



**BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR**

BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT WE WILL COVER

- The roles and responsibilities of the Council, councillors and the clerk
- Who is responsible?
- The skills needed to be a good councillor

BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR

INTRODUCTIONS

THE COUNCIL

The council is a corporate body constituted by councillors.

THE COUNCIL

Formally, local councils can only do what legislation requires or permits them to do.

But the nature of legislation means that local councils actually have a great deal of freedom to undertake activities that benefit the community.

THE COUNCIL

The council has the authority to raise money through taxation (the precept).

THE COUNCIL

Each council will consider where its priorities lie based on the needs of the community and the other organisations locally e.g. other local authorities, public sector organisations, charities, voluntary groups etc

THE COUNCIL

The council must act as a responsible employer.

Council employees enjoy the full security of the law.

COUNCILLORS

Councillors are public office holders democratically accountable to their community.

COUNCILLORS

There is no statutory description of the role of councillor.

COUNCILLORS

The main responsibility of the role is to participate in the collective decision making processes of the council.

COUNCILLORS

Councillors collectively make decisions on council matters, but councillors cannot individually make (or be delegated) decisions on behalf of the council.

COUNCILLORS

They will represent the views and needs of their community to the council, and represent the council to the community and partners.

THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman is elected at the Annual Council meeting and holds office for one year.

They preside council meetings, lead the council and often enjoy a range of civic responsibilities.

THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

of public life

Selflessness

Openness

Integrity

Honesty

Objectivity

Leadership

Accountability

THE CLERK

statutory title 'Proper Officer'

Local councils have the statutory power to employ staff as it thinks necessary to carry out its functions and powers. They are most commonly known as the clerk of the council, but different titles can be given.

THE CLERK

The clerk implements the decisions of the council and provides independent, objective and professional advice, information and administrative support to the council.

THE CLERK

The clerk is the most senior member of staff of the council

THE CLERK

The clerk will be responsible for the day-to day operation and administration of the council

eg correspondence, communications, administration of council meetings, etc.

THE CLERK

The council can delegate further powers to the clerk

WHO DOES WHAT?

Makes decisions

Writes the minutes

Monitors the accounts

Spends the money

Decides the precept

Makes decisions in an
emergency

Chooses the clerk

Decides if a councillor has a
disclosable pecuniary interest

Decides planning applications

WHO DOES WHAT?

Makes decisions —
The council

But the council can choose to delegate power to make decisions to a committee, a sub-committee, an officer or another council.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Writes the minutes —

The clerk or another officer

The accuracy of minutes is agreed by the next meeting of the council and then signed by the chairman.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Monitors the accounts —
The council

The council is ultimately responsible for the accounts as the corporate body.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Spends the money —
The council

The clerk or RFO may have some delegated powers to spend money. But ultimately it is still the council which is responsible.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Decides the precept —

The council

The decision to approve the precept demand cannot be delegated and must be approved by full council.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Makes decisions in an emergency —
The clerk

An officer is the only individual who can have powers delegated to them.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Employs the clerk —

The clerk is employed by the council

The clerk answers to the council as a whole,
not individual councillors.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Decides if a councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest —

The councillor

The clerk or another councillor is not required to remind a councillor of their duty.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Decides planning applications —

The principal council

Parish councils only comment on applications,
they are not the decision maker.

WHICH COUNCIL DOES WHAT?

Public conveniences	Lunch for pensioners	Supporting public and community transport
Repair of potholes	Home care assistants	Support for youth clubs
Street lights	Maintenance of public rights of way	Support for village halls
Car parks	Financial support for voluntary organisations	Recycling
Street cleaning and litter		
Traffic calming		

COUNTY COUNCIL CAN DO THESE

Public conveniences	Lunch for pensioners	Supporting public and community transport
Repair of potholes	Home care assistants	Support for youth clubs
Street lights	Maintenance of public rights of way	Support for village halls
Car parks	Financial support for voluntary organisations	Recycling
Street cleaning and litter		
Traffic calming		

BEING A GOOD COUNCILLOR

DISTRICT COUNCIL CAN DO THESE

Public conveniences

Repair of potholes

Streetlights

Car parks

Street cleaning
and litter

Traffic calming

Lunch for
pensioners

Home care
assistants

Maintenance of
public rights of way

Financial support
for voluntary
organisations

Supporting public
and community
transport

Support for
youth clubs

Support for
village halls

Recycling

PARISH COUNCIL CAN DO THESE

Public conveniences

Repair of potholes

Street lights

Car parks

Street cleaning
and litter

Traffic calming

Lunch for
pensioners

Home care
assistants

Maintenance of
public rights of way

Financial support
for voluntary
organisations

Supporting public
and community
transport

Support for
youth clubs

Support for
village halls

Recycling

BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR

SKILLS NEEDED TO BE A GOOD COUNCILLOR

THE SKILLS NEEDED TO BE GOOD

Communication

Problem solving & analytical

Team work

Organisation

Ability to engage with the local community

OTHER USEFUL SKILLS

Local knowledge

Financial management

Law and procedures

The built and/or natural environment

Other skills relating to the work of the council

BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR

YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHAT WE HAVE COVERED

- The roles and responsibilities of the Council, councillors and the clerk
- Who is responsible?
- The skills needed to be a good councillor

BEING A GOOD
COUNCILLOR

THANK YOU

ABOUT US

The Devon Association of Local Councils is a member organisation supporting and representing parish and town councils in Devon.

We provide a number of services:

- Advice and guidance with access to legal and financial services
- Updates and information
- An events programme for clerks and councillors
- Enable strategic engagement and partnership working
- Lobbying for issues that are important to local councils

CONTACT US

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