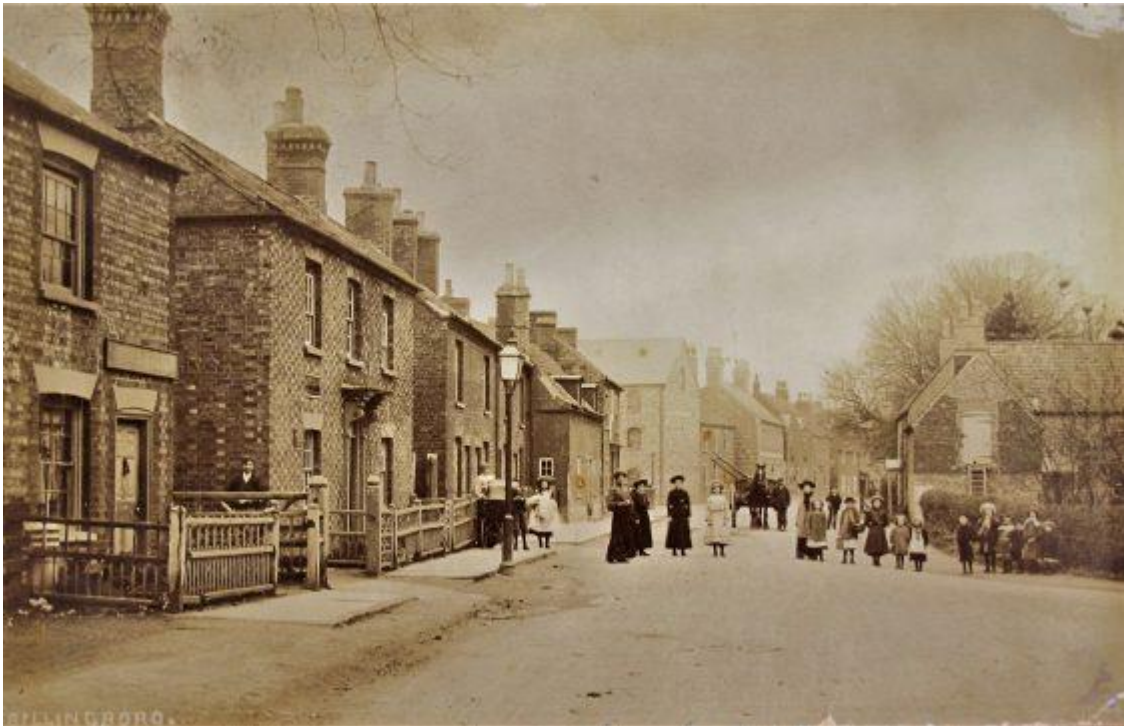


BILLINGBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION RESOURCE



*Billingborough - Pointon Road end of High Street 1890. Looking North up the High Street with the Fortesque Arms on the right.
Source: Aveland Archive, https://www.avelandarchive.org.uk/catalogue_item/end-of-high-street-harrisons-store-billingborough-1890*

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Welcome to Billingborough Parish Council

– we look forward to working with you during your term of office!



Starting as a Councillor can be daunting, and difficult to fit in to an already busy life, so please do not hesitate to ask the Clerk or any of your Colleagues about any aspect of this resource or any Council matters that puzzle you as you start to get involved. We've all been new at some point, so no matter how trivial you feel the question might be, please ask away. A fresh pair of eyes often raises very good points that can improve what we do and how we do it!

Councillors' contact details and areas of responsibility can be found on the website <https://billingborough.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/contact> this is where you can also see the previous years' Chairman's reports, (these are a roundup of what the Parish Council has achieved each year), as well as all the meeting dates for the year, financial figures, agendas, and minutes recording the meeting decisions and actions.

The website also provides access to all Council policies <https://billingborough.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/policies-regulations>. These policies guide how the Council operates, they are reviewed annually and updated, either when there is a legal requirement for them to be changed, or when the Council agrees to make an alteration, if doing so does not affect a mandatory obligation. All policies are important, and over time a Councillor should familiarize him/herself with the contents of all the policies, but the key ones to get started are The Standing Orders, The Financial Regulations, and the Councillor's Code of Conduct, all of which will be provided as a hard copy with this resource. Policies can often seem overwhelming, so please do not despair. The key thing is not to try and learn the contents of all these policies by heart, but to be aware of them and know where to find them. Sometimes, when looking for an answer of how to do something or whether we can do something, the answer is already there in a policy we already have. Knowing how to use them can help even experienced Councillors and Clerks, and gives us the confidence that we are on the right (or maybe the wrong) road.

How do we communicate with each other and parishioners between meetings?

The Council is obliged to have a gov.uk secure email, which is the clerk’s email. Councillors need to have a password protected, dedicated email address for Council business that only they have access to. All correspondence will be sent to that email address, including agendas and materials for Council meetings. The IT policy includes guidance on the use of council email addresses. In addition, the Council also has an informal WhatsApp group for Members and the Clerk.

Communication with the public is via the Parish noticeboard, which is situated outside the Post Office, the bi-monthly newsletter (currently edited by the Chair), is delivered inside the Your Local Lincs magazine to every letterbox in the Parish. Our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBillingboroughParishCouncil/>. Details of how this is run can be found in our Social Media Policy. The Clerk manages the parish phone, and residents are encouraged to make contact via the Clerk’s email address: clerk@billingborough-pc.gov.uk/. Any requests, queries, or correspondence received by the Clerk, are fed back at meetings.

Parish Information

- About the village →
- Allotments →
- Cemetery Information →
- Anglian Water Consultation *updated →
- Become a Lincs Resilience Forum Volunteer →
- Call Connect £2 fare cap! →
- Cost of Living Challenge →
- Heavy Rain Locally? →
- How to Report a Flood →
- Identify and Report Fraud - FREE Fraud Pack →
- Keep your dog safe →



Council Business

- Councillors Registers of Interests →
- Future Parish Council Meeting Dates →
- Parish Council Newsletters →
- Parish Council Vacancies →

1. The Council

A Parish Council is the first tier of local government and as such plays an important role in promoting the village as a whole. Billingborough Parish Council encompasses Billingborough and the hamlet of Birthorpe, a total number of approximately 1200 constituents. One of the Council's aims is to promote an interconnected village by supporting the work of different groups in the community. So, what is under the remit of Billingborough Parish Council?

The Council owns and has responsibility for the following areas and services:

- The Cemetery on Birthorpe Rd. It entails burial, interment and memorial fees and is liable for business rates.
- The Allotments on Birthorpe Rd, on part of the site of the old Aveland School. This is managed by a committee of volunteers known as B.A.G.S. (Billingborough Allotments and Gardening Society). The fees paid by allotment holders are split 50/50 between the Society and the Parish Council.
- The Recreation Ground, including the car park, the tennis courts, the field, the former bowling green area, the sports pavilion, and the play park area. This area, although owned and run by Billingborough PC, actually falls within the Parish of Horbling. Billingborough, Horbling, and Threekingham Cricket Club, as it is traditionally known, operates from here. Annual Contributions towards the upkeep of the pavilion and the recreation ground are received from the Cricket Club and Horbling Parish Council respectively.
- The Spring Wells area, which allows us to have a brown tourist sign in the village.
- The village planters and village entrance signs, currently looked after by volunteers.
- The Council also owns approximately 72 acres of arable land that is currently tenanted and earns an income for the Parish.

Billingborough Parish Council does not have responsibility for the following areas or services:

- The Village Hall.
- St Andrew's Church or its' graveyard.
- Street lights.
- Watercourses (apart from any riparian rights), drainage or sewer systems.

- 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.
- Libraries.

The above areas come under the remit of either South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), which is the second tier of local government, or Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). Both have a comprehensive website where many routine issues can be reported. It is often helpful to carry out a Google search to find the correct area of the site, and the correct authority to report to; e.g. report fly tipping to SKDC, whereas blocked drains and potholes, should be reported to LCC on Fixmystreet <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>.

Councillors and Staff

It's important to remember that Councillors are simply unpaid volunteers serving their local community, do not represent political parties, and every Councillor is equal. An election is held every four years, unless not enough applications have been received to provide a full Council. For Billingborough and Birthorpe, a full Council should have nine Members. When there are fewer than nine Members, if someone applies to join the Council before an election is due, and they meet all the requirements, they can be co-opted at a meeting of the Council. It is important to note that, even if there are vacancies, the Council does not have to accept any application presented.

All Councillors are expected to attend all Council meetings. If you cannot attend, please make sure that you let either the Clerk or the Chairman know in advance, giving your reason. 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.

Once a Councillor has signed an "acceptance of Office" form, they can join a meeting and vote as a Councillor. Within 28 days of being either elected or co-opted, a new Councillor will also need to complete and return to the District Council a form detailing any "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" (the Clerk can help with this). This is where a Councillor would disclose any interest in land or property within the Parish, declare an affiliation with any clubs, societies, etc., all to ensure that transparency in public office is maintained. Once submitted, these forms are displayed on the District and Parish Council websites.

It sounds like a lot of paperwork, but please don't worry, the Clerk will provide you with a copy of both forms from the start and will gladly help if you have any queries.

The Parish Council employs one member of staff – Mrs. Hayley Beaver - as Parish Clerk. Hayley is also the Burial Clerk (administrating the Billingborough cemetery duties), Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer for Billingborough Parish Council. She works 12 hours per week, on a flexible basis. There is no Parish Office so Hayley works from home. She responds to emails, messages and phone calls as soon as possible. If she doesn't answer the phone, she hopes that you would leave a message so that she can reply or take action as soon as she is able.

Committees

Billingborough Parish Council currently has one committee, the Human Resources Committee. This Committee exists because it employs staff (the Clerk). It meets once a year, consists of 3 elected Members, one of which is elected as the Chairman, and it reports to full Council. A copy of the HR Committee's Terms of Reference can be viewed on the website.

The Council has local contractors to maintain the cemetery (8hrs a month), Spring Wells area (8hrs a month), recreation ground (5.5 hours a week), and a community cleaner who litter-picks and is part grant funded (4.5 hours a week). Other contractors are engaged in grass and hedge cutting and for various aspects of maintenance of the sports pavilion at the recreation ground.

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 Councillor

2. Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

Please read and familiarise yourself with the Council's Code of Conduct, <https://billingborough.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/polices-regulations/4>, a hard copy is also provided with this pack. Any complaints about a Billingborough Parish Councillor would be handled by The Monitoring Officer at SKDC.

3. Guidance / Training

Every new Councillor who joins Billingborough Parish Council is asked to attend a New Councillor Training session within the first six months. This can be in person or online depending on the dates available. A copy of the Good Councillor's Guide, which provides a straightforward overview of the role of a local Councillor can be provided as an online resource, see <https://www.lalc.co.uk/good-councillor-guides>.

Billingborough Parish Council is a member of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) <https://www.lalc.co.uk/>, a member-based organisation that exists to promote the rights and interests of Town and Parish Councils across Lincolnshire. LALC also provides professional support for council members in all aspects of their work and when necessary, can provide formal, legal advice on a wide range of council-related issues. LALC is affiliated with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

Training

LALC runs a comprehensive programme of training aimed at supporting the core work of Town/Parish Clerks, Councillors and Chairmen. They are suitable for both new and experienced Councillors and include sessions by experts in planning and local government finance. LALC also partners with [Breakthrough Communications](#) who deliver online training in a range of communication skills for Clerks and Councillors. LALC's training schedule is circulated to Councillors each quarter. The Council keeps a training budget, so if you would like to attend any course, please let the Clerk know so that this request can be added to the next agenda for agreement. The Clerk will then be able to book your place, with costs of the course and other reasonable expenses, e.g. travel, being met by the Parish Council.

4. Meetings

Billingborough Parish Council meets nine times a year, on the second Tuesday of the month, except for the months of April, August and December. These meetings take place in either the sports pavilion at the recreation ground during the summer months or in St Andrew's church Billingborough in the winter months, but the place time and venue of each meeting will be on the schedule provided with this pack, on the agenda for each individual meeting, and on the website <https://billingborough.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/future-parish-council-meeting-dates>.

Agendas are sent out by e-mail, together with minutes from previous council meetings and reports relating to the agenda items. Hard copies are not provided.

Regular agenda items on a scheduled meeting agenda include:

Receiving any declarations of Interest. This is when a Member would advise the meeting if there was something on the agenda in which he or she had an interest, as the onus is on the Member to notify the Council, not the other way round.

To consider requests for dispensation received from a Member about a particular agenda item, including voting rights. This is when a Member would ask to either stay present, rather than having to leave the room, or join the discussion, and/or ask to vote, on an agenda item in which they have a declared interest.

To agree the draft minutes as circulated. This is when a Member should raise a disagreement regarding the content of the minutes from the last meeting.

All meetings are open to the public and start with a Public Forum at 6.30pm. 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 Chairman may choose to extend the time if several 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 Chairman's discretion. Councillors are required to attend the public forum, but if no public are present at 6.30pm the Chairman will commence the meeting at that time. If the Council needs to discuss a confidential matter e.g. competitive tenders, this is conducted at the end of the meeting as "Part B" business. The press and public must leave before Part B of the meeting commences.

The need may also arise for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be called by the Chairman or any two Councillors for major or urgent matters, which would be extra (additional) to the above meetings, but the same rules of advertising a meeting apply, i.e. each summons and agenda need to be actioned and displayed at least 3 clear working days prior to the meeting date.

The May Council meeting is termed the **Annual Parish Council Meeting**. This is the meeting at which Councillors elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman if applicable, for the forthcoming year and appoint members to outside bodies.

There is one very unique meeting that is not a Parish Council meeting, but is facilitated by the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk usually takes the minutes, and the Parish Council acts as custodian of the minutes. This is called the **Annual Parish Meeting**. This is a centuries-old

tradition which began with community gatherings, meeting in churches in medieval times to discuss and manage local affairs. It was established in its current form by the Local Government act 1894 and is now a mandatory community forum, distinct from Council meetings which must be held annually between March 1 and June 1. As it has been quite poorly attended in recent times, it has become practice to hold this meeting before the Annual meeting of the Parish council in May, with a start time of 6pm, but it is hoped to revitalize it.

A comprehensive description of meeting rules can be found within the Standing Orders.

5. 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 SKDC as part of Council Tax). The precept for Billingborough Parish Council has been around £20,000 for several years. The Council agrees how much precept it will request for the forthcoming financial year at the January meeting of full Council. The Council reviews budgets and considers other costs and income incurred before agreeing a precept. A copy of the Council's latest budget and precept request is provided.

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

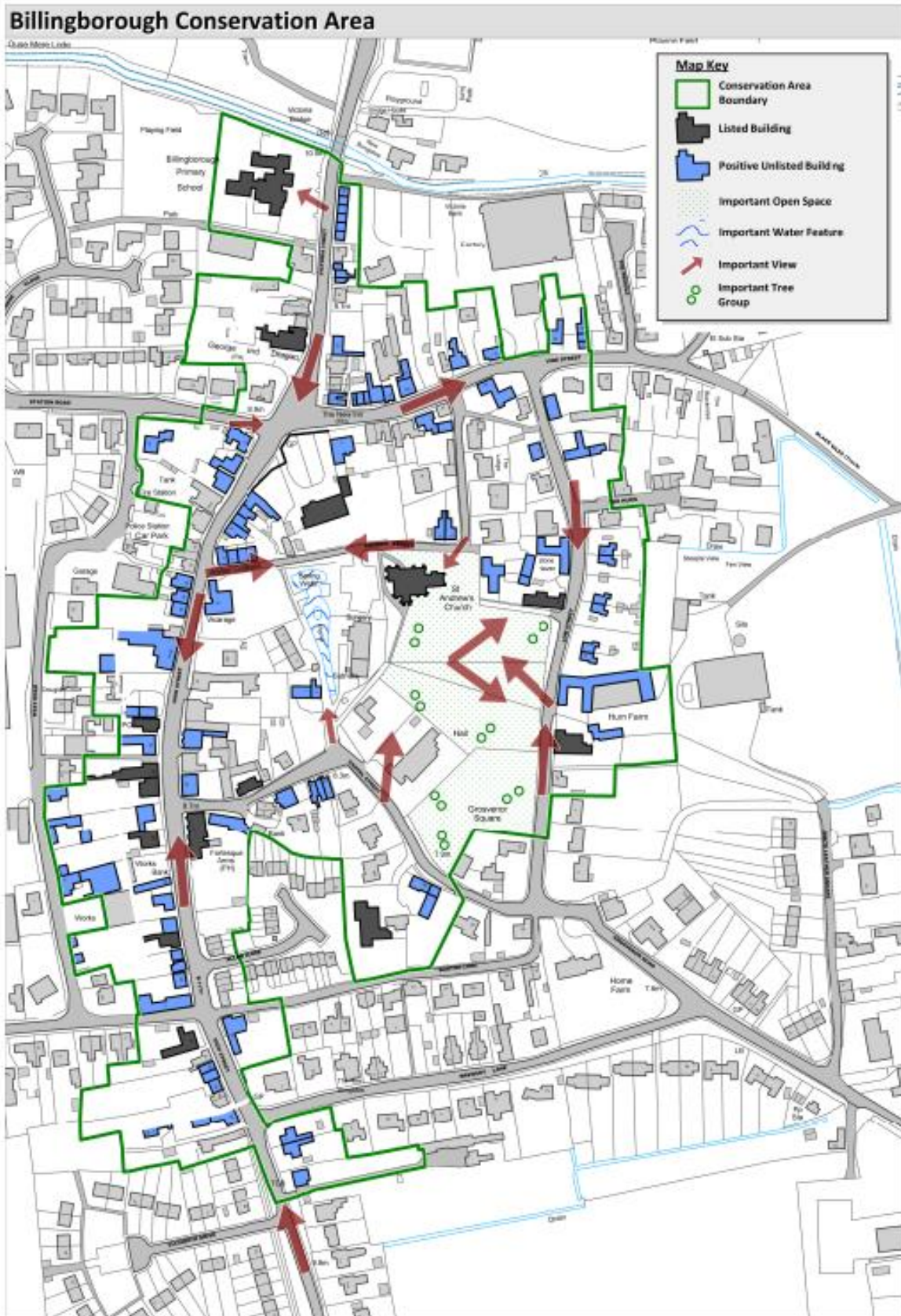
6. Planning

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

Billingborough Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to SKDC for sites within the Parish. Billingborough Parish Council submits responses to planning applications after taking into consideration any views presented by parishioners or the majority view of the Council.

Although planning matters can seem daunting at first, and it is undoubtedly a wide and complex field, courses such as those run by LALC provide a good grounding and include sessions aimed at those with no prior knowledge. It may also be reassuring to remember that you are not personally deciding the planning application but simply recommending a response which will be submitted by Billingborough Parish Council as a whole.

WISHING YOU ALL THE VERY BEST FOR YOUR TIME AS A MEMBER OF



BILLINGBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX 1

List of Acronyms for new Billingborough Parish Councillors

Acronym Full Name

AGAR	Annual Governance and Accountability Return
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AW	Anglian Water
BAGS	Billingborough Allotments and Gardening Society
BCEP	Billingborough Community Emergency Plan
BCET	Billingborough Community Emergency Team
BFG	Billingborough Flood Group
BPC	Billingborough Parish council
BPS	Billingborough Parish council
BVH	Billingborough Primary School Billingborough Village Hall
EA	Environment Agency
FOI	Freedom of Information
HR	Human Resources (committee)
ICCM	Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
LALC	Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils
LEA	Local Education Authority
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
LGA	Local Government Act
LGR	Local Government Reform
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
PCC	Parochial Church council
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer

POS	Public Open Space
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PROW	Public Right of Way
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer
S106	Section 106
SLCC	Society of Local Council Clerks
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage System
T/PC	Town/Parish Council
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
VHC	Village Hall Committee

Resource adopted on 10 March 2026

Review due March 2027.