

## **The role of the Parish Council**

Parish Councils are the backbone of local democracy, serving local communities with dedication and purpose.

As the first tier of local government, Parish Councils work to meet local needs, represent community voices, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Parish Councils ensure that local voices are heard on critical issues, from planning and development to health and safety.

## **The role of a Parish Councillor:**

Parish Councillors are responsible for representing the local community, delivering services to meet local needs, and improving quality of life and community well-being.

Parish Councillors need to respond to residents' queries and investigate their concerns, effectively communicate council decisions that affect the community. Know their area and be aware of any problems. Work with representatives of local organisations, interest groups and businesses.

## **Required Relevant knowledge:**

Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community

## **Skills required to be a Parish Councillor:**

Interest in local matters, ability and willingness to represent the Council and the community, good interpersonal skills, ability to communicate succinctly and clearly both orally and written, ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with other members and staff, good reading and analytical skills, ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. Voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, OCC and WODC, charities), ability and willingness to undertake relevant training, ability to work under pressure.

## **Other Requirements:**

Ability and willingness to attend Parish Council meetings held monthly on the evening of the second Wednesday of each month, attend other local authority meetings when required, flexible and committed to the Council, enthusiastic.

## **Qualifications**

Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the qualifications for election and holding office as a member of a local authority. Section 79 states:

A person shall, unless disqualified by virtue of this Act or any other enactment, be qualified to be elected and to be a member of a local authority if he/she is a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a relevant citizen of the Union and on the relevant day he/she has attained the age of eighteen years and—

(a) on that day he/she is and thereafter he continues to be a local government elector for the area of the authority; or

(b) he/she has during the whole of the twelve months preceding that day occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in that area; or

(c) his/her principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in that area; or

(d) he/she has during the whole of those twelve months resided in that area; or

(e) in the case of a member of a parish or community council he/she has during the whole of those twelve months resided either in the parish or community or within three miles of it.

Section 80 of the LGA 1972 sets out the disqualifications for election and holding office as member of local authority.

### **Disqualifications**

A person shall be disqualified for being elected or being a member of a local authority if he/she –

(a) holds any paid office or employment (other than the office of chairman, vice chairman, deputy chairman, presiding member or deputy presiding member or, in the case of a local authority which are operating executive arrangements which involve a leader and cabinet executive, the office of executive leader or member of the executive) appointments or elections to which are or may be made or confirmed by the local authority or any committee or sub-committee of the authority or by a joint committee or National Park authority on which the authority are represented or by any person holding any such office or employment; or

(b) is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, or a debt relief restrictions order under Schedule 4ZB of the Insolvency Act 1986; or

(c) has within five years before the day of election or since his/her election been convicted in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man of any offence and has had passed on him/her a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine; or

(e) is disqualified for being elected or for being a member of that authority under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983

## **JOB DESCRIPTION – COMBE PARISH COUNCILLOR**

Responsible to: The Parish Council and its electors

Responsible for: Effective leadership to foster the interests of their electors and Parish

Role Purpose to: Represent the views of Parishioners within and outside the Parish

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

- To participate constructively in the government of the Parish.
- To participate fully in the formation and scrutiny of the Parish Council's policies, budgets, strategies, and service delivery.
- To ensure, with other councillors, that the Parish Council is properly managed.
- To keep up to date with significant developments affecting the Parish Council at local, regional, and national levels.
- To promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the Parish taking account of the strategic effects on other communities and the Parish Council as a whole.
- To represent effectively the interests of the Parish for which the Councillor is elected and deal with Parishioners' enquiries, representations, and complaints.
- To represent the whole electorate; listen, and then represent the views of the whole community when discussing council business and working with outside bodies.
- To take an active part in the Parish Council's arrangements to build community capacity and promote measures that contribute to the Parish Council's Vision.
- To attend Parish Council meetings.
- To prepare for meetings and being properly informed about the issues to be discussed.
- To take part in meetings and form sound judgements based on what is best for the community and then abide by majority decisions.
- To represent the Parish Council on outside bodies to which the Councillor is appointed including the Standards Committee and Governing Bodies.
- To maintain proper standards of behaviour as an elected representative of the people.
- To fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of a Local Authority and the Parish Council, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct and maintaining high ethical standards, (including not disclosing confidential information and not using council resources for political purposes or for any other reason unless agreed by the Council)
- To participate effectively as a member of any committee or working party to which the Councillor is appointed.
- To contribute constructively to open government and democratic renewal to actively encourage the Parish to participate generally in the government of the area and provide access to information where appropriate.
- To uphold the Parish Council's Standing Orders and ethical standards (ensuring that the impartiality of council staff is not compromised).
- To produce an annual report to enhance their accountability to the public by providing details of official activities and the contribution made to the effective operation of the Parish Council.