

Here is some useful information about being a Parish Councillor.

A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish. It is the level of local government closest to the community, with the district authority (West Lindsey District Council) and the county authority (Lincolnshire County Council) above it in the hierarchy.

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, crime prevention and roads & highways.

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 or county council, health authorities, police etc.). 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.

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.

Your work will involve liaison with other councillors, local authorities, and residents

Length of term of service is usually four years with possible extension by re-election. This does not mean that you have to stay for four years. If you find it's not for you, or you can no longer meet the commitment, you can stand down.

This is a voluntary position with some expenses able to be paid in certain cases.

As part of a local council you will:

- Represent the views of all residents within your parish.
- Have responsibility for running local services, which may include: open spaces, play areas, village halls, community car schemes and potentially much more.
- Help to decide on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver your council's services.
- Help to influence and shape the long term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish.
- Improve the quality of life and the environment in the local area.
- Work to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent.
- Work to bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

The Parish Council usually meets every three months in the Village Hall. Meetings are usually on a Tuesday and last for between an hour and two hours, depending on what is on the list of items to discuss.

In addition to the regular meetings, Councillors are sometimes required to give time for 'ad hoc' meetings – for example with architects or agents to discuss planning applications that the council must give its opinions on.

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

- be a UK or Commonwealth citizen;
- be at 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
- in the past 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the parish; or
- work in the parish (as your principal or only place of work); or
- live 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.

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. Go along to a parish council meeting, speak to one of the councillors and find out what they think of the job. Details of Councillors can be found on the website.