

Could you stand up to being a West Mersea Town Councillor?

If you have a keen interest in local issues such as amenities, planning and housing, anti-social behaviour and local government finances, then you might like to consider whether you could be one of our next Town Councillors.

West Mersea Town Councillors are elected representatives that volunteer their time free to work on behalf of their local community. The position is not linked to any political party, but you get to be involved in decision making at a local government level, thus helping to shape the future of our Town. The Town Council is very busy, diverse, proactive and enthusiastic, with a large population to serve and a number of projects underway, including a Neighbourhood Plan for West Mersea. A Councillor's role is both challenging yet rewarding.

The following requirements are key to being a West Mersea Town Councillor:

- **To attend and take part in Town Council meetings and be informed about the issues to be discussed.** Typically, you would be required to attend a minimum of 2-3 meetings a month and do background work in between. There are also a number of committees which discuss and make decisions which affect the community and it is desirable for all Councillors to take part in at least one or two of these.
- **To participate in overseeing the budget, policies, and strategies of the Council.** As part of this it is important to learn about the finances in depth, as it is the councillors' responsibility to set the budgets and ensure we keep within that.
- **Work with community groups and outside agencies for the benefit of our residents, the provision of some local amenities and recreational areas.** You should have the flexibility to attend other meetings/appointments with contractors, residents, groups, and attend occasional meetings of our borough and county council.
- **To keep up-to-date with any developments in day to day Town Council business.** This involves reading letters that come in either via post or email, reviewing information sent out by the Town Clerk, and checking in with the office staff regularly. Councillors are expected to check emails daily and respond to any issues accordingly. Each Councillor is given their own email address so they do not have to use their personal email accounts.
- **To keep up to date with developments affecting the Town Council at local, regional, and national level.** This may involve reading information from various local and regional councils, liaising with other councils and occasionally attending meetings at different levels.
- **Work alongside staff on projects, day-to-day queries and decisions as and when needed.** The Council receives a great deal of correspondence and some issues raised need quick decisions, which Councillors must be on hand to do. Other issues may need longer term input.

Personal attributes which you will need include being a good communicator, with the ability to listen and hear all sides, positive in your outlook and being able to overcome negativity, and possibly most importantly not get disheartened at the lack of speed when dealing with issues, or our inability to solve a problem due to it being beyond our remit.

Being a Councillor requires commitment and enthusiasm for serving our local community. Despite the challenges it is a most rewarding role when you know that you have made a positive contribution and helped make a difference.