

Sturminster Newton Town Council

Get Your Voice Heard – Why not become a Town Councillor?



We have a vacancy for a Town Councillor to be co-opted to join our team.

What is the Town Council?

The Town Council is the collective voice of the local community.

It represents your wishes, concerns and aspirations. It directly influences the provision of services and

facilities throughout the town. It strives to improve the quality of life for its residents.

By joining our team you help to decide what gets done, from street lighting to footpaths, allotments to play areas. The things that matter the most to you and family!

In total 11 Councillors serve the town, supported by the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and the Finance Officer. We also employ a small Grounds Team.

Among its many functions, the Town Council:

- is consulted and invited to comment on every planning application made within the town
- owns and manages the town's cemetery
- owns and manages the Railway Gardens
- owns and manages two recreation grounds and three other play areas
- manages the town's public toilets
- provides a town centre street-cleaning and Town Orderly service
- leases the local popular tourist attraction Sturminster Mill from the Hinton St. Mary Estate and supervises its management.
- maintains many footpaths, verges, amenity areas and other public open spaces around the town
- has responsibility for the allotments at Filbridge Rise and Chinnocks
- owns Butts Pond Local Nature Reserve and facilitates its management by the Open Spaces Group and the Dorset Countryside Rangers Service



How is a Town Council Funded?

The Town Council is not a voluntary or charitable organisation and has no affiliation with the Church. Funding is primarily from the 'Precept' – a small percentage of the council tax charge made by the District Council to householders. Other income is raised via the services we provide.

The role of a Councillor is a non-paid role (although expenses may be reimbursed).

What can a Town Council do?

Diversity is its strength!

As an elected body at the first tier of local government the Town Council works within the law by exercising powers and functions which have been conferred on it by Statutes (i.e. Acts of Parliament)



to choose what actions to take and which services to influence.

Unlike Local Authorities who have legal duties to deliver certain services the Town Council, by exercising its legal powers carefully and pro-actively, is more flexible and can respond uniquely to the needs of the local community.

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for our parishioners.

What does a Councillor do?

Once elected a Parish Councillor must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, adhere to an ethical Code of Conduct when dealing with Council business and declare his Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to ensure he acts in a transparent and fair manner.

Councillors come from a variety of backgrounds and all walks of life. By listening to their parishioners, networking within the community and using their own local knowledge and experience they come together to make important decisions for their neighbourhood through council meetings.

No individual councillor is responsible for making decisions – the Council makes decisions as a collective body by voting. This is democracy at its best.

Meetings

Meetings are held on Thursday evenings at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber. Councillors are expected to attend 2 meetings per month; a full meeting of the council and a committee meeting. Meetings last approx. 2 hours.

Training

Lots of training options are available and will be offered to you throughout your time as a Councillor. The Town Clerk will help you to devise your own training plan as well as providing some training in conjunction with the County Association and other colleagues.

Applying to become a councillor

If you wish to stand as a councillor you must satisfy these requirements:

- You need to be over 18 years of age
- A British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union

- On the Electoral Register for the council area for which you wish to stand,
- A local government elector of the parish; or a person who during the whole of the twelve months before nomination as a candidate occupied land or other premises as owner or tenant in the parish; or has, during the same period, resided in that area or within three miles thereof; or has during the same period, had a principal or only place of work in that area

You cannot stand for election if you:

- Are bankrupt and an Order or Interim Restriction Order has been imposed.
- Have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine
- Work for the council where you are intending to stand for election (but you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area).
- Have been convicted or reported guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court, or have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority

Apply today and have a say in what happens tomorrow!