

Description of the role and general information

Role Parish Councillor

Responsible to All people resident within the Parish

Regular liaison with Other councillors, council officers, local authorities, residents

Period of service Four year term

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

Main purpose Representing the views of all residents within your parish.

Secondary purpose

- As part of a local council you will have responsibility for running local services which may include: open spaces, play areas, village halls and allotments
- Deciding on how much to raise through the precept in order to deliver your council's services.
- Influencing and shaping the long term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on applications in the parish.
- Improve the quality of life and the environment in their local area.
- Working to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent.
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

What is a parish council?

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 unitary authority (Bracknell Forest Council) above it in the hierarchy.

Why become a parish councillor?

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.

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 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.). 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.

How much times does it take up?

Councils usually meet once a month for the council meeting to which members of the public are also invited. Meetings may last two or three hours, depending on what's on the list of items to discuss. Some councils may also have committees to deal with specific subjects, such as planning matters.

In addition to the regular meetings Councillors are 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.

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.

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.

The next elections will take place in May 2023.

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 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 and make a declaration of interests.