

Chelmondiston Parish Council

Becoming a Parish Councillor

A councillor is elected not only to represent their constituents but also to take decisions affecting the area of the council as a whole.

They may have many different roles including corporate decision maker, corporate employer, policy formulator, representative on external bodies, citizens advocate and corporate protector of their parish and its environment.

A suitable qualified person may become a member of a local council in several different ways. However, the most common ways are by:

1. **Ordinary election.** The interval between elections is 4 years. The election day for districts, is the first Thursday in May.
2. **Local election.** Following a vacancy; if 10 electors for the Parish request an election in writing to the Returning Officer of the District Council within a certain period of time an election will be held. Otherwise the vacancy will be filled by co-option.
3. **Co-option to a casual vacancy.** The co-option process is less formal. If you wished to be considered for co-option, you would need to complete an application form. We ask that you attend a parish council meeting so you can see how the Parish Council works. If you then wish to proceed with your application we will item your application on the next agenda ask you to come along and give a brief outline of your experiences and reasons of wanting to become a Parish Councillor.

A decision will then be made by the Parish Council on your application.

Am I Eligible to Be a Parish Councillor? (set out in s.79 of the Local Government Act 1972)

To stand for election on a Parish Council, or to be co-opted into the Council, you must:

- be a UK or Commonwealth citizen, or;
- be a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or;
- be a citizen of another Member state of the European Union;
- be at least 18 years old.

To be eligible to stand for an election or co-option for a particular parish, you must:

- be an elector of the parish, or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the parish, or;
- during the previous 12 months have worked in the parish (as your principal or only place of work), or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months lived in the parish or within three miles of the parish boundary

You may but don't have to be connected to a political party. Most of the current Councillors are independent, with no political party affiliation.

Unless disqualified from being elected or being a Councillor (s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972)

- if he takes up paid employment with the council such as paid clerk;
- is the subject of bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order (s.267(1) Enterprise Act 2002);

- if a councillor is on conviction of any offence in the United Kingdom, Channel Isles or the Isle of Man, with a sentence of not less than 3 months' imprisonment (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine;

If you do become a Parish Councillor you will have to adhere to the *Code of Conduct*, sign a **Declaration of Interests** and adhere to the **Council's Standing Orders** and other policies. Training will be provided and you can always contact the Parish Clerk should you need to ask any further information.

Amount of Time Involved

Councils usually meet once a month for the Council meeting, to which members of the public are also invited. Meetings may last two to three hours, depending on what's on the agenda to discuss. Some Councils may also have sub-committees to deal with specific subjects. In **Chelmondiston Parish Council**, we have a Planning Committee.

In addition to the regular meetings, Councillors are required to give spare time for 'ad hoc' meetings – for example, for the Advisory Finance Group meeting, in order to prepare recommendations to full council, liaise with the local primary school, represent the council on the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee.

The role is varied and offers residents and members of the public to be a part of the decision process for the community.

If you wish to be considered for co-option to **Chelmondiston Parish Council**, please complete the following section and return to the Parish Clerk.

Chelmondiston Parish Council- Councillor Co-option- Application

Please write a little bit about yourself and why you would like to be part of the Parish Council. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Name:

Address:

Contact details, including e-mail address:

Declaration: Please also confirm in writing that you meet the eligibility criteria as detailed above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed form to:

Chelmondiston Parish Council

Mrs Jill Davis, *Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer*

Michelle, Church Road, Chelmondiston IP9 1HT.

Tel : 01473 780 159 e-mail: clerk@chelmondistonpc.info