



Alvanley Parish Council

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PACK

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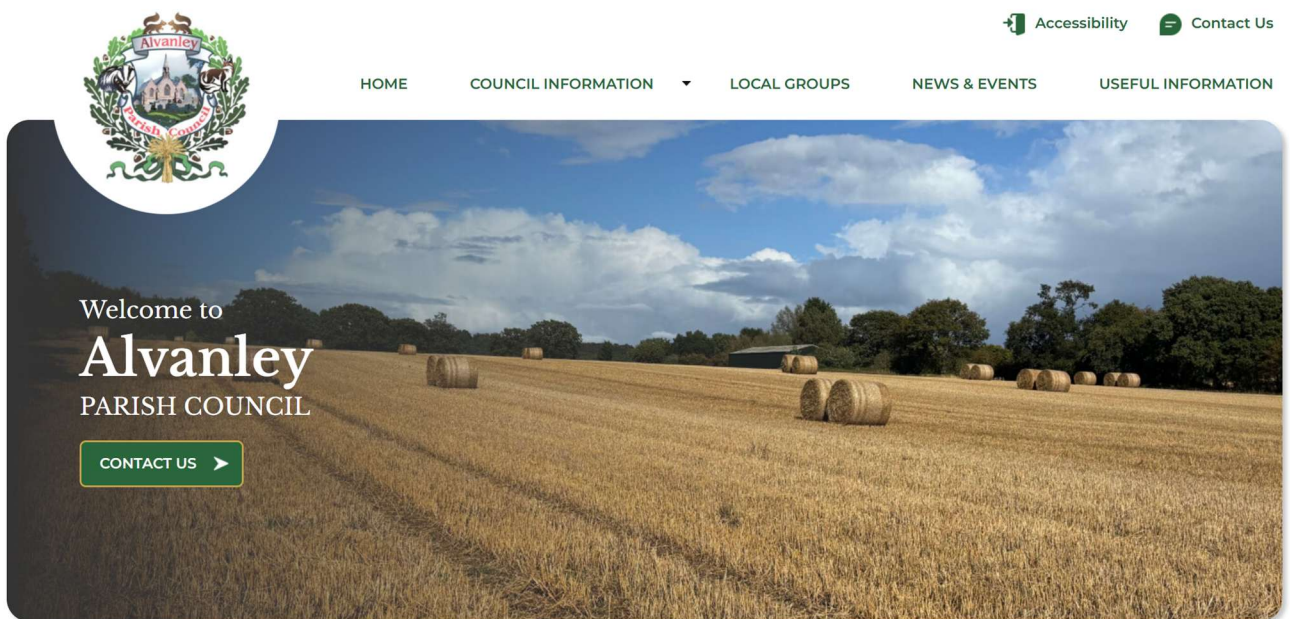
Welcome to Alvanley Parish Council!

We look forward to working with you during your term of office

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

Please do not hesitate to ask the clerk, 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. A fresh pair of eyes often raises very good points that can improve what we do and how we do it!

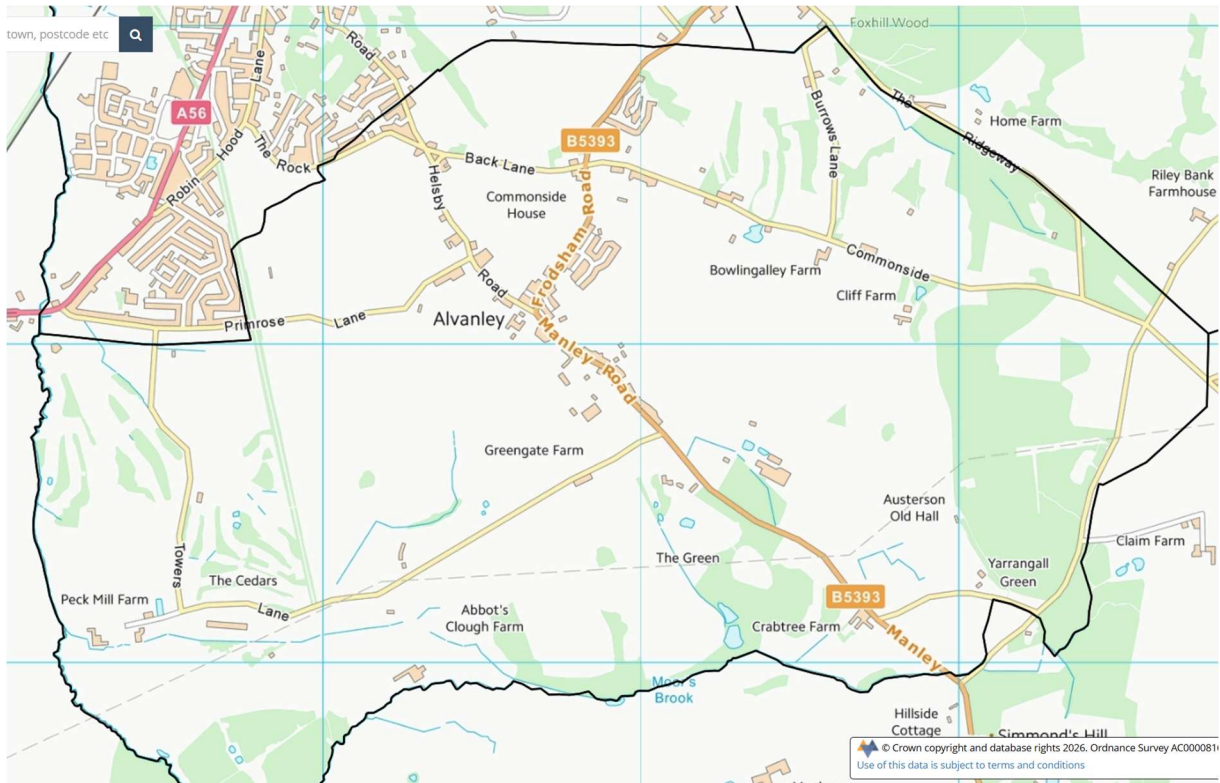
The clerk will arrange for you to have a dedicated e-mail account which should be used for all parish council related matters. All future correspondence will be sent to that address, including agendas/materials for council meetings.



Our website is a great place to start to navigate the work of the council! All of our policies and important documents can be found here too, including our [Standing Orders](#) and [Financial Regulations](#). These define, in great detail, how the council operates and manages its affairs. The website also contains our [Publication Scheme](#), which outlines the information we must disclose as part of our responsibilities under data protection legislation. These policies and documents are reviewed routinely, some each year.

On our website, you can also find our previous [agendas and minutes](#) of Council.

The next few pages contain some more information about the council, as well as links to the specific policy documents on our website, where relevant.



1. The Council

Alvanley Parish Council is the first tier of local government and we play an important role in promoting the village of Alvanley, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. Alvanley parish councillors do not represent political parties and are simply unpaid public servants acting on behalf of their local community.

Alvanley Parish Council does not have responsibility for any land or buildings within Alvanley.

Alvanley Parish Council areas of responsibility include:

- Organising Annual Community Litter Picking Events.
- Speed Indicator Device outside the White Lion.
- Providing Christmas lighting on Primrose Road
- Installing and maintaining the community defibrillator by the White Lion.
- Managing the parish council noticeboard near the Village Hall.

Copies of the Annual Report and Financial Summary Report are produced in April each year and presented at the Annual Parish Council Meeting. These offer you an idea of the topics handled by the parish council and bring you up to date on what's been happening in recent times.

Alvanley Parish Council does not have responsibility for the following services:

- Highways, including parking, and public rights of way;
- Bins, waste collection and street cleaning, including maintenance of verges (but we can organize and participate in Highway Volunteer scheme with the local borough council) ;

- Housing issues;
- Health and social services;
- Schools and education;
- Libraries;
- Crime prevention and policing.

These are dealt with by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) which is the second tier of local government. They 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 (e.g. “report fly tipping in Cheshire West”) or there are direct weblinks to various departments on our website. We sometimes offer guidance and support to residents experiencing problems with these matters or direct them to the appropriate department or officer. Alvanley also has an [elected borough councillor](#) who can follow up such issues within CW&C.

Alvanley 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. CW&C is the local planning authority and all planning applications, current and historic, are available on CW&C’s [website](#). You can search using a reference number if you know it, or by line of an address.

Crime prevention and policing is the responsibility of Cheshire Constabulary. However, we have a close working relationship with their local Police Community Support Officer, who acts as a liaison between the police and the community.

Councillors

The Parish of Alvanley comprises of the village of Alvanley and has a total of 8 parish councillors. A list of councillors and their full contact details will be provided to you. This is for internal use only by the clerk and other councillors.

We publish the name and council e-mail addresses of all councillors on the parish council noticeboard (located by Alvanley Village Hall) and on our website. Councillor photos are also included on the website.

Elections are held every 4 years. The next parish council elections will take place in May 2027.

Committees and Outside Body Representation

The Full Council meets every other month, all dates are available on the website, but delegates some of its functions to working groups and the clerk. This means that matters tend to be discussed in detail by the appropriate working group, which recommends actions for approval by Full Council. Conversely, strategic decisions made by Full Council may be cascaded to a working group, volunteer, councillor(s) and/or the clerk for implementation. The [Standing Orders](#) set out the powers and duties of each committee.

The council currently has no committees.

Councillors may also be asked to sit on local liaison committees and organisation to ensure the council remains up to date with relevant local matters, representation on these bodies will be reviewed annually.

Staff

The council employs one member of staff – Mrs Trudy Ryall-Harvey - as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. She works 5 hours per week, on a flexible basis.

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](#) which is available on the website. We have largely adopted CW&C's Code of Conduct, last updated in 2024. This document aims to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst councillors and helps to underpin public confidence in the council and its members. Any complaints about a Alvanley councillor are handled by CW&C's Monitoring Officer.

Register of Interests

When you join the council, you will be given a Register of Interests form. Please complete it 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 CW&C's website. The completed form should be returned to the clerk. If you have any questions, please contact the clerk. Full guidance on completing the form is available in Appendix B of the Code of Conduct document.

Declarations of Interests

An opportunity is provided at the start of each meeting of the council 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.

Cheshire Association of Local Councils ([ChALC](#)) provide regular general and specific training sessions for councillors which cover the Code of Conduct.

3. Guidance and Training

Alvanley Parish Council is a member of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC). ChALC is a member-based organisation that exists to promote the rights and interests of town and parish councils across the boroughs of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Warrington and Trafford. ChALC 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. ChALC is affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

An online copy of NALC's 'Good Councillor's Guide' should have been provided to you when you expressed an interest in joining the council. This provides a straightforward overview of the role of a local councillor. Councillors may register in their own name for a login to NALC's website using their hpc.gov.uk email address.

Training

ChALC 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. ChALC also partners with [Breakthrough Communications](#) who deliver online training in a range of communication skills for clerks and councillors and [CloudyIT](#), who provide IT training and support.

A copy of the latest virtual training program provided by ChALC is available online at [ChALC Training Events](#) and the clerk will circulate other opportunities as they arise. Please consider attending an introductory course as soon as possible, and any others you feel would assist you in your role as a councillor. The clerk can book you onto those course(s) you wish to attend. The cost of attending will be covered by the council, which has provision in the budget for this. For further details, see our Training Policy on the website.

Any Parish Councillors not wishing to undertake training will be asked not to represent the Parish Council on external committees.

4. Meetings

The parish council meets in Alvanley Village Hall for its Parish Council Meetings. A schedule of meetings will be provided to you. Meetings dates can also be found on the [website](#).

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

All meetings are open to the public and there is a "Public Participation" section to each Parish Council Meeting. This is when any member of the public can ask a question or raise an issue. It lasts a maximum of 10 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. a competitive tender or a legal or HR matter), this is conducted at the end of the meeting as 'Confidential' business, sometimes referred as a 'Part B' matter. The press and public must leave before this section of the meeting commences.

The May council meeting is termed the Annual Meeting of Alvanley Parish Council. This is the meeting at which councillors elect a chair and vice chair for the forthcoming year and appoint members to committees and outside bodies.

An Annual Parish Meeting is also held in April each year for the benefit of all residents. The council's chair delivers an address describing activities over the previous year.

Councillors are expected to attend all Full Council meetings. If you cannot attend, please make sure that you let the clerk 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.

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 CW&C as part of the council tax). The precept for Alvanley Parish Council is currently around £11,000. The council agrees how much precept it will request for the forthcoming financial year at the January meeting of Full Council. This is based on a the Parish Council reviewing a budget and considers costs and income expected by Full Council. The clerk can provide you with a copy of the council's latest budget and each annual precept request is provided on the website.

The Financial Summary Report summarising the council's income, expenditure, assets, at the end of the previous financial year is also available on the website, along with the Strategic Plan which sets out the council's goals for the upcoming year.

6. Planning

The parish council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to CW&C as the local planning authority for sites within the parish, and for some sites outside the parish which may impact us e.g. within neighbouring parishes.

Alvanley Parish Council does not have a planning committee but instead relies on councillors reviewing each application, mostly during Full Council meetings, and suggesting a response. The procedure is described in an Appendix within the Standing Orders and is coordinated by the clerk. A report containing our planning responses along with any decisions which have been made by CW&C is included in the meeting agenda pack.

Although planning matters can seem daunting at first, and it is undoubtedly a wide and complex field, courses such as those run by ChALC 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. 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 Helsby Parish Council as a whole. Providing local insight and 'insider knowledge' can be very useful for a CW&C planning officer 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.

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

With very best wishes for your time on Alvanley Parish Council.

APPENDIX 1

List of Acronyms for new Alvanley Parish Councillors

Acronym	Full Name
AGAR	Annual Governance and Accountability Return
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CHALC	Cheshire Association of Local Councils
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CILCA	Certificate in Local Council Administration
CNC	Cycle North Cheshire
CW&C	Cheshire West and Chester Council
EA	Environment Agency
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human Resources
LEA	Local Education Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LGA	Local Government Act
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
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
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
TTRO	Temporary Traffic Regulation Order