

Your role as a Councillor

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

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.

Local councils are the first tier of governance and are the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue. They are democratically elected local authorities and exist in England, Wales and Scotland. The term 'local council' is synonymous with 'parish council', 'town council' and 'community council'. Local councils are made up of locally elected councillors. They are legally obliged to hold at least one meeting a year. Most meet on a four-weekly cycle to discuss council business and hear from local residents. In addition to this, any committees or sub-committees dealing with specific subjects must also hold regular open sessions, at which members of the public can speak. District councillors regularly attend parish meetings to report back to the district on developments at parish level. County, unitary and metropolitan councillors are also invited to attend parish meetings when the parish council feels it is appropriate, and they have a standing invitation to attend and report at the annual assembly.

Councillors attend meetings of the full council and often participate in committees that deal with specific areas of council business. Councillors take collective decisions that form the policy of the council. Some training is available for new councillors, for example The Wycombe District Association of Local Councils (WDALC) run training courses as does The Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC). Recent courses run by WDALC have included Legal Matters for Town Councils, the Role of Town Councils in the Future and Quality Town Council Status; a course on Planning is scheduled for later in the year

Being a Parish Councillor can be an interesting and rewarding experience.

The next elections are May 2019.