

CONSTITUTION

1. The Parish Council is the body corporate which represents the first tier of Local

Government for the Parish of Cornforth, County Durham.

1. Originally established by the Local Government Act 1894 the Council’s powers

and activities have been increased by many subsequent Acts of Parliament but are now governed by the Local Government Act 1972 together with the Localism Act 2011. The business of Cornforth Parish Council is regulated by the Local Government Act 1972.

1. Cornforth Parish Council consists of fifteen unpaid Parish Councillors

democratically elected by the registered voters who reside within the Cornforth Parish. Elections take place every four years in May

To be eligible as a parish councillor the following applies;

* he/she is 18 or over; and
* he/she is a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union.

and at least one of the following apply:

* he/she is an elector for the Parish and continues to be an elector; or
* has resided in the Parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land in the Parish; or
* has had his/her principal or only place of work in the Parish for the past twelve months; or
* has lived within three miles of the Parish for the past twelve months.

1. A minimum of three Councillors needs to be present to hold a meeting and form

a quorum, voting is by a show of hands or a written ballot if requested. A majority vote by Councillors is required to pass a motion put before the Council.

1. Parish Council meetings are held every other month throughout the year, except

in August when the Council is in recess*. (Period of time during which regularly scheduled meetings of the Council are not held).*

The date, time and venue of these meetings are publicly advertised in advance and are open to members of the public to observe and listen to the proceedings. There is an agenda item for Public Questions and a policy in place to guide both councillors and members of the public. Members of the public who attend any meeting will be asked at the start of this agenda item, by the Chairman, if they wish to raise any matter for the Parish Council to discuss. Thereafter, members of the public will not participate in the Council’s proceedings unless invited to do so by the Chairman. The Council operates a freedom of information policy, official Parish Council business is available to members of the public, in the main this is covered by the published minutes of the meetings.

1. The Council may set up committees or working groups to deal with specific

matters that require either more extensive consideration of a matter or more dedicated on-going support of an established local facility/amenity.

1. The purpose of Cornforth Parish Council is to work within its statutory powers to

maintain and enhance the public amenities within the village and to help the people of Cornforth improve their quality of life by working in partnership with Durham County Council.

1. The Parish Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the

law without favour or prejudice and utilise its limited funding to achieve the greatest good for the community. The funding being obtained by levying a precept on the Council Tax paid by residents of the Parish, the amount being controlled by Durham County Council.

1. Councillors agree to follow the Parish Councils’ Code of Conduct, which is

overseen by Durham County Council.

1. The Council’s financial and administrative affairs are dealt with by the Parish Clerk, who is a part time employee of the Parish Council. All expenditures require signatures from two councillors and the Parish Clerk and are reported to all other Councillors at the next available Parish Council meeting.

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

In order to give effect to good governance the parish council commits time to producing and annually reviewing, their governance documents. These documents set the environment in which the council discharges its duties and powers. They constitute the internal rules, practical arrangements and processes which are essential to those who form and work for the council.

The Core governing documents for Cornforth Parish Council comprise:

* STANDING ORDERS
* FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
* TERMS OF REFERENCE
* CODE OF CONDUCT
* HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
* PUBLICATION SCHEME

These governing documents may be amended with a view to improving the council’s method and efficiency in conducting its business. The documents are reviewed annually and all updates/changes agreed by full council at its Annual Meeting in May each year, or as required.

Copies of these documents are all available on the council web site –

[www.cornforthparishcouncil.org](http://www.cornforthparishcouncil.org)