

## **SEEND PARISH COUNCIL**

Seend Parish is entitled to have 11 councillors on the Parish Council. There are just over 900 residents over the age of 18 on the electoral roll.

Parish Councillors are elected and remain in office for 4 years. They can be re-elected at the end of the 4-year period. In between elections, if a Councillor stands down for any reason, a notice of a Councillor Vacancy is advertised. Anyone from the parish can request an election to fill the vacancy, and if more than 10 parishioners request an election within 14 days of the notice, then the Parish Council will have to hold an election if there are more candidates than councillor vacancies. The cost to the parish of an election is approximately £2,100. If no election is requested, then the vacancies can be filled by Co-option.

Vacancies: There are no vacancies

Elections: The next Parish Council election will be in May 2021.

At these local government elections, parishioners can put themselves forward as a candidate. The requirement is that they should be:

- British, or a citizen of the Commonwealth, or European Union
- At least 18 years old
- Registered to vote in the area or have lived, worked or owned property there for a least 12 months before an election.

They would need to complete a nomination form, and be nominated by two other parishioners.

If there are more than 11 candidates, an election will be held on the date. If there are no more than 11 candidates, then the election will be declared as uncontested and all candidates will automatically become councillors without an election. It is in the interests of full democracy that there are as many candidates to ensure that an election takes place. Please click on the link below to find our more information and to download a nominations pack.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/elections-becoming-a-councillor>

### **The Role of the Parish Council**

A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the Parish. It is the level of government closest to the community, with Wiltshire County Council above it in the hierarchy. As it is the authority closest to the people, parish councils are invariably the first place people will go to with concerns or ideas. It has a variety of duties all of which impact directly on the community.

Statutory Power – Whilst Seend Parish Council has little in the way of statutory powers, it provides the link between the community and the County Council and will be consulted by the County Council on many issues that may directly affect the Parish. So, Seend Parish Council will be asked to give comment to consultation documents that may be on housing, highways, etc.

Planning: It is a statutory consultee on planning matters relating to the parish. It is notified of all planning applications that are submitted in the Parish. However, there is no legal requirement for the County Council's Planning Department to act on the recommendations of the Parish Council.

Land in Seend: the Parish Council does not own any playing fields or village halls. However, it does own land which has 15 allotment plots, and these are rented out to tenants for an annual rent. The Parish is lucky to have two village halls and a playing field. These are looked after by the Trustees of the Community Centre and the Lye Recreation Field.

Bus Shelters – The parish council owns and has responsibility for the two brick bus shelters at The Lye and Sells Green. The other bus shelters are the responsibility of the County Council.

Highways – Seend has two A Roads, A361 and A365 that run through the parish, plus a number of C roads. Signage, white lines, speed restrictions, highway maintenance etc are the responsibility of the Highways department of Wiltshire County Council. For any highway safety improvements that the Parish requests, the Parish Council will be expected to pay for at least a third of the cost. Applications for Highway improvements are raised as Community Issues and sent to the Area Board. They are then discussed at CATG (Community Area Transport Group) meetings where they will compete with other parishes for funding.

Area Board – Seend Parish Council has recently moved into the Devizes Community Area. Whilst our parish boundary has not changed, we will be grouped together into a new ward to be called Devizes Rural West. This will include: Bulkington, Poulshot, Seend, Potterne, Erlestoke, Marston, Worton and Coulston

Seend Parish Neighbourhood Plan – This has now been completed and following the Referendum in May is now a statutory document that Wiltshire Council must refer to when dealing with planning applications. For further information, please go to [www.seendparishplan.org](http://www.seendparishplan.org)

Parish Steward – The County Council offers a Parish Steward service free of charge. The Parish Steward visits our parish 2 days a month and will carry out a number of tasks such as drain clearing, vegetation clearing, cutting back overgrowth, etc. These tasks are given to him by the Parish Council in the form of a monthly task sheet which has a priority list.

Precept – This is the element of the Council Tax that is paid to the Parish Council. The current precept for the 2020-21 financial year is £20,381. This equates to £38.34 per annum per household in Band D.

### **The Role of the Parish Councillor**

Parish Councillors work together to serve the community and to help the Council to make decisions on behalf of the local community. The role of the councillor is a voluntary one. You must live in the parish and be on the electoral roll.

Meetings: There are 11 monthly meetings of the full Parish Council which meets on the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. There is also the Annual Parish Meeting which always takes place in May. In addition there may be sub-committee meetings, such as the Precept budget meeting and for representation at the County Council's Area Board and CATG meetings.

**Could you be a local Parish Councillor?**

- Do you have a desire to help and become involved in your community?
- Do you believe in helping others to help themselves?
- Do you like a different challenge every day?
- Have you ever shouted at the TV and thought you could do better?
- Are you prepared to stand up and be counted?
- Are you self motivated?
- Are you prepared to take part in learning and development opportunities?
- Do you have time to spare to meet this significant commitment?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it might be time for you to stand as a local councillor.