



The Role of a Councillor

A councillor is a member of the council and is normally elected for a term of four years. People of any political or religious persuasion are eligible to become a councillor, although their personal views should not extend into their parish council work.

They are elected to represent the interests of the local community as a whole and promote a harmonious local environment. The number of elected councillors depends on the size of the area. In Beachamwell we are able to have 7 councillors.

Local councils are the first tier of governance and are the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue. They are democratically elected local authorities and exist in England, Wales and Scotland. The term 'local council' is synonymous with 'parish council', 'town council' and 'community council'. Local councils are made up of locally elected councillors. They are legally obliged to hold at least one meeting a year. Most meet on a monthly cycle to discuss council business and hear from local residents. District councillors regularly attend parish meetings to report back to the district on developments at parish level. County councillors are also invited to attend parish meetings when the parish council feels it is appropriate and they have a standing invitation to attend and report at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Councillors must abide by a Code of Conduct; a set of rules on how councillors are expected to behave. They must also declare their pecuniary (financial) interests in the parish, details of which are kept on a Register at Breckland District Council.

Being a parish councillor can be an interesting and rewarding experience.

The Role of the Clerk

The Clerk is the 'Proper Officer' of the Council who is responsible for the smooth running of the Council's business. They are the first point of contact for the Council and all correspondence comes to the Clerk. Responsibility for implementing the decisions of the Council rests with the Clerk along with giving professional guidance where necessary whilst remaining neutral and discrete. The Clerk is also responsible for financial management.

The Clerk prepares, circulates and displays agendas in public places. They sign notices and summonses with a list of business to be transacted but does not have the power to fix the meetings of the Council. The Clerk is required to attend meetings, take minutes, keep Council minutes in a book and hold other documents.

A member of the Council may be appointed as Clerk without remuneration but nowadays it is more usual to appoint someone who is not a councillor to be paid for the work they undertake.