

Welcome to Funtington Parish Council's 3 Year Business Plan 2022 - 2025

The parish of Funtington has a population of 1,549 (2011 Census). It covers approximately 6 square miles and sits partially within the South Downs National Park, lying 4.5 miles west of Chichester. The parish does not have a main village but is made up of four distinct areas: West Ashling, East Ashling, West Stoke and Funtington together with the hamlets of Adsdean and Sennicotts.

1. Introduction

This is the second Funtington Parish Council Business Plan and sets out the Parish Council's vision for the parish, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities for the next three years.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give the parishioners of Funtington a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does, what it is trying to achieve and what it intends to focus on over the next three years.

The Plan is a statement of intent. However, it is flexible as it is subject to budget constraints and any future legislative changes that may affect local authorities.

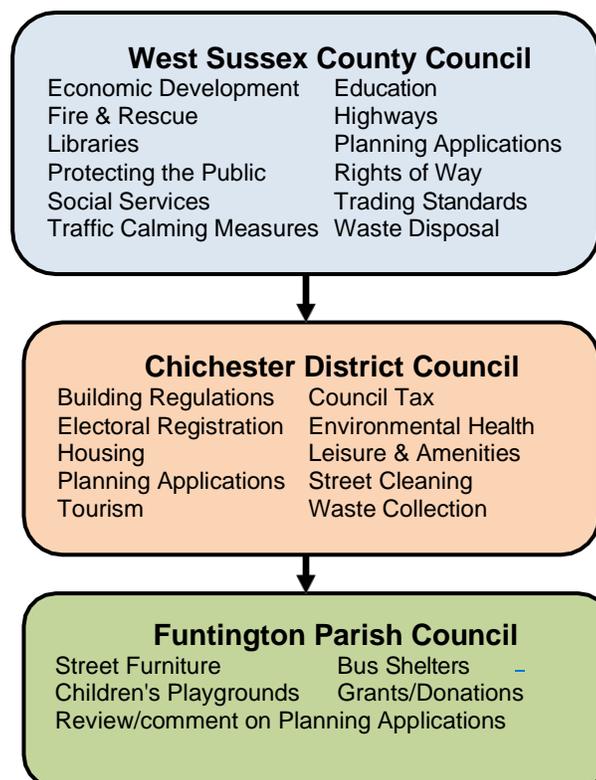
Any changes will be published in an updated plan and the plan is available on the website or in hard copy from the clerk@funtingtonpc.org

2. Why are we producing a Business Plan?

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and coordinated way and to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making.

3. Overview of the Parish, District and County Councils

The powers of the Council are limited by law. The chart below gives a high-level summary of service responsibilities across the three tiers of local government



In addition, the majority of the Parish sits within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The SDNP does not own any land, but works in partnership with local people, land owners, farmers, local authorities and other organisations to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

4. Councillors

Parish Councillors are unpaid but are elected representatives, not volunteers or employees, and serve for a minimum term of four years. Funtington Parish Council currently has seven councillors - elected or co-opted: the latter is the process by making someone a Councillor through the choice of the current Council members.

5. Council Meetings

The Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month - except August. Everyone is welcome to attend and a defined period is always set aside for the public to ask questions of the Council. The Council will also accept representations from groups or organisations for items to be discussed at Council meetings, provided an approach is made to the clerk at least seven working days prior to the meeting date.

6. Council Committees

The Council currently has three Committees all of which have defined Terms of Reference and report into the full council.

- Finance
- Planning
- Communications

Occasionally, working groups are formed to deal with specific issues which may need more detailed consideration outside of formal council meetings. These working groups are usually time limited and may include non-councillors: they have no decision-making powers.

7. Council Governance

In its simplest form, the term governance determines who has authority, who makes the decisions and how the organisation is kept accountable. The most important piece of legislation for the Parish Council is the Local Government Act 1972

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukpga/1972/70>

To guarantee effective governance, the Parish Council will ensure that it:

- complies with all statutory duties, powers and legal obligations and prioritises and undertakes associated actions required by those duties;
- operates under a set of Policies, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations: the latter two being based on the models prepared by the National Association of Local Councils.
- Engages with local residents and key stakeholders to deliver the services and facilities required;
- Takes informed, transparent decisions and manages risk; and
- Ensures decisions and actions taken are lawful and transparent to our residents who, through their council tax, have a vested interest in the Council's activities.

Copies of all Council documents are available on the council's website.

<https://www.funtingtonpc.org/> or in hard copy from the clerk@funtingtonpc.org

8. Council Management

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer is the only permanent Parish Council employee. The Clerk administers the Council, dealing with all correspondence, communications and all aspects of a financial nature.

The Council also employs people/companies for specific tasks such as gardening services or project work such as installation of equipment.

9. Financial Information

Most of the Parish Council's income comes from the precept: collected as part of the Council Tax. However, the Parish Council may be awarded - by Chichester District Council or the South Downs National Park - additional monies through the New Homes Bonus or the Community Infrastructure Levy: two financial mechanisms closely related to the planning system.

The Audit Commission Act 1998 and regulations made subsequent to this, require the Parish Council to exercise tight financial controls. To support this, our cashbook is presented at each Parish Council meeting and our yearly accounts are audited by an internal auditor appointed by the Council and an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission (www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

10. Communication

The Parish Council holds that effective communication is one of our most important tools in achieving and maintaining a positive relationship with our community.

To support this ethos, the Council has introduced a Communications Committee and a Communications Strategy

11. Focus of our Action Plan

The Parish Council has identified key priorities we wish to concentrate on over the next three years. Information pertaining to these priorities is detailed in our Action Plan. The main objectives are broken down into action items and projects, which are then defined more fully as further information and resources become available.