

Role	Parish Councillor
Responsible to	All people resident within the Parish
Regular liaison with	Other councillors, local authorities, residents
Period of service	Four years with possible extension.
Salary	This is a voluntary position with some expenses able to be paid in certain cases.

Main purpose

Representing the views of all residents within your parish.

Secondary purpose

- As part of a local council you will have responsibility for running local services which may include: open spaces, play areas, village halls, community car schemes and potentially much more.
- Deciding on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver your council's services.
- Influencing and shaping the long term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish.
- Improve the quality of life and the environment in their local area.
- Working to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent.
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

History of parish councils

Parish councils have their origins in medieval times, in an era when money was seldom used and when few people lived in the countryside. Communities came together in order to organise land management, agriculture and settle disputes.

The current system of parish councils was formed in 1896. There are currently around 10,000 parish councils in the country.

Any community can ask to have a parish council and, in fact, many new parishes have been formed in recent years -particularly in urban areas.

Local councils have evolved considerably over the last 1000 or so years, but one thing remains the same: they are the tier of local government which is closest to individual communities and therefore have the greatest potential for identifying, understanding and addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

While some larger councils are run along party political lines, there is no expectation that you have to join a political party. The vast majority of parish councils are not split by party politics.

Persons specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Over 21 and on the electoral register	Y	
A resident of the parish for which you are standing (although there are certain exceptions)	Y	
Able to attend regular evening meetings	Y	
Interest in local issues and things which affect people.	Y	
Keen to improve the local environment and quality of life.		Y
An understanding and willingness to represent the views of the whole community.	Y	
An interest in learning and developing your role in the community		Y

Support and training

Training and advice for parish councillors is provided by the Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NorfolkALC). The District Councils, County Council and Norfolk Rural Community Council provide training, advice and support on particular issues relating to working with the community.

How to find out more

Contact the Norfolk Association of Local Councils (Norfolk ALC) www.norfolkalc.gov.uk or 01603 638495 who will be able to put you in touch with somebody locally.

The National Association of Local Councils has a comprehensive website www.nalc.gov.uk or you could visit a parish or town council meeting and talk to existing councillors or a clerk. Find details of your parish clerk Mrs. Clare Crane on the Starston parish council pages on the village website www.starstonvillage.co.uk