



"Your Parish Council Needs YOU"

What is a Parish Council?

A Parish Council is the first tier of Local Government. It is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people of the Parish.

As the authority closest to the people, we are often the first port of call local people go to with their concerns or ideas. For this reason, we are a vital part of any community.

Why become a Parish Councillor?

I know what you're thinking – The Vicar of Dibley – but that's over exaggerated and dramatised for comic effect (well, mostly!). If you have never been to a Parish Council meeting before, you may be picturing of a group of (mostly older) people who meet now and then in a draughty village hall, endlessly discussing the same old issues such as the poor bus service, cars speeding and inconsiderate parking, and dog poo not being cleared up. How wrong you are 😊



As a Parish Councillor, you will become someone our community looks to for help, guidance and support, a community leader with the power to influence decisions for the benefit of the whole village. Seeing our community change for the better as a result of the decisions you've helped to make is something to really be proud of. It's lovely to see the village change for the better and to see people benefiting from those decisions.

What decisions do a Parish Council make?

Probably one of the most common topics that the Parish Council gets involved with is planning issues, as we are statutory consultees for many planning applications in the Parish.



The Bucklesham Playing Field is held in trust and managed by the Parish Council and Councillors take an active role in looking after the field (when they are not playing on the gym equipment). We also have a role in the maintenance of the village assets that we own, and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

On our own, the Parish Council has limited powers to make big decisions. However, we do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence, those other organisations that do make the final decisions, such as the County and District Councils.

Those organisations know that the Parish Council gives the best reflection of how the village community feels about something and our views are taken seriously.

What are the Parish Council's duties?

Bucklesham Parish Council has 7 Councillors. The duties and functions of the Parish Council are many and varied so it is a really interesting position to hold.

We meet on the first Wednesday of every other month at 7pm in the Bucklesham Village Hall. The meetings will last up to two hours, depending upon the items on the agenda to be discussed. All meetings are advertised on the village notice boards, in the Bucklesham Bugle Newsletter and on a Bugle Bulletin email alert.

Residents can bring to the attention of the Parish Council any village issues that concern them, either directly or through the Clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the Parish Council, the Clerk can signpost them to the proper authority. It might not be that we have all the answers on the night, but the matter can be put on the agenda for the next meeting and we will give it our full attention once we have researched all the issues.

How much time does it take up?

In addition to the 6 meetings a year, some Councillors represent the village at various external bodies such as the Suffolk Association of Local Councils or the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership.

Some help with developing a new project for the community or help with tasks around the village such as litter picks and village maintenance. These things don't happen often, so it's not going to take over your life.



Am I eligible to be a Parish Councillor?

You have to be:

- a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union
- over 18 years of age

and additionally you have to be one of the following:

- a local government elector for the council area for which you want to stand
- have during the whole of the 12 months occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the council area or within 3 miles of it for the whole period
- have during that same period had your principal or only place of work in the council area or within 3 miles of it for the whole period

You cannot stand to be a Parish Councillor if you:

- are subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order
- 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
- you work for the council you want to become a councillor for (but you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area)



If you have ideas for improving Bucklesham, can listen to others, consider different views and engage in constructive debate, then you have the qualities that make a good Councillor. The Parish Council needs a variety of people with different interests – perhaps your interest lies in communications, planning, highways or the local environment. There are a range of areas of Parish Council work that councillors can be involved with.

You also need to be a good sport and not mind a bit of dressing up!

We are not one trick ponies...

All Bucklesham Parish Councillors are also Community Council Trustees. The Community Council was formed in 1967 to

'provide adequate recreational facilities, playing field and playground for the benefit of the community residing in Bucklesham'

and it has been a constant fund-raising charity for the village ever since. Following the retirement of the entire Community Council in 2019, the Parish Council stepped forward in order to keep the Bucklesham Community Council as a working charity for the village.

The Parish Council feel the Community Council is a vital asset for the village which needs to be protected, as many grants and awards are only available to Community Councils and are not open to Parish Councils. We can ensure that the constitution is fully adhered to and that any money raised under the auspices of the Community Council is spent solely in the village and on village projects.

In the last 3 years the Community Council has successfully applied for over £22,000 in grants for village projects including supporting the Village Hall, establishing the Toddler Group, and supporting village groups with finance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So, have we convinced you to join us yet?

The best way to find out what it's like to be a Parish Councillor is to come along to the next meeting and have a chat with us about the role and what it will involve.

We are a friendly and approachable bunch and we would love to see you.

Just look at this Motley Crew - We hope you now see that Bucklesham is nothing like Dibley 😊



For more information contact Ruth Johnson, the **Parish Council Clerk** at

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