

What is the role of a Parish Councillor?

The main role of a Parish Councillor is to represent the views of all residents within the parish and to listen to, and understand, the views and needs of different groups in the community. There is a responsibility to be well-informed, especially about diverse local views. Councillors cannot assume that they represent the interests of electors without consulting them.

Parish Councillors are elected representatives (they are neither volunteers nor employees) and serve for a 4-year term unless co-opted or elected in a by-election when they serve until the next election. They must apply the law and comply with the Code of Conduct and other adopted policies of the council. Councillors are required to act in an ethical way and to declare an interest when necessary.

Councillors contribute to the work of the council by suggesting ideas, influencing policy and strategy, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the council to make decisions.

Individual Parish Councillors cannot make decisions on behalf of the council, but they can actively lead and engage with local projects.

The Parish Council needs a wide range of skills and experience to work as a team. Councillors from different backgrounds better represent the whole community and possess different enthusiasms, skills, attitudes and interests.

What is the role of the Parish Clerk?

The role of the Parish Clerk is to ensure that the council conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support. They are under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and to serve or issue all the notifications required by the law of a Local Authority's Proper Officer.

The Parish Clerk is an employee of the Parish Council. They are not an elected officer and can only make decisions which the Parish Council's elected Members delegate to them. Typically, these responsibilities are set out in the Parish Clerk's contract of employment and include most day-to-day administrative functions.

What is the role of the Parish Council Chairman?

The Parish Council Chairman is elected by the other councillors and is typically elected for a period of a year.

The Chairman will often represent the council at community events and is responsible for chairing the meetings of the council, ensuring good order, and using their casting vote in the event of a tie on any matter requiring a council decision.

Beyond this, the Chairman has no other authority and cannot act independently on behalf of the council.