



WHY BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

If you've ever attended a parish council meeting, you'll know that when people in the community need support and guidance, it is often the parish council that they turn to.

By becoming a parish councillor, you become someone your community will look to for help, guidance and support, a community leader with the power to influence decisions for the benefit of the people you serve. Seeing your community change for the better as a result of decisions you have helped make, is something that can give you a real sense of achievement and pride.

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 are planning matters (parish councils are statutory consultees), crime prevention and public safety, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

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 City Council and County Council, health authorities, police etc.).

In this respect parish councils can be very 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.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE UP?

Parish Councils most commonly meet once a month for the council meeting, to which members of the public are also invited. In addition to regular meetings, councillors may be required to attend other meetings representing the council, for example acting as a representative on an outside body, community activities or helping develop a new project for the community. Such meetings won't happen every day, so it's not going to take over your life.

HOW LONG DOES A PARISH COUNCILLOR SERVE FOR?

Once elected, parish councillors sit on the council for a maximum of four years. If they then want to stay in the post they can stand for re-election.

AM I ELIGIBLE TO BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

To stand for election on a parish council, you must:

- be a UK or commonwealth citizen, or;
- be a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or;
- be a citizen of another Member state of the European Union; and
- be a least 18 years old.



To be eligible to stand for an election for a particular parish, you must:

be an elector of the parish, or;

- for the whole of the previous 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the parish, or;
- during the previous 12 months have worked in the parish (as your principal or only place of work), or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months lived in the parish or within three miles of the parish boundary.

You don't have to be connected to a political party.

If you do become a parish councillor you will have to sign up to the Code of Conduct.

WHAT POWERS DO PARISH COUNCILS HAVE?

They have a wide range of powers which essentially relate to local matters, such as looking after community buildings and structures, open spaces, allotments, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, car parks and much more. The council also has the power to raise money through taxation, known as 'the precept'. The precept is the parish council's share of the council tax. The precept demand goes to the billing authority, the district council, which collects the tax on behalf the parish council.

ALDCLIFFE WITH STODDAY PARISH COUNCIL DUTIES

Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council has 5 Councillor posts which are filled by local election every four years (the next elections are due in May 2023). The duties and functions of the parish council are many and varied.

The Council currently meets on the first Tuesday of every month (except August when there is no meeting) and considers planning applications and any other matters referred to it by local residents, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council and by central government.

All meetings are open to the public and there is a forum towards the end of the meeting at which members of the public can raise concerns and ask questions. Meetings generally last up to two hours, depending on the length of the agenda.

All meetings are advertised on the council notice boards and on this website.

Residents can bring to the attention of the parish council anything that concerns them, either directly to councillors or through the clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the clerk can bring them to the attention of the proper authority.

Don't take our word for it!

The best way to find out what it's like to be a parish councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now. Come along to a parish council meeting or speak to one of our councillors and find out what they think of the job.