

THE ROLE OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

The main role of a Parish Councillor is to represent the views of all residents within the Parish and to listen to, and understand, the views and needs of different groups in the community (such as young and older people). As a Councillor, there is a responsibility to be well-informed, especially about diverse local views. Councillors cannot assume that they represent the interests of electors without consulting them.

Parish Councillors are elected representatives, not volunteers or employees, and serve for a four year term, unless co-opted or elected in a bye-election when they serve until the next election. They must apply the law and comply with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct. Newington has eleven Parish Councillors.

Councillors contribute to the work of the Council by suggesting ideas, influencing policy, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the Council to make decisions. Individual Parish Councillors cannot make decisions on behalf of the Council, but they can actively lead and engage with local projects. Parish Councillors have no powers outside of the Council meeting.

Councillors from different backgrounds better represent the whole community and possess different enthusiasms, skills, attitudes and interests. Some Councillors work with ideas while others are very practical. The Parish Council needs a wide range of skills to work as a team. Occasionally there will be a conflict of interest requiring sensitive judgement, and the need to take difficult decisions in an open, honest and reasoned way. Councillors are also required to act in an ethical way and to declare an interest when necessary.

Key Responsibilities:

- As a Member of Hook Parish Council, Councillors have responsibility for running local services, such as public open spaces, sport pitches, play areas, the cemetery and closed churchyard and provision of community buildings.
- Deciding how much to raise through the Precept in order to deliver the Council's services.
- Influencing and shaping the long term development policy for Hook, and as part of the planning process, commenting on planning applications in the Parish
- Improving the quality of life and the environment in the local area.
- Working to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents the Council represents.
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other Parishes, local authorities, agencies and community organisations.
- A Councillor agrees to attend all meetings (as much as reasonably possible) that he or she is summoned to.
- Councillors, together as a team, are responsible for the financial decisions made and implemented by the Council.

A Councillor's main task is to bring local issues to the attention of the Council, participate in debate and help the Council to make decisions on behalf of the local community.