

So you're thinking of becoming a Parish Councillor? Here are some Q & A's which may help...

What is a Parish Council?

Drayton Bassett Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish. It is a level of government that is closest to the community, with the district council (Lichfield) above in the hierarchy.

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.

When do you meet?

The Parish Council has 10 meetings per year - each one on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (except August and December) and each one starts at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion, Rectory Close, Drayton Bassett.

Are there other meetings?

Each year the council holds an Annual Parish Council Meeting and usually arranges and hosts the Annual Parish Assembly. These are held in April/May and will usually overlap with the monthly meetings. Depending on the projects the parish council wish to develop may affect additional work meetings.

Suppose I can't make a meeting?

Councillors are expected to read the papers before a meeting and then attend and participate in the meeting. For this reason a 'summons' (not an invitation) is issued at least 3 working days prior to a meeting. Whilst it is unavoidable that the occasional

meeting may be missed, should 6 months elapse between attendances, the Councillor will lose their right to sit.

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 they get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, helping local groups, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

It's true to say that on their own, 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.

How long does a Councillor serve for?

Once appointed, Parish Councillors sit on the council for a maximum of four years (or to the next election cycle if they are co-opted) but should they wish to stay, they can put themselves up for re-election.

Do all Councillors have the same power?

Councillors may take on the roles of Chair or Vice Chair but that does not give them any more power than any other Councillors - these are roles to help with process only.

Is training available?

There are specific courses which Cllrs can go on that can be held in person or online - the Parish Clerk will advise on the date of these courses should you be appointed and the Parish Council will cover the cost of the courses.

I know you look at planning applications – I don't know anything about planning though.

Cllrs are asked to look at planning applications from their position as a local resident, not because they are planning experts. The Parish Clerk will help with advice and process.

What powers does a Parish Council have?

They have a wide range of powers which are essentially related to local matters, such as looking after community buildings, open space, allotments, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, car parks and much more. The council also has the power to raise money through taxation, the 'precept'. The precept is the parish council's share of the council tax. The precept demand goes to the billing authority (the District Council), which collects the tax for the Parish Council.

Do Councillors get any support to carry out their role?

The only paid employee of the parish council is the Parish Clerk. They work for 22 hours per month to implement the decisions taken at meetings, undertake all correspondence, advise the councillors, and is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for the council.

Looking for more information? Try these links:

Viral sensation Jackie Weaver talks about the role of parish councils: [Election 2021: What about parish councils? - BBC News](#)

Here is the link to the formal National Association of Local Councils Good Councillors Guide: [The Good Councillor's guide 2024 \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#)

The parish council is run by and for the local community – this is where communities (including YOU) can make a difference.