

# **GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The following Constitution has been agreed by Great Aycliffe Town Council. It contains information about how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that those decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to the community.

The Constitution is divided into 14 articles which set out the basic rules for governing the Council's business.

If the document is being viewed electronically hyperlinks will take you to the policies and procedures referred to.

However, if you wish to view a hard copy, arrangements should be made by contacting Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 6QF, telephone 01325 300700 or email [info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk](mailto:info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk).

There may be a small charge for copies of documents. In addition a large amount of information can be found on the Council's website [www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk](http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk).

## **PURPOSE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The purpose of the Constitution is to bring together a number of documents to:

1. Enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
2. Enable the Council to be a clear, transparent and accountable organisation;
3. Create an effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
4. Ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable;
5. Encourage the active involvement of citizens in the Town Council's decision making;

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

All of the elements of the Constitution aim to assist the Town Council in achieving its mission to be:-

*"A proactive and responsive Council, working in partnership, listening to and speaking up for the community, contributing towards making Great Aycliffe an excellent place in which to live for all its residents".*

## **COUNCIL STRATEGIC AIMS**

The Council has agreed eight strategic aims in support of its mission statement. These are:

1. *To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.*
2. *To manage the council's finances and assets in a responsible manner.*
3. *To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.*
4. *To provide pre-school education as appropriate in Great Aycliffe.*
5. *To contribute to the environmental improvement of Aycliffe by managing and developing parks, play areas and green spaces.*
6. *To help and encourage partnership working to improve the services and facilities for the residents of Great Aycliffe.*
7. *To encourage the residents of Great Aycliffe to become involved in local democracy.*
8. *To research information and make the case for Great Aycliffe.*

## COUNCIL SERVICES, FACILITIES, INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

Great Aycliffe Town Council provides a wide variety of services to the local community and these services are set out below:

- Oakleaf Sports Complex which provides an indoor bowls green, a multi-use sports hall, four squash courts, a function room, bar and catering facilities and a programme of community events and activities for children.
- Oakleaf Golf Complex comprising an eighteen-hole golf course, eighteen-bay floodlit driving range, golf shop and changing rooms.
- Provide, maintain and undertake burial services at two cemeteries at West Cemetery and Stephenson Way. Also provide grounds maintenance and burial services at St Andrew's Churchyard in Aycliffe Village.
- Manage the following ten parks, all with play equipment:

Town Park	West Park
Moore Lane Park	Aycliffe Village Park
Simpasture Park	Byerley Park
St Oswald's Park	Woodham Park
Cobblers Hall Park	Horndale Park
- Provide additional play areas at Scott Place, School Aycliffe and Oak Leaf Sports Complex, plus five Multi-Use Games Areas, a BMX Track, a Scoot Track, and a Skate Park.
- Provide eight football pitches, including junior football and six a side pitches at three sites at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex, Simpasture Park and Moore Lane Park.
- Provide a Pre-School Learning Centre located in St. Oswald's Park which is currently registered for 40 places for 3 and 4-year-old children as well as a setting for two-year olds called 'Tots in the Park', offering 12 places, morning and afternoon, 5 days per week. Both pre-schools are rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- Run a programme of community events including Fun-in-the-Parks, Santa Tours, Firework Display, Senior Citizen Trips, and Christmas Lights.
- Provide funding and assist and support other event organisers in running events such as the Big Brass Bash, Ayclife Music Festival, Remembrance Day Parade, Tri-Golf Schools Event, Girls Can Football, Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society Vintage Bus Event, Annual Indoor Bowls Competition and Community Enhancement Awards (floral displays and festive lights).
- A range of civic events including the civic ball and mayor at home.
- Provision and maintenance of Aycliffe Angels Memorial Garden,
- Ownership and maintenance of the war memorial and flagpole.
- Provide over 220 allotment sites located at:
  - Clarence Chare
  - Finchale Road
  - St. Oswald's
  - Aycliffe Village and
  - Byerley Park
- Also offer facilities for keeping pigeons and poultry, as well as beekeeping plots at specific allotments sites.
- The Council also provides a home at Clarence Chare Allotments for the Great Aycliffe Garden Guild, who run a not-for-profit allotments shop and community room on site.
- Run an Eco Centre at Moore Lane Park which is currently occupied by Green Arts who run arts programmes, activities and events from the building.

- Encourages interest in the environment of Great Aycliffe through the Works and Environment Manager and his team who work to deliver a comprehensive programme of environmental activities and events for schools, community groups, and deliver an Environment Week, which involves visiting the primary schools in the town to give an interactive presentation on litter and then offering the opportunity for the children to take part in a litter pick in their local community.
- Assists a number of community groups such as Great Aycliffe Tidy Team, local scouts and guides groups.
- Declaration of a Climate Emergency and working towards reducing the Council's carbon footprint and becoming carbon zero by 2050.
- Provide public seats and litter and dog bins on town council land.
- Provide over 50 bus shelters (not the ones with adverts).
- Undertake grounds maintenance e.g. the provision of flower beds, grass cutting and tree planting and maintenance, on all Council owned land and facilities.
- Carry out environmental management of a number of nature and conservation areas including:
  - Great Aycliffe Way
  - Woodham Burn
  - South Agnew Plantation
  - Cobbler's Hall Plantation
  - Simpasture Railway Walk
  - Aycliffe Nature Park
  - School Aycliffe Wetlands
  - Byerley Park Nature Area
  - Seven Hills
  - Butterfly Meadow at Rail Halt
  - Two nature areas on Aycliffe Business Park
- The Town Council is also the custodian of Aycliffe Village Greens and maintains land at Millfields and Bickford Terrace.
- Employs a team of Park Patrol Operatives to assist with crime prevention and provide an out of hours service to monitor and safeguard the Council's parks, other facilities and their users.
- Provides a range of civic events including Mayor at Home and the Annual Chairity Civic Dinner.
- Community engagement via community consultation surveys, events and open days.
- Operates a grants and donations fund offering financial support to community and voluntary organisations and local charities.
- Operates a Community Recognition Award Scheme to provide a means of recognising and acknowledging the dedication, commitment and outstanding contribution that nominated individuals make to improve and promote the Parish of Great Aycliffe.
- Maintains the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.
- Comments on planning applications.