

## **Becoming a Parish Councillor**

### **Qualifications:**

To become a parish councillor, a person is qualified if:

- They are registered as a local government elector for the parish
- That for the 12 month period leading up to their co-option they have owned/rented property of land in the Parish
- That for the 12 month period leading up to their co-option their only or principal place of work has been in the Parish
- That for the 12 month period leading up to their co-option they have resided within the Parish or within 3 miles of it.

A prospective councillor only has to meet one of these qualifications.

### **Disqualifications:**

A person will be disqualified from holding office as a parish councillor if:

- They hold a paid office or other place of profit in the gift of the Council
- They have been declared bankrupt in the past 5 years and have not repaid their debts.
- They have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to not less than three months imprisonment (including any suspended sentence) within the past five years.

Persons can also be disqualified from holding office, by order of the court, if they have incurred illegal expenditure (when acting as a councillor) of over £2,000 and if they have been found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices under the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983.

### **What does becoming a councillor involve?**

A councillor is a member of the Council and is normally elected for a term of four years. For those elected at a by-election or by co-option during the four year term, their term of office may be anything up to the full four years.

The majority of serving councillors are a broad mix of men and women of all ages. Whilst they may have differing political views these do not normally extend into their parish council work. What parish councillors to all have in common is an active interest in their local community and a concern for it.

Councillors take collective decisions which form the policy of the Council. The policy of the Council will therefore reflect the views of the majority of the members.

In addition to attending meetings of the full council, most councillors are also appointed to be members of certain committees of the Council which deal with specific areas of council business. When work of a particularly detailed

nature is required, a special sub committee or working party may be established to handle the matter. The committees of the Council will usually meet in a cycle of meetings and at the end of each cycle the full Council will meet to confirm the recommendations made by various committees and to take decisions for action.

The council Clerk will advise councillors on their work. Whenever necessary clerks can seek advice from DAPTC. Clerks are employed to implement the functions and duties of the Council as decided by the elected councillors who must act within the law.

### **Have you time to be a Councillor?**

It is possible to spend a lot of time on council work – but most people have jobs, families and hobbies which also place demands on their precious time!

Charminster Parish Council currently holds monthly full council meetings (except in January and August) which are usually held at 7.30pm. The North Ward Amenities Advisory Committee usually meets every other month and members choose to sit on this committee at the AGM along with the Planning Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee.