



# PARISH COUNCIL

## WHAT IS A PARISH COUNCIL?

A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish and has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its local community. It is the level of government closest to the community, with the District Authority above it in the hierarchy. As it is the authority closest to the people, parish councils are invariably the first place people will go with concerns or ideas.

## WHAT DECISIONS DO PARISH COUNCILS MAKE?

Parish councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, helping local groups and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities. An example of this is that the Parish Council is currently in the planning process of an extension on the Memorial Hall to provide more community space for residents.

It's true to say that on their own, parish councils have limited powers to make decisions. But they do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence, those other organisations that do make the final decisions (such as the District Council, health authorities, police etc.) This is currently the case with the Howlett Way and Reeve Lodge Developments. In this respect parish councils are extremely powerful. The organisations that make the final decisions know that a parish council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something, and its views will be taken seriously.

## WHY BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

Below are some quotes from our current councillors on why they are a Parish Councillor:

*"A Parish Council can co-ordinate the voices of it's parishioners who would otherwise be voices in the wilderness when approaching District and County Councils alone."*

*"I wanted to build on a sense of belonging and become more engaged with the local community"*

*"I enjoy working alongside a committed and caring group of individuals who are driven to make the local environment and community a happy one. We don't have the power to make the all important decisions but we do have the chance to put forward the point of view of the local community and I know that historically, the Parish Council has been able to sway decisions to the benefit of the community."*

## WHO CAN BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

To be a parish councillor you have to be:

- A British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union.
- Over 18 years of age

And additionally, you have to be one of the following:

- A local government elector for the council area for which you want to stand.
- Have during the whole of the 12 months prior occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the council areas or within 3 miles of it for the whole period.
- Have during that same period had your principal or only place of work in the council area or within 3 miles of it for the whole period.

## HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE UP?

The parish council meet on the first Tuesday of each month (excluding August) for the council meeting, to which members of the public are also invited. Meetings may last up to two hours, depending on the agenda set for the meeting to discuss. There are sometimes additional meetings, such as planning meetings, where that particular committee meets, but that does not happen very often so it's not going to take over your life.

## GET IN TOUCH



If you would like any further information or would like to apply to become a Parish Councillor please contact the Parish Clerk.

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