

About the role of a Parish Councillor

A good parish or town council plays a vital role in representing the interests of the community it serves. It will improve the quality of life for its residents and for the local environment, delivering services to meet local needs and influencing decision makers, for example in planning matters. The council will work as a team and each councillor is a valued team member!

A Parish Councillor effectively represents the parish. They will champion the causes which relate to the interests and sustainability of the area and will campaign for improvements in the quality of life of those living in, working in, or visiting the area. A Parish Councillor will be supported by training and development to help them to fulfil the requirements of their role.

Whether elected or co-opted they will stand as a Councillor for the term of office which is 4 years (i.e. May 2019 – May 2023), although they can resign at any time. A Parish Councillor must comply with the statutory requirements of a councillor. This means that they must complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before starting as a Councillor and they must agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. A Parish Councillor must attend all meetings, or should give their apologies and the reasons for their absence to the Parish Clerk. A Parish Councillor will contribute to an effective meeting by briefing themselves ahead of the meeting – reading the agenda, minutes and supporting information. They will participate at a meeting giving their ideas and knowledge to help in the decision-making process. Specialised

knowledge or skills are greatly valued. A Parish Councillor cannot make decisions on their own. They will contribute to the formation of the Council's policies and plans by actively involving themselves in meetings. A Parish Councillor may act as a representative on outside bodies, reporting back to council on their activities.

Here are just a few of the activities and causes you might become involved with as a Parish Councillor:

- The Parish Council is a consultee in respect of planning applications and the planning policies which guide the decisions made by the planning authorities. A Parish Council may help to formulate its own planning rules for its area through a Neighbourhood Plan. A Parish Council will pass back its views on planning applications to the District / Borough Council.
- A Parish Council responds to consultations which could change the quality of life of their constituents, for example: the Norfolk County Council Budget; Child Care provision; mobile libraries; highway maintenance.
- A Parish Council sets its own budget and agrees a precept to help meet its financial requirements. A budget will be based on agreed actions, for example: refurbishing a play area; commissioning a new village sign; maintaining communal areas.
- A Parish Council may become involved with projects and activities such as the commemoration of WWI.
- A Parish Council will have contact with key stakeholders in their community, for example the police, local employers and service providers.