

**What matters to you in your local area? Is it supporting festivals in town, grants to local organisations, burial provision or the need for allotments? Whatever needs changing in your neighbourhood, you could be just the right person to change it by becoming an Evesham Town Councillor.**

## **What does my Town Council do?**

The Town Council is responsible for four allotment sites, three cemeteries, two closed church yards, Christmas lights, the Charter Market, Evesham Town Hall (first floor), Bonfire/Firework event, floral Evesham and the Almonry Museum and Tourist Information Centre. The Town Council is also a statutory consultee on many issues including planning. The Town Council is the corporate trustee of Wallace House Community Centre on Oat Street which it manages through a board of appointed Councillors. The Council also provide financial support for various festivals in Evesham such as the Battle of Evesham and distributes grants to various local organisations. The Town Council partners with various organisations to deliver the Town Plan, a strategy for Evesham.

## **How does a Council work?**

All councils have one thing in common, their purpose is to make the lives of people in their community better and to give local people a voice and the means to achieve this. A Town Council is the tier of local government closest to the people. Evesham Town Council is made up of 24 democratically elected local councillors, people just like you, who give up a little of their time each week to represent the interests of their local community. The Town Council's main source of income is from a small proportion of your annual council tax, together with fees charged for our services and facilities. Unlike district and county councils, town councils receive no income from central government grants or business rates. This money is invested back into the local community to improve facilities and services for you and your neighbours. It is your local Councillors representing the aspirations of the community who will decide how to spend this money.

## **What does a Councillor do?**

Becoming a town councillor is both a rewarding and privileged form of public service; you will be in a position to make a difference to the quality of daily life and future prospects of the people in your community. Being a town councillor requires both commitment and hard work. You will need to be able to balance the needs and interests of residents, the political party you represent (if any) and that of the Council, all of which will make demands on your time.

Local councillors have three main areas of work:

**Decision making:** Through attending meetings and committees with other elected member, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.

**Monitoring:** Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

**Getting involved locally:** As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available. The town council delivers a lot of what it does in partnership with other services and agencies, so you may have opportunities to sit on partnership boards or committees of other organisations.

## What skills or qualifications do I need?

The knowledge and experience you have picked up through your personal and professional life are important. Whilst you do not need any special or formal qualifications to be a councillor, having or being able to develop the following skills, knowledge and attributes will help you in your role:

- **Communication skills**—these include listening and interpersonal skills, public speaking skills and the ability to accept alternative points of view as well as the ability to negotiate, mediate and resolve conflict.
- **Problem solving and analytical skills**—this includes being able to get to the bottom of an issue and to think of different ways to solve it, including advantages and disadvantages of each
- **Team working**– including being able to work with others in meetings and on committees and being able to complete on time the tasks that you agree to do
- **Organisation skills**– these include being able to plan and manage your time, keep appointments and meet deadlines
- **Ability to engage with your local community**– you may have to make yourself available through meetings, the media, the internet, public forums, debates, on the phone and face to face

You do not need to have all the skills or confidence to be a Councillor to start with as Evesham Town Council offers support, information and training for new Councillors.

## Am I eligible to be a councillor?

Almost anyone can be a councillor if they:

1. Are British, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union
2. Are 18 years of age or over
3. Are registered to vote in the area or if you have lived, worked or owned a property there for at least 12 months before an election

You cannot become a councillor if:

1. You work for the council you want to be a councillor for, or work for another council in a politically restricted post
2. You are bankrupt or have been surcharged in excess of £2,000
3. You have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more in the five years before the election
4. You have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices

## I want to be a councillor—what next?

If you want to stand as a town councillor you must first decide whether or not you would like to represent a political party or stand as an Independent candidate.

If you want to represent a political party then the next step would be to get involved with your party locally as soon as possible. This will help you find out more about what the role entails, who you will be working with and what it takes to win elections.

If you are thinking of standing as an independent candidate you need to call Electoral Services at Wychavon District Council on 01386 565437. You must make sure you are officially “nominated”, this means getting 10 nomination papers, each signed by a registered elector of the ward where you wish to stand. These papers are available from the District Council. All the necessary documents must be submitted 19 working days before the day of election.

## Further information:

More information about standing as a councillor can be found at the following:

### **Wychavon District Council**

[www.wychavon.gov.uk](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk)

01386 565000

### **National Association of Local Councils**

[www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk)

02076 371865

### **Be a Councillor**

[www.beacouncillor.org](http://www.beacouncillor.org)

02076 643000

### **Electoral Commission**

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

02072 710600