



## The Role of the Parish Councillor

Parish councillors have a dual role:

- They represent the views and concerns of the residents of the parish to the parish council itself and, through it to the unitary authority (Somerset Council);
- They report back to residents on issues affecting the parish.

The formal part of these roles, especially the first one, is carried out by attending meetings and corresponding with the parish clerk.

Individual councillors do not have, and cannot be given, powers to make decisions on behalf of the parish council. This applies to the chairman as much as to the other councillors, although the chairman does have personal responsibilities in connection with the running of formal meetings.

The less formal part of these roles of listening and talking to people, including the local elected members of the unitary council, will almost certainly take up more of the councillor's time. However, it is important to remember that "rules of behaviour" apply whenever activities of being a parish councillor are being undertaken.

Councillors are expected to undertake some training that supports them in fulfilling the councillor role. The training, provided by Somerset Association of Local Councils, provides essential training about the role of the council and councillors, the parish clerk, and the council's finances/budget setting. Further training will cover responding to planning applications and also more about the code of conduct. The training is fully supported and financed by the parish council, and takes place via remote learning (zoom).

Long Sutton Parish Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month, apart from August. The annual budget (2023/24) is £38325, and the precept (2023/24) is £28795

Long Sutton Parish Council does not have committees but has an Environment Working Group, and a group leading the community infrastructure. Councillors each take on a responsibility to be the lead councillor on various elements, as listed below.

Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committee: 3 councillors required. Long Sutton Parish Council is the sole managing trustee for the Village Hall and Recreation Ground. (currently Councillors Cox, Coombes and Stoddart-Stones).

Local Community Network (LCN). Since Somerset Council is now an amalgamation of Somerset County Council and the four district councils, a regular meeting of the 18 Local Community Networks takes place quarterly. There is a member of each parish or town council within that LCN. (currently Cllr Cox).

Planning. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications. The Lead councillor considers the planning applications that are due to be discussed at the parish council meeting and leads that agenda item at the parish council meeting. (currently Cllr Rousell).



Highways. The parish council has a Speed Indicator Device, shared with two other parish councils. The lead councillor manages the device relocation and the data, and also leads on Highways issues. (currently Cllr Rousell).

Footpaths. The lead councillor works with the team of volunteers and the Parish Pathways Liaison Officer (PPLO) to manage maintenance within the parish on the network of rights of way. (currently Cllr Pritchard).

Accounts/payment scrutiny. Two councillors to scrutinise and sign the financial papers each meeting. (any two councillors at the parish council meeting).

Lengthsman co-ordinator. The parish council contracts a lengthsman, who's time is targeted each month to various areas of the parish. (currently Cllr Cox).

Parish Council communications and website (e-newsletter). The parish council introduced an e-newsletter at the start of the year. The councillor in this role will lead on the production of the e-newsletter monthly with the parish clerk and support the clerk with the website management. (currently vacant).

Environment plan working group. Currently three councillors make up the working group and meet regularly. A survey was conducted earlier this year (2023), to establish the environment priorities in the parish. (currently Councillors Ricards, Stoddart-Stones, Ward and Weilgus

Community Infrastructure (refurbishment of pavilion, tennis courts, and play area). Three councillors lead on this area and meet regularly to discuss funding and project progress. (currently Cllrs Cox, Coombes and Rickards).