**Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council**

**2023**

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**INSIDE**

**About Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council**

A section that explains how

The Parish of Oakthorpe Donisthorpe & Acresford is divided into three villages.

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**Explanation of the different roles**

Details of the difference in the statutory roles and how they all can work in harmony for the good of the community.

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**Useful Information**

There are links to many useful books and guides which give more detailed information to help you in your role as a Parish Councillor

**#**

**Parish Councillor Handbook**

Compiled by Kelly Grove – Manager/Parish Manager /RFO to ODA Parish Council

With thanks to Cllr Debbie Warren for her advice & help.

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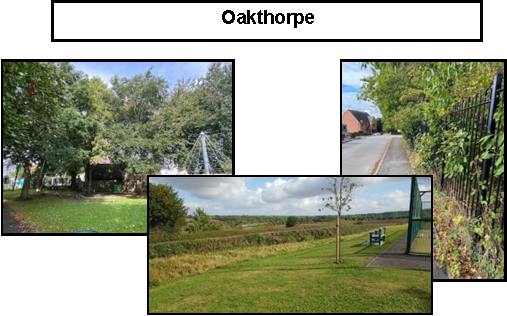
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# **About Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council**

The Parish Council holds an office and post box at ME Sports East Midlands Satellite Centre also known as Oakthorpe Leisure Centre on the Measham Road Oakthorpe. At present the office is closed to the public as council investigate converting the room into an active office. The Manager/Parish Manager /RFO to ODA Parish Council works remotely. The building is managed by ME Sports CIC.

The Leisure Centre building was built in 2000 with Lottery Grant and help from North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) to provide a football sporting venue for the Oakthorpe, Athletic Football Club to use and Parish Council to manage. It has been a venue for the community to hire for meetings, parties, exhibitions, etc. It is also the main venue for holding Parish Council and Committee meetings. The building and surrounding land is owned by ODAPC. The Parish Council functions with 8 Councillors elected. This is not a warded parish, and all councillors represent all three villages

The Parish Council, as a corporate body employs 1 x Manager who is the Proper Officer, Parish Manager and Responsible Financial Officer for 23 hours per week. (referred to throughout this document as Parish Manager).

The Parish Council have their own website which the Parish Manager recommends that all Councillors periodically take some time to view to gain more information relating to the many and varied services that the Parish Council provides and delivers to the residents of ODA: <https://www.odapc.co.uk>

The information in the remainder of this document is divided into sections. The latest versions of the documents referred to throughout this pack have already been uploaded to Share Point cloud storage and the council website (under policies or councillor information). Please feel free to use the online storage as you wish. Active links to policies and websites are contained in this document. The active links are highlighted in blue.

The Parish Council also have their own Facebook page which is an effective way of disseminating information to part of the community quickly: <https://www.facebook.com/odapc>

The next routine elections to ODA Parish Council will take place in May 2027.

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

# **Getting Started**

The contents of this pack form the basis of your induction to ODA Parish Council.

ODA Parish Council now provides its Members with a Microsoft 365 account, which will be their main method of contact, replacing paper versions of documents, as a way of helping to meet climate emergency objectives. A copy of the agenda is taken to meeting. Papers will be provided when asked for.

All future correspondence will be sent to that email address, including your summons’ to meetings (agendas). [Our communication policy](https://www.odapc.co.uk/policies.html) includes guidance on the use of our e-mail accounts.

Your online mail account has been set up so that it will include a standard signature on each message, which refers recipients to the Parish Council’s privacy policy. Please make sure that the same signature is included on any messages sent from mobile or other devices.

Your details will be added to our website, together with a photo. If you would like a brief biography adding, then please submit one to the Parish Manager for review and inclusion. With your permission we do publish councillor email addresses and your home telephone number in the 3 View News for parishioners to contact you. Other contact details such as mobile telephone numbers and addresses are provided for internal use only (by staff and other Councillors).

To login to your Microsoft 365 account:

* Go to <https://www.office.com/> in your internet browser.
* Login using the following details:
* Your e-mail address / login is: Cllr.X.XXXXXX@odapc.co.uk
* Your password is: XXXXX

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated\* Please do not change your password without letting me know as it is a requirement that the Parish Manager retains access to all accounts linked to the odapc.co.uk domain name. Logging in this way will take you to the online home screen for Microsoft 365:

**1 - Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

You cannot act in your office as Parish Councillor (including participating in any meetings of the Council or any Committees) until you have signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, click on this link for further information [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/83](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/83)

This declaration must be made before or at the first Council meeting after the date you were elected or co-opted. If you fail to make your declaration, then your seat will become vacant.

A copy is kept by the Parish Manager. Please note that when you sign the Declaration you are undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council. It is essential for you to read the Code; a copy of the current [Code of Conduct](file:///C:\Users\olc2\Desktop\Policies\Website%202023\Updated%20Code%20of%20Conduct%202022.docx) is available on the Parish Council website:

1. **- Registering Members' Interests**

All members of local authorities are statutorily required to register with their authority various financial and other interests they may have. A Register of Members' Interests form will be provided to you by the Parish Manager. The Parish Manager offers support to assist you with completing this form by arranging a meeting with you where it can be explained and checked before being sent to the Monitoring Officer at NWLDC. This must be completed and returned to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of signing the above Declaration of Acceptance of Office. This is a requirement of the Code of Conduct. The Parish Manager will ensure that the completed form is submitted to the Monitoring Officer at NWLDC on your behalf and will keep a copy on file in the office.

The Monitoring Officer keeps all forms on a public register which is available for all members of the public to view, either at the NWLDC offices upon request or to view on NWLDC’s website.

**Declarations of Interests**

An opportunity is provided at the start of each meeting of the Council or its committees for councillors 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.

You may also wish to read the Department for Communities and Local Government’s guide ‘Openness and Transparency on personal interests – a guide for Councillors’ which can be found online at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240134/Openness_and_transparency_on_personal_interests.pdf>

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1. **Code of Conduct**

The Parish Council alongside Leicestershire County Council & NWLDC has adopted the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) model Code of Conduct for its members', which reflects the compulsory model code prescribed by the Government.

When signing your Declaration of Acceptance of Office as a Parish Councillor, you undertake to observe the Code of Conduct. The importance of this cannot be over emphasised, particularly as breaches of the Code are liable to be reported to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer must consider all complaints, and these may be investigated. If a case is serious enough, it may be referred to an independent panel to make a judgement, which could result in the suspension of the person concerned or to the disqualification of the person as a Councillor for up to five years. Members have a duty to report any perceived breach of the Code. It is essential that all Councillors read the [Code of Conduct](file:///C:\Users\olc2\Desktop\Policies\Website%202023\Updated%20Code%20of%20Conduct%202022.docx) and familiarise themselves with its contents before you begin to act in your role as a Councillor. This can be found on the Parish Council website.

LRALC provides regular general and specific training sessions for Councillors which cover the Code of Conduct

**4- Attending your first meeting**

The first meeting you will be able to attend as a Councillor is either the meeting where you are successfully co-opted onto the Parish Council or, the first meeting you attend after you have been elected. Council meetings are held usually on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7pm at Oakthorpe Leisure Centre aka ME Sports. You will receive the agenda papers and supporting documentation at least 3 working days before the meeting by email link If you have any queries or questions about items on an agenda, please contact the Parish Manager who will be happy to help.

Meetings start at 7pm with a 15-minute public question or comment session. It is important to note that this is the public’s only opportunity to participate in the meeting, other than at the Chairpersons discretion.

The Parish Council delegates a number of its functions to committees and the Parish Manager.

This means that strategic decisions are taken at Full Council meetings and then implemented on a cascading basis. The Scheme of Delegation sets out who does what.

The terms of reference for finance committee can be viewed online at: <http://www.odapc.co.uk/parish-councillors.html>

The Parish Council reviews their policies and procedures annually and all current documents are available to view on the website:

Finances can be seen :- <http://www.odapc.co.uk/finances.html>

Monthly reconciliations and payments are found in the monthly council meeting paperwork.

# **The** **Roles: -**

# **The Council (As a whole)**

**Duties & Powers: -**

A duty is what a council must do. It is a legal obligation placed on the council.

The council represent the views and concerns of the residents of the parish to the parish council itself and, through it, to the district and county council; They report back to residents on issues affecting the parish.

A power is what a council may choose to do.

* Provide lifesaving equipment.
* To be notified of planning applications affecting parish
* To maintain war memorials
* To provide and manage recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces.
* looking after community buildings, open space, allotments, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, car parks and much more. The council also has the power to raise money through taxation, the precept.

The Parish Council provides services including:

* Green spaces including Donisthorpe Orchard, Memorial grounds and Football field, Triangle Hill St Donisthorpe, Acresford Green and memorial garden.
* One playground on School Street Oakthorpe.
* Council owns the Oakthorpe Leisure Centre building and land on Measham Road. (managed by ME Sports on a 25-year lease starting 14th Feb 2022).

The Parish Council does not:

* Have responsibility for highways, household bins, most street bins or housing issues. These are dealt with by Northwest Leicestershire District Council. They have an excellent website where many routine issues can be reported: [www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/contacts](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/contacts)
* Act as the planning authority, although we are consulted on each application which is submitted and on the Local Plan. <https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/local_plan>

We often recommend carrying out a google search to find the correct area of the site (e.g., reporting fly-tipping in the parish). www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/refuse\_flytipping

Northwest Leicestershire District Council is also the Planning Authority. https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/view\_planning\_applications is an excellent archive of all planning applications. You can search using a reference number if you know it, or by line of an address.

The Department for Local Communities and Local Government have produced a ‘[Plain English guide to the Planning System](https://www.odapc.co.uk/councillor-information.html)’, a copy of which is on the council website.

One of the most important things you will do as a Councillor is to agree a budget and precept for each financial year. The budgets and precept figures are presented to Councillors for consideration in December and then again in January, where they are required to make a final decision on the level of precept required and authorise the Parish Manager to submit the precept demand to Leicestershire County Council.

[Parishioners’ explanation](https://www.odapc.co.uk/finances.html) of the budget set 2023/2024

A copy of the Council’s last annual report written by the chair at the time is included so that you can read it and get up to speed with what has been happening.

​**Chair's Annual Report 11th May 2022**

There was not an annual parish meeting last year and this report will cover more than the last 12 months.

It has been a difficult time for many people, but the strong sense of community that has come to the forefront since the pandemic began has been inspiring. Voluntary groups and local businesses have worked hard to support those who have been struggling to cope or have needed someone to talk to in these difficult times and they have made a significant contribution to the care of the parish and its people.

I want to pay tribute to the work of members of the whole range of groups and to those who choose to stay in the background, making contributions in their own way. We also know there are those who, for a range of reasons and circumstances, are unable to be involved in activities and whatever the contribution, it is equally valuable to us all.

The council has been able to move towards usual business, returning to face-to-face meetings as we continue to carry out improvements to the parish.

A tree survey was commissioned on land the parish owns and the results of the survey provided reassurances most trees were healthy.

We continue to plant spring bulbs around the parish and the positive feedback from parishioners indicates the difference they make.

The project to improve the Memorial Gardens progresses and our application for funds to carry out remedial work to the gates is being finalised.

Responsibility for operational management of the leisure centre has now transferred to ME Sports, a Community Interest Company.

Three new benches and flowering cherry trees have been secured for the parish through an initiative by the district council, one in each village. The benches provide a place to sit and reflect on the those lost during the pandemic.

In response to the growing concerns about speeding across the parish, we purchased 2 Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS), currently in use in Acresford whilst we await confirmation of other locations for MVAS across the parish.

A new notice board was erected on Chapel Street in Donisthorpe, and others will be replaced.

Hawthorn hedging has been laid alongside the allotment boundary with the orchard. It will take time to grow and will provide important habitats over time as well as a robust boundary to the allotments.

This year marks an historic achievement by the monarchy, 70 years reign. In recognition of this unique historic event, the council has commissioned commemorative medallions to give to every child attending our two schools in the parish.

This is my final report as Chairperson of the council and I would like to thank colleagues for putting their trust in me to lead the council for the last three years and for the professional assistance and advice of Kelly, the Parish Manager for the last two years.

It also gives me great pleasure to offer congratulations to Kelly who has achieved a key qualification, the Certificate in Local Council Administration, otherwise known as the CILCA. This is the recognised qualification for local council Parish Manager s and along with at least two thirds of Cllrs being declared elected to this council, it now means the council would meet the criteria to hold the General Power of Competence (GPC) should it so wish. The GPC enables council to consider a range of powers and the right to act, that would not otherwise be available. A great achievement for Kelly from which the council and therefore the parish, can benefit. I am happy to end my Chairpersonship with such positive news.

Cllr Sue McKendrick

Chairperson

11th May 2022

# **The Role of a Councillor**

The Local Community and Your Role

The local community relies on its Councillors, the local community can view your role in the following ways:

• You are the elected/co-opted representatives of the whole parish of ODA

• People who are from inside the local community know what is best for that community. They understand the issues and pressures and can offer solutions that best serve the community.

• As a voice within the local community Councillors can champion the users of local services.

• The effective function of democracy is a key factor within a local community and Councillors are seen as key to ensuring that.

By law, you must:

• Attend legally, at least one Committee or Council meeting every six months (however, it is expected that you would attend every Council and committee meeting you have been assigned to. Circumstances permitting).

• Declare and take appropriate steps to acknowledge the existence and nature of any interests.

• Comply with the Member Code of Conduct and other related protocols.

• Observe and keep to your Council’s Member/Officer Protocol and other protocols that may exist, e.g., in relation to communication with the press and posting on social media.

• Keep confidential information confidential.

• Register all gifts received.

• At all times ensure the highest standards of ethics and conduct are maintained.

• Balance the different interests within your ward and represent the needs of all people within the ward and the whole of ODA and not just those people who voted for you or who are known to you.

• Become an advocate of and for your constituents by representing your constituents and bring their views into the Council’s decision-making process.

• Contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision‐making.

• In all outside activities, be an ambassador for the Council and always act in a professional way to reflect the best possible standards.

Doing Your Job Effectively

A Councillor should provide to the community a service and it will be up to the Councillor to decide how they devote their time, energy, and effort to provide this service. However there are a number of key fundamental areas that must be considered. To provide a high standard of service a Councillor must:

• Participate effectively as a member of the Council, Committee or external organisation to which they are appointed.

• Be available and approachable to all the constituents within the parish.

• Represent the Council to the community and the community to the Council.

• Councillors are collectively responsible for making Council policy and decisions, for which they are accountable to the electorate.

• Councillors are not directly involved in the day-to-day management of the staff or the provision of services to the public. This does not of course mean that there should be no contact between Councillors and the Parish Manager on such matters and, indeed, Councillors may often find that electors ask them to pursue matters on their behalf. However, Councillors have no executive authority, they will need to deal with all matters either through their collective Council membership or in liaison with the Parish Manager concerning a local problem.

• There are no circumstances where an individual Councillor can issue an instruction to the Parish Manager , any member of staff, or a contractor employed by the Council. Likewise, a Councillor must never act "on behalf of the Council" in the organisation of any function or service.

• Care should be taken when writing letters, emails or making verbal comments to the press or on social media making it clear to the readers so that they understand that you are expressing your ‘personal’ opinion and that you are not speaking on behalf of the Parish Council as a whole. Generally, the Parish Manager , on behalf of the Council, issues press statements. The Parish Council’s Press & Media policy is available to view and download from the Council’s website.

• One of the most important things you will do as a Councillor is to agree a budget and precept for each financial year. The budgets and precept figures are presented to Councillors for consideration in December and then again in January, where they are required to make a final decision on the level of precept required and authorise the Parish Manager to submit the precept demand to LCC.

There is a very informative booklet produced by Local Government Association called the Good Councillors Guide and a link to this booklet is on the 'Useful Information' page.

**Code of conduct based on Nolan principles –**

The Seven Principles of Public Life apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. Public office holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources.

Selflessness -Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity -Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work.

They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, family, or friends.

They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity- Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, without discrimination or bias.

Accountability -Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness- Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty -Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote/ support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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Oakthorpe Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council signed up to the civility and respect pledge (Nov 2022)

Alongside LCC, National Association of Local Councils (NALC), and One Voice Wales (OVW) they all believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

There is no place for bullying, harassment, and intimidation within our sector and signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge is one of the ways a council can demonstrate that it is committed to standing up to poor behaviour across our sector and to demonstrating positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.

By signing the Pledge, ODA Parish Council agrees that it will treat Councillors, Parish Manager, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles, and that it:

* has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
* has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors.
* has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a Dignity at Work policy.
* will seek professional help at early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
* will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
* will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model / champion council e.g., via Local Council Award Scheme
* supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the civility and respect, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

**The Role of the Parish Manager /Proper Officer/RFO**

The Parish Manager is the Council's Chief Executive and works for it as a corporate body. The Parish Manager has the prime responsibility for the administration of the Council, for managing any other staff and for carrying out the Council's decisions. The Parish Manager is not simply a clerical or secretarial officer whose role is merely to produce agendas and minutes (important though these tasks are). By analogy with the chief executive of a principal council, the Parish Manager also has the responsibility of advising the Council before it takes a decision and warning it against proceeding with a course of action that is unlawful.

The Parish Manager is accountable to the Council as a collective, corporate body.

The Society of Local Council Parish Manager s (SLCC) which the Council is a member of, has published the following advice note:

The Role of the Parish Manager and Proper Officer

The Parish Manager is employed by the Parish Council under section 112(1) of the Local Government Act 1972: a copy of the Act can be found using this link: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents. The Parish Manager provides administrative support for the Council's activities. Any other staff members, although employed by the Council, are managed by and are answerable to the Parish Manager as their Manager who is ultimately responsible for their performance.

The Parish Manager s primary responsibility is to advise the Council on whether its decisions are lawful and to recommend ways in which decisions can be implemented. To help with this, the Parish Manager may be asked to research topics of concern to the Council and provide unbiased information to help the Council make appropriate choices. The Parish Manager has a wide range of other responsibilities which are set out in their Job Description.

The Parish Manager recognises that the Council is responsible for all decisions and that the Parish Manager takes instructions from the Council as a corporate body.

The Parish Manager is not answerable to any individual Councillor, including the Chairperson. The Council must be confident that the Parish Manager is always, independent, objective, and professional.

'Proper Officer' is a title used in statute. It refers to the appropriate officer for the relevant function which in Parish Council's the Proper Officer is normally the Parish Manager . In financial matters, the Proper Officer is also known as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

Within the framework of policies decided by Councillors, either at full Council or Committee level, the Parish Manager , often in consultation with the Chairperson, will take many decisions every working day. Most of these decisions will be concerned with the day-to-day management of the staff and services to the public, but others will be concerned with more important matters.

The relationship between the Parish Manager and Councillors:

The smooth running of a Council and its affairs depends crucially upon a harmonious and positive relationship between the Parish Manager and the Councillors. It is essential that each party understands the role of the other and that, as far as possible, their respective roles do not overlap.

Personal relationships between the Parish Manager and a Councillor should not be allowed to influence the conduct of the Council's affairs. It is not unknown for animosity to exist between one (or more) Councillors and the Parish Manager, which can arise because of a failure to understand that the Parish Manager 's loyalty and responsibility is to the Council as a whole and not to individuals and that individual Councillors cannot monopolise the Parish Manager 's time. Such a situation can arise, for example:

a) where a Councillor wishes to be provided with information by the Parish Manager to further a personal matter in which the

Council is not involved.

b) where a Councillor is pursuing a factional interest without the approval or authority of the Council. c) where a Councillor is seeking political gain

A Parish Manager must resist any request of this nature and should, if necessary, inform and obtain the support of the Council.

The relationship between the Parish Manager and the Chairperson:

As a Councillor, the Chairperson of the Council should have regard to the considerations of the Parish Manager /Councillor relationship dealt with as above. In addition, the special position of the Chairperson means that they will have more contact with the Parish Manager than most Councillors.

It is good practise for the Parish Manager and the Chairperson to discuss the agenda prior to a meeting. This can help the Chairperson to ensure that the agenda items are properly discussed at the relevant meeting. It can also help the Parish Manager to prepare any necessary advice or guidance for Councillors on agenda items. It is, however, the Parish Manager s responsibility to shape and prepare the agenda and as the Council's legal signatory issue the summons to attend to all Councillors.

The Parish Manager reports to the Council as a whole, and while a good Parish Manager will be as helpful as possible, they are not at the beck and call of any individual Councillor, including the Chairperson.

**The Role of the Chairperson**

A Chairperson is a member of the Council who is elected annually at the Annual Parish Council meeting which must be held in May each year (LGA 1972 s.15). The elected Chairperson must sign a new Declaration of Acceptance of Office prior to taking the Chair at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

The Chairperson’s role is to provide leadership to the Council at meetings and to Chair the Council meetings in a fair and impartial manner.

At the meetings, the Chairperson has the authority over the meeting and must be obeyed; the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the meetings run smoothly, keeping discussions to the agenda points; maintaining order with the public in attendance and Councillors, ensuring that every Councillor has the opportunity to speak.

The Chairperson summarises the debate and facilitates the making of clear resolutions that the Parish Manager can record in the minutes and carry out. In the event of any tied votes the Chairperson has a casting vote. In the event of the meeting becoming disrupted the Chairperson has the power to close or adjourn the meeting with Council approval by resolution.

The Chairperson does not line manage the Parish Manager or any other member of staff. However, a good working relationship between the Chairperson and the Parish Manager is vital.

Some Councillors and Chairmen mistakenly think that the Chairperson is the executive head or leader of the Council and acts as the Parish Manager s "line manager" and has a duty of care to other Councillors. This is not the case. The Chairperson does not have any additional powers, authority, or managerial rights than any other individual Councillor. They Chair the Council meetings and attend to civic duties on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Chairperson must sign the minutes of meetings and ensure that all decisions of the Council are lawful. The Chairperson is the 'face' of the Council, in their civic role and at meetings to make visitors and speakers welcome creating an atmosphere to encourage participation.

**The Role of the Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer of Charnwood Borough Council has certain duties in relation to Parish Councils under the Localism Act, which include:

• Dealing with Complaints that Parish Councillors have breached the Code of Conduct

• Publishing details of the Register of Members Interests and any declarations of interests made by Parish Councillors on the Borough Council's website and making the information available for public inspection.

In relation to declarations of interests, it is important that these are made and submitted to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of becoming a Parish Councillor to avoid them becoming null and void. It is also important that you promptly notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes to your Register of Members Interests either directly to the Monitoring Officer or via the Parish Manager.

Failing to declare interests can, in some circumstances, be a criminal offence.

Elizabeth Warhurst,

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

and Monitoring Officer,

Northwest Leicestershire District Council,

Council Offices, Coalville, LE67 3FJ

https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/contacts/monitoring\_officer

**Council & Committee Meetings**

1 - The Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting

These two meetings can cause some confusion, but it is important that the difference is explained so that Councillors realise the differences and the importance of both. To avoid any confusion, the meetings are held on different dates.

***The Annual Parish Meeting*** is **not** a Council meeting. It is an annual meeting arranged and facilitated by the Parish Council for the Parish Electors to attend and raise matters of concern to them or to enable them to bring matters to the meeting that they would like the Parish Council to consider in the forthcoming year.

The presiding Chairperson presents the Annual Report to the electorate at this meeting, it is an informative document compiled in April each year by the Parish Manager and it details the achievements of the Parish Council during the year and the unaudited accounts for the previous financial year.

The report is also published in a local newspaper so that all residents receive a copy. Copies of the report can be found on the Parish Council website: https://www.ODAparishcouncil.org.uk/finance.html.

The Parish Council invites external organisations and partners that the Parish Council has worked with during the year to deliver a report to the Electorate and display stands are set up to increase interest and encourage more of the residents of ODA to attend the meeting. ODA Parish Council are continuing to build links to enable this process to happen.

***The Annual Parish Council Meeting*** is a meeting held in May each year and is a statutory requirement. At this meeting, the Parish Council elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson for the forthcoming year. Councillors will be invited to submit self-nomination forms for both roles if they are interested in standing for either position.

Councillors can self-nominate to become members of the Councils Committees and external organisations that the Parish Council supports at the May Council meeting.

At present there are three Committees of the Council – Leisure Centre Committee, Burial Board Committee and Finance Committee.

2 - More about meetings and who to contact

Calendar of Meetings:

A copy of all meeting dates is available on the Council Website: https://www.ODAparishcouncil.org.uk/councilmeetings.html a hard copy is provided to Councillors at the Council meeting in April/May for the forthcoming year, where Councillors are asked to consider and approve them.

**Parish Council meetings** – 8 Members:

Full Council meetings are scheduled wherever possible for the 2nd Wednesday of every month in the evening. Councillors are Summoned to attend, not invited. If you are unable to attend, you must give your apologies to the Chairperson of the meeting or the Parish Manager in time for them to be recorded and offered to the Council for their consideration, approval, and acceptance. If a Councillor misses any six meetings without sending apologies to the Council Manager, they automatically cease to be a Councillor, this is reported to the Monitoring Officer and a vacancy on the Parish Council is advertised.

**Leisure Centre Committee Meetings** (3 Members or more)

These meetings are scheduled wherever needed and at minimum annually. Usually, these meetings are during the day. The Committee meet with ME Sports to discuss any business and discuss their asset the Oakthorpe Leisure Centre building.

**Finance Committee Meetings** - 6 Members (all council welcome):

These meetings are arranged quarterly with focus in Sept/Oct/Nov on the draft budget/ precept for the coming year. These meetings are held in the evening. As this committee do not make decisions just recommendations to full council they can be held by TEAMS. Public are welcome to attend.

**Burial Board Committee Meetings** – (3 members or more)

These meetings are with several councillors from Ashby Woulds Town Council as the Town Council shares responsibility of the burial grounds with Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council. This committee works with the Burial Clerk and meets quarterly at various locations across ODA and Moira. The Burial Committee has its own separate budget that both councils pay into annually.

**Organisation of Meetings:**

At present all meetings take place in the Oakthorpe Leisure Centre/ ME Sports. In future meetings may be held at different locations to encourage more people to attend. All meetings are open to the public.

An agenda is produced by the Parish Manager and copies of the agenda and supporting paperwork is provided to Councillors five days before the date of the meeting which meets with the requirement of three clear days’ notice.

**Agenda, Reports and Minutes:**

When Councillors receive the agenda for a meeting, the agenda is at the same time published on the Parish Councils website and placed on the Parish Council Noticeboards in each of the three villages. After each meeting, the Parish Manager prepares the Minutes. Draft copies are not published until after they have been approved at the next meeting of the Council or appropriate Committee, this is in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders which are available to view on the website.

Draft copies of the minutes are distributed to Councillors with the agenda prior to the meeting. The Council agenda, together with the Minutes of the previous meeting and meetings of Committees forms the basis on which the Council conducts its business.

Council meetings are NOT public meetings and members of the public do NOT have a right to speak at these meetings, however, the Parish Council appreciates the importance of community engagement and provides an opportunity for members of the public to speak during 'Public Participation'. There are rules surrounding Public Participation and these can be found in the Council's Standing Orders.

A very useful [Legal Topic Note from NALC](https://www.odapc.co.uk/councillor-information.html) explains the legalities of Parish Council meetings and is available to download from the Parish Council’s website.

**Finance Meetings**

The Council’s financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

The Council’s main source of income is the precept (money raised for it via Council Tax). For the 2023/24 financial year the precept was set at £85,313. A full copy of the Council’s budget for the current year is on the council’s [website](https://www.odapc.co.uk/finances.html).

A list showing the membership of Committees will be provided. This is reviewed at each Annual Meeting of the Parish Council which is held in May each year.

**Useful Information**

ODA Parish Council’s Standing Orders

The Parish Council’s [Standing Orders](https://www.odapc.co.uk/policies.html) are Based on the NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (England) and were adopted at a Council meeting held on: 11th May 2022. Model standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements.

The Links below will take you to several different external websites where you will be able to view and/or download the information. The links are updated by the Parish Manager when new models are produced, and the handbook will then be re-distributed to all Councillors with a note on what amendments have been made.

National Association for Local Councils

The Council is a fully paid-up member of NALC.

Access To NALC website: LRALC Member Councils can access the website using the following details. Go to NALC home page (www.nalc.gov.uk) enter the following details: Username: leicsrutmember

Password: planning

Useful web links: NALC Legal Topic Notes and Briefings – [www.nalc.gov.uk/members-area/legal](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/members-area/legal)

[Leicestershire & Rutland Association for Local Councils](https://www.leicestershireandrutlandalc.gov.uk/) (LRALC) The Council is a fully paid-up member of LRALC.

LRALC is an independent membership organisation which includes over 300 local councils (parish, community, town councils and parish meetings) throughout Leicestershire. LRALC works to support councils by giving members legal and technical advice, information and training relevant to their work and generally to support their work and governance. Advice is accessed by the Parish Manager as required, unless on staffing issues in which case the Chair can also contact LRALC..

Councillor access to LRALC website: Go to LRALC home page (www.leicestershireandrutlandalc.gov.uk) scroll down to the “quick links” buttons. Click on “Member login” button. Two boxes will then appear:

In the first please enter: councillors@leicestershireandrutland.gov.uk In the second enter the password: Planning1.

Then click the small “Login” button underneath the box. Once you are logged in you will then be able to view and download all the private documents on the site.

A copy of the latest training programme provided by LRALC is on the [council website.](https://www.odapc.co.uk/councillor-information.html) Courses are provided which are suitable for both new and experienced Councillors.

Please consider attending a training course. The cost of attending, together with any reasonable expenses (e.g., travel) will be covered by ODA Parish Council which has provision in the budget for this.

[Society of Local Council Parish Managers](https://www.slcc.co.uk/)

The Council is a fully paid-up member of SLCC. Individual Councillors can view the website, but they are not permitted to contact SLCC directly. SLCC will only deal with the Parish Manager on matters pertaining to the Council as a corporate body.

Local. Government Association (LGA) - Guidance for New Councillors 2019/2020

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.166%20Councillors%20Guide%202019_08_0.pdf>

This information booklet is a particularly good publication which explains the role of a Councillor in great depth.

[The Good Councillors Guide to Finance & Transparency](https://www.odapc.co.uk/councillor-information.html)

This information booklet is a very good publications which explains the importance of the role of a Councillor relating to public finances.

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

With very best wishes for your time on Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council.

**(Mrs Kelly Grove) Parish Manager/ Parish Manager / RFO**

Part Time 23hrs (Hours Mon, Tues, Weds 8-2pm, Thursday morning 9-12, Friday 9-11. Please note *these hours are flexible* and can change).

My direct e-mail address is clerk@odapc.co.uk or manager@odapc.co.uk

Mobile: - 07766 516 438 (not for the public)

Home/council number 01530 610 357 (answer phone)