

Role of the 'Councillor'

A councillor is a member of the council and is normally elected for a term of four years.

The [next elections](#) are in May 2025.

People of any political or religious persuasion are eligible to become a councillor, although their personal views should not extend into their parish council work. They are elected to represent the interests of the local community as a whole and promote a harmonious local environment. The number of elected councillors depends on the size of the area. The Town Council in Princes Risborough consists of 13 elected councillors. Find out more about the eligibility to stand for parish elections via [the electoral commission website](#).

Councillors:

- participate constructively in the governance of the Parish/Town
- participate fully in the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery including the Parish/Town Plan
- ensure, with other Councillors, that the Council is properly managed
- keep up to date with developments affecting the Council at local, regional and national levels
- promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Parish/Town effectively
- represent the interests of the ward(if applicable) for which the Councillor is elected and attend to parishioners enquiries, representations and complaints
- represent the whole electorate, listen and represent the views of the community when discussing Council business and working with outside bodies
- play an active role in the Council's arrangements to build community involvement and promote measures that contribute to the Council's vision
- attend Council meetings
- prepare for meetings and are properly informed about the issues to be discussed, take part in meetings and form sound judgements based on what is best for the community and then abide by majority decisions
- represent the Council on outside bodies and organisations to which the Councillor is appointed
- maintain proper standards of behaviour as an elected representative
- fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of a Council, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct and maintaining high ethical standards, (including not disclosing confidential information and not using Council resources for political purposes or for any other reason unless agreed by the Council)

No member of the Council may act alone, the Council acts as a body and ALL actions must first have the resolution of the Council

Role of the Chair/Mayor

The Chair on their own has no power to make decisions; they must have the Resolution of the Council and should not involve themselves in the day-to-day administration of the Council, but can be a point of reference for officers if agreed by Council.

The Chair (interchangeably Mayor) is elected by the members of the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and serves for twelve months. The Chair's main role is to:

- run Council meetings
- ensure that effective and lawful decisions are taken at meetings of the Council
- guide Council activities by managing the meetings effectively (assisted by the Clerk)
- involve all Councillors in discussions
- ensure that Councillors keep to the point
- summarise the debate and facilitate the making of clear resolutions
- keep discussions moving so that the meeting is not too long
- use their casting vote; the first vote is a personal one as a member of the Council, if there is a tied vote the Chair can have a second, casting vote
- manage the public participation element of the meetings

The Chair will often be the public face of the Council and will represent the Council at official events and may be asked to speak on behalf of the Council; and in such circumstances he/she should only express the agreed views of the Council, not personal views.

Additional roles of the Chair include:

- Planning the meeting with the Clerk. The Chair cannot decide which items should appear on the agenda for meetings. The Clerk is responsible for the agenda, apart from Extraordinary Meetings. Normal practice would be for the Clerk to consult with the Chair when drawing up the agenda to ensure that appropriate and necessary items are added and sufficient time allowed.
- Briefing themselves and preparing fully for meetings – studying all relevant information and anticipating the needs and interests of the members. They can then answer questions or deal with requests for information.
- Setting a good example by arriving early to check the arrangements and welcome members, the public and any visiting speakers.