

## THE ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR

A Councillor has a number of roles and the following points give some indication of the scope of the work involved:

- Individual Councillors do not have authority to make decisions (not even the Chairman) – a Council can delegate to their Proper Officer (Parish Clerk), Committees, Sub Committee or another Council. However, individual Councillors often help to carry out the work of the Council once this has been agreed by the Council as a whole i.e. inspecting a playground, helping with footpath clearance, attending a meeting on behalf of the Council.
- A Councillor has to represent the many interests of his or her area – not just the electors who voted for them, but the interest of the wider community. A Councillor will need to bear in mind the issues concerning groups who find it hard to attend meetings i.e. carers for the elderly or young, young people, people on low incomes.
- A Councillor will need to listen to the concerns of individuals and bring these concerns to the attention of the appropriate people or organisations. He or she will need to ensure that they do not commit the Council or other agencies to any particular course of action, and that they are careful not to become involved in disputes, which are purely private.
- Local Councils are responsible for its own good governance and individual Councillors have an important role to play in this. Councillors will be involved in setting and/or agreeing the budget for the coming year, agreeing the accuracy of the accounts prior to audit, and being aware that the running of the Council is both fair and efficient.
- Individual Councillors may contribute to the work of the Council by becoming members of committees, which deal with matters of particular interest to them, or by bringing matters to the Council for debate by requesting that they be placed on the agenda.
- Councillors contribute to the decision making role of the Council by reading papers prior to meetings, and by attending meetings whenever possible. Decisions of the Council are taken only by those present and voting, therefore it is not possible to vote by proxy.