



PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS – Part 2

Hopefully, you will have read Part 1! If not, you are welcome to contact me and I can email it to you.

Getting elected is not difficult. Once you have decided that you wish to “represent the views of the local community within the Parish, all you have to do is send your application once the Notice of Elections is published. This will be done online and on the Noticeboards. If in doubt, contact the Monitoring officer at Stratford-on-Avon DC < Philip Grafton on 260400 or, for anything more local, me.

Why would you wish to become a Parish Councillor? Following the “making” of the Bidford-on-Avon Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Council is putting into effect a number of projects based on the responses made by the Local Community to the original survey: these include

- Youth and Community Project
- Improvement and development of the Big Meadow and other play areas
- Increased awareness of the High Street businesses to ensure it remains a viable and vibrant commercial part of the village
- Improved communication

You may feel strongly about one or all of these projects and wish to become involved in the decisions made to implement them (or not).

Equally, you may not agree with these projects and feel dissatisfied with the current Parish Council. It is always easy to just sit on the side-lines and complain but more productive to get elected and try to change things from within. The 4 yearly elections are a good time for a committed group of residents to stand for election and effect real change or continue the good work already under way.

So what does a Parish Councillor do?

- He/she is responsible to The Parish Council and its electors
- Is responsible for “Effective leadership to foster the interests of their electors and Parish”
- Represents the views of Parishioners within and outside the Parish

The main “duties/responsibilities” of a Parish Councillor is to:

- Participate constructively in the government of the Parish council
- Participate fully in the formation and scrutiny of the parish council’s policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery

- Ensure the Parish Council is properly managed
- Promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the parish
- Effectively represent the electorate
- Attend Parish Council meetings
- Maintain proper standards of behaviour as an elected representative of the people

The question most often raised is: will I have the time? Parish Councillors are elected but are, in essence, volunteers. As mentioned above, they have the duty to attend all Parish Council meetings which, in Bidford-on-Avon, is 2 times a month: the second and last Monday of the month. Councillors are also members of 1 Working Group (Amenities, Business Development and Communication & Marketing), normally one that deals with concerns of special interest to them. The Working Groups meet as required, consider issues and then make recommendations to full Council for it to make the final decision. It is not onerous and is rewarding: the Parish Council does have the power to improve the quality of life of its local community and, as a Councillor, you will be responsible for carrying this out.

Interested? The West Midlands & Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) is organising a special event which is **FREE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC** at Elizabeth House, on Monday 11th February 6.30 – 8.30 pm when, amongst others, I shall be one of the Speakers. This is the ideal opportunity to find out what being a Parish Council entails, how the Parish Councils works and how rewarding being a Parish Councillor can be.

You can, of course, always come to see me in confidence and I will be only too pleased to answer any questions.