TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

Introduction

Town and parish councils in their current form have existed since 1894. Town and Parish Councils in the East Riding represent their local communities and, together with East Riding of Yorkshire Council, work in the interest of the people and communities of the area. Town and parish councils and East Riding of Yorkshire Council each have different powers, duties and responsibilities, but it is important that they work in close partnership to improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing in the East Riding.

This charter has been written in response to a desire for closer working relationships expressed both to and by East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Town and Parish Council Communication Review Panel (2019). It seeks to strengthen the relationships between town and parish councils and East Riding of Yorkshire Council by setting out their shared aims, values and understanding in order that work between the two tiers of local government in the area are characterised by professionalism and mutual respect.

Shared Values

- selflessness;
- integrity;
- objectivity;
- accountability;
- openness;
- honesty;
- leadership;
- professionalism;
- mutual respect;
- inclusion;
- directness.

Shared Aims

Every council in the East Riding:

- is democratically constituted to serve and represent its residents;
- wants to serve its local community to the best of its ability;
- wants to use its powers to make a positive difference to local people's lives;
- endeavours to work with other councils, public sector organisations and local businesses in service of local communities.

Shared Understanding

While there are similarities between the services delivered by councils in the East Riding, the combination of services offered by each is different. Many residents do not understand this at the first point of contact but, ultimately, each council will recognise that they serve the same residents and will help them to speak to the right person to address their needs. Before East Riding of Yorkshire Council suggests that a resident contact their local town or parish council, its officers will check the relevant council's website to consult its list of offered services.

Different, too, are the services offered by East Riding of Yorkshire Council. While East Riding of Yorkshire Council delivers some services which are similar to those offered by town and parish councils, its services are delivered and prioritised on a different scale, taking into account the whole of the East Riding. This can cause differences in perspective between East Riding of Yorkshire Council and town and parish councils in relation to issues such as planning and the prioritisation of repair and maintenance works. Every council in the East Riding will maintain an awareness of its own priorities and those of other councils in relation to all matters it deals with. The term, 'mutual respect', is used in this charter to mean that each type of council, while undertaking different duties at different scales, will recognise that any other council should be treated as equal.

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Communication and Respect

East Riding of Yorkshire Council and town and parish councils need to communicate efficiently to ensure that each is providing the best possible service to residents and to one another. East Riding of Yorkshire Council appreciates that the main point of contact with a town or parish council is likely to be the clerk, and that many clerks are employed for a limited number of hours. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will endeavour to respond to clerks' enquiries quickly, and town and parish councils will, where possible, address their enquiries digitally so that communication can be efficient, measurable and not reliant on everyone involved being available at the same time. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will communicate in 'plain English', avoiding the use of technical terms without proper explanation, and it will explain its responses and decisions.

Sometimes, it is important to meet one another in person. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will hold town and parish member network meetings across the East Riding in order to facilitate discussions between town and parish councillors, clerks, ward councillors and council officers about issues relevant to the East Riding and to local communities. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will welcome town and parish councillors and clerks to observe any of its public meetings, and town and parish councils will welcome their local ward councillors to their public meetings. Town and parish councils will endeavour to attend meetings that are relevant to them and to engage with East Riding of Yorkshire Council's consultation processes.

Ward councillors are recognised as important conduits for communication between East Riding of Yorkshire Council and town and parish councils. Councillors at both the ward and parish tiers are committed to working effectively with one another for the benefit of local residents.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council and town and parish councils understand that, despite their best efforts, individual councils may remain unsatisfied with certain outcomes or decisions. Town and parish councils will make use of East Riding of Yorkshire Council's complaints and feedback systems and relevant appeals processes to highlight their concerns. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will treat complaints seriously and respond to them according to the timelines agreed in its procedures. In order to avoid this sort of situation, this charter promotes 'directness' as one of its shared values. What this means is that each type of council will be candid with the other; open and frank in its reasoning.

While each council in the East Riding has adopted codes of conduct, according to which its members and officers are held accountable, this charter seeks to go further; to encourage an active effort to cultivate positive, forthcoming and productive relationships between councils. Representatives of all councils in the East Riding will address one another with respect and in accordance with the shared values set forth in this charter.

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Managing the Charter

The aim of this charter is to make sure that East Riding of Yorkshire Council and town and parish councils are committed to working together effectively for the benefit of all residents of the East Riding. This final version has been written following a period of consultation with town and parish councils, but East Riding of Yorkshire Council continues to welcome feedback on the effectiveness of this charter. The charter will be reviewed, taking into account any feedback received from town and parish councils, at least once every four years.

We, the undersigned, commit to working together in accordance with this charter:

Caroline Lacey
Chief Executive of East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Councillor Jonathan Owen
Leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Councillor WITTERNSEA.
Chair of _____ Parish/Town Council

**** *****
Clerk to WITTERNSEA. Parish/Town Council
14.3.22. Ref: 5064e

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL