

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

New Councillor Crib Sheet

The Parish Council

Swindon Parish Council has nine seats (i.e. we should have nine councillors, also called members). The council meets on the second Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall.

The council's meetings are required to be open to the public. Decisions are made in meetings, and a quorum of at least three members must be present.

The clerk must give at least three clear days notice of meetings to members and the public.

The parish council is a corporate body and members have collective responsibility for decisions made.

In law, the council has duties (things it must do, relatively few) and powers (things it can do). It cannot operate outside those parameters.

The council has the power to comment on planning applications (though decisions are made by the Borough Council).

Councillors (or Members)

Councillors are normally elected by the parish electorate. Elections are held every four years, at which point all councillors retire (regardless of when they took office) but may offer themselves for re-election. If there are insufficient candidates at an election to fill the vacancies those offering themselves for election are elected unopposed and the remaining vacancies may be filled by co-option.

To become a councillor you must (broadly):

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a British citizen
- Be a registered voter in, or work in, the parish

The council has Standing Orders and Financial Regulations that describe how its business is conducted. In practice meetings are informal and we make most decisions by discussion and consensus.

Members should make every effort to attend meetings, but everyone has other commitments from time to time. Members who fail to attend for 6 months without an acceptable reason are automatically removed from office.

The Clerk

The council has one part time employee (the clerk) who is responsible to the council (not the chairman).

The clerk is expected to:

- Provide advice to the council on matters of law
- Run the council's accounts
- Undertake actions as requested by the council
- Keep the council's records, including minutes of meetings

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The Chairman

The council elects a chairman every year in May.

The chairman is a councillor like any other in most respects, though he/she is responsible for running the meetings and, if required, has a casting vote.

Other bodies

The council interacts with other bodies, including:

- The County Council (highways, footpaths)
- The Borough Council (planning matters, the park, rubbish and recycling)
- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) (legal advice, training)

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

Last updated 04/05/2021