

Canterbury District Parish Charter

Introduction:

This charter has been jointly created by Canterbury City Council and the parish councils within the district to ensure that all parties continue to work as efficiently together as possible for the benefit of local people.

Definition:

A charter is a document describing the relationship between two parties and aims to encourage good working practices. This charter represents a mutual agreement between Canterbury City Council and each parish council within the district. It is a statement of intent, but not a legally binding document.

Aims:

- To clearly define the expectations that both Canterbury City Council and the parishes have of each other.
- To set out what both parties can contribute to develop and maintain good relationships.
- To mutually acknowledge the vital roles played by both parties in local democracy.

Personnel

The city council will normally conduct communications with parishes through the parish clerks. It is recognised that some parish clerks are employed on a part-time basis. Clerks are expected to inform the City Council of their normal availability

1. Communication and Information Sharing:

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Make effective use of websites and emails for timeliness, efficiency and environmental reasons.	Make effective use of websites and emails for timeliness, efficiency and environmental reasons, and encourage parish councillors to do the same.
Hold a publicly accessible, up-to-date list of parish clerks and links to parish webpages on the city council's website. www.canterbury.gov.uk	Promptly inform the council of any changes to this information.
Use plain English and avoid, where possible, using jargon when communicating with the parish councils.	Use plain English, avoid using jargon and ask for clarification if an issue is unclear.
Have public links on its website to its compliments, complaints and other feedback processes.	Put a process in place for compliments, complaints and other feedback, and make residents aware of this, if not already available.

2. Consultation:

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Where possible provide a minimum of 6 weeks for consultation on any district wide or specific issues that affect parishes- other than in cases where the council is bound by other statutory requirements eg planning applications.	Actively respond to consultations and put delegated authority mechanisms in place for issues that cannot be dealt with within this timescale.
Always acknowledge receipt of correspondence, provide an estimate of when a formal response will be forthcoming, and inform parishes of outcomes.	Always acknowledge receipt of correspondence

3. Service Delivery:

Parish councils and the city council share a number of statutory functions and also share the desire to deliver joined up effective and efficient local government services to the public.

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Deliver services on behalf of, and to, its residents that are value for money and follow the council's Contract Standing Orders to procure the best services at the right price.	Continue to ensure value for money when delivering local services, and where appropriate consider alternative providers and collaboration with other parishes to deliver services.
Ensure that all service providers meet the required health and safety standards with appropriate public liability insurance and risk assessments.	

4. Democracy and community leadership

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Canterbury city councillors will endeavour to attend parish council meetings regularly.	Provide city councillors with papers for parish council meetings in advance.
Hold an annual rural forum to facilitate partnership working between the parishes and the district and agree the agenda with parish councils.	Send a representative to this forum.
Continue to give the public the opportunity to speak at council meetings.	Send a representative to attend council meetings and committees when appropriate.
Encourage parish council representation on council committees- ie standards and joint transportation boards.	
Continue to provide the facility for parish councils to have online access to, and sign	Sign up to this service.

up for alerts when, committee agendas are published.	
Collate and publish the parish register of interests on behalf of the parish councils.	Annually update the council about changes to this register.
Provide administrative support for parish council elections and locally raised referendums.	Advise the council of vacancies and promote these locally, and support all democratic and electoral processes.

5. Finance/funding

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Collect precepts as appropriate on behalf of the parish councils.	Return any required financial information within the set timescales, to allow the council to adhere to its statutory requirements.
To process precept and other payments to the parish councils within published time scales.	Provide evidence of expenditure relating to any grants or reimbursements received from the city council.
Consult with parish councils about any budget changes which may have a direct impact on them.	Actively respond to budget consultations within timescales set by the city council.

6. Advice and support:

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Ensure an officer from the relevant service will respond to specific queries/issues raised by parish councils.	Take responsibility for acting on advice given by these officers on issues affecting their community.
Provide useful contacts on its website-to signpost parish councils to other support.	

7. Planning:

Canterbury City Council undertakes to :	Parish Councils undertake to:
Ensure that parish councils have every opportunity to engage in the development of the local plan.	Help engage local residents in the local plan development process.
Inform parish councils about, and ensure they have sight of, relevant planning applications and allow the statutory 21 day response period for comments. Note	Submit comments within this period to enable CCC to process applications within the timescales set out in the legal framework of the Town and Country Planning Act.

submissions made by parish councils (as statutory bodies).	
Ensure Parishes can access the online information and alert system which is updated daily.	Make effective use of websites, on-line systems and emails for timeliness, efficiency and environmental reasons.
Consider comments and concerns about applications that have an impact on a specific parish or group of parishes.	Where a parish council has registered an objection to a specific application they will endeavour to send a representative to the Developmental Management Committee meeting which arises.

8. Monitoring and review

Parish councils are encouraged to express their views on the content and effectiveness of this *parish charter*.

Feedback will be used to review the parish charter two years from its adoption and then at four year intervals. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the council's complaints procedure.

Any comments should be directed to Lynda Gatusch - Lynda.gatusch@canterbury.gov.uk

Dec 2013.