field Liaison Committee (includes Perenco)	S. Cranshaw T Brodie James I Church