

- Team working – you will need to work with others in meetings and on committees
- Organisational skills – being able to plan and manage your time and keep appointments
- Ability to engage with your local community – you will have to make yourself available to your community.

Councillors work as a team. The Town Clerk is employed to advise and seek advice on behalf of councillors to assist them in their decisions. Councillors are there to consider the information gathered and make a group decision on all matters. No individual councillor is responsible for any single decision. This is democracy at its best.

Will I get paid?

Councillors are not paid, the role is voluntary. Travel expenses are available for any meeting or training event that is held outside of the parish and, in certain circumstances, help is available towards the cost of dependant care.

What about my job?

Most of the meetings councillors attend are in the evening. By law your employer must allow you to take reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a Councillor. This will depend on your responsibilities and the impact it will have on your employer. The law doesn't state how much time is reasonable, and in some circumstances an employer could legitimately refuse. You should discuss this with them before making a decision. Many employers recognise that the skills people develop in their role as councillor can be useful in the work place.

How do I find out more?

If you would like more information on becoming a councillor please do not hesitate to contact Dursley Town Council who will be happy to give you all the information you need.

Dursley Town Council
 Jacob's House
 Castle Street
 Dursley
 Glos, GL114BS
 Tel/Fax: 01453 547758
 E-mail: clerk@dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk
 Website: www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Visit us at our office
 We are open Monday to Friday 10:30am -12:30pm
 (or at other times by appointment)

Do you want to make a difference in your community?

Are you concerned about what happens in your local area?

Do you feel you could represent the views of your neighbourhood?

If you answered **'yes'** have you ever thought about becoming a Town Councillor?

Your Guide to Becoming a Dursley Town Councillor

What is Dursley Town Council?

Dursley Town Council is one of the many town and parish councils that exist within the Stroud district. There is no difference between a Town and a parish council other than name. They both provide expert local information for the district and county councils, eg. comments on planning applications, the local knowledge to highlight matters of concern and report service failure etc. In addition to providing various amenities, including benches and bus shelters, Dursley Town Council manages and maintains the War Memorial Recreation Ground, Kingshill House Play Park and allotments. It also provides burial services and is trustee of the Twinberrow Foundation. Like the county and district, the town of Dursley is divided into areas, with each of the 17 Town Councillors representing one of the 3 wards.

- Highfields
- Central
- Kingshill

The Council currently has vacant places

Local government elections take place every four years. Elections are only held if more people apply to be councillors than there are seats available. If not enough people apply, then all candidates are considered elected, and there is no actual voting. Whenever there is a vacant seat, and after a set period of public notification, volunteers are invited to apply (in writing or by email) for 'co-option' to the council. If there are more applicants than places, the Town Council itself chooses the new councillors. A co-opted councillor is the same as an elected councillor, and has to meet the same criteria.

Why become a councillor?

Dursley Town Council needs councillors from all walks of life with a wide range of skills and experience to get involved. It's a great opportunity to help to shape the community and improve life for the people of your neighbourhood. You will also benefit from support and training, helping you to gain new skills and confidence.

What does a councillor do?

Councillors are elected to represent the voice of their community as a whole. Their role is to speak on behalf of the people they represent, being aware of and considerate to specific minority needs. Councillors help to resolve and promote local issues and make decisions for the whole of Dursley.

Most people's impression of what a councillor does is that they just attend council meetings and nothing could be further from the truth. The duties and

pleasure, of being a local councillor are many and varied, however it is the ordinary day to day contact with local people in their own community that is the most important part of being a councillor.

Who can be a councillor?

If you wish to stand as a councillor you must satisfy these requirements:

- Be over the age of 18 between the notice of election and closure of nominations
- A citizen of the European Union or the Commonwealth
- A local government elector of the parish; or a person who during the whole of the twelve months before nomination as a candidate occupied land or other premises as owner or tenant in the parish. Or has, during the same period, resided in that area or within three miles (4.8km) thereof, or has during the same period, had a principal or only place of work in that area.

Who can't be a councillor?

You cannot stand for election or co-option if you:

- Are bankrupt and an Order or Interim Restriction Order has been imposed.
- Have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine.
- Work for the council where you are intending to standing for election (but you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area).

How much time will it take up?

The amount of time being a Councillor takes up will, to some extent, be up to you, but it is a commitment that you should consider carefully. There will be a number of meetings that you will be required to attend which are usually held in the evenings. You will have to spend time talking to people in your community and resolving any issues they may have. You will also need to make time to read papers in preparation for meetings.

What skills do I need?

You don't need any professional or formal qualifications to be a councillor but the knowledge and experience you have picked up through your work and personal life could be useful. The following skills could help you in your role:

- Communications skills – the ability to listen and talk to people, to understand people's points of view
- Problem solving – you will need to get to the bottom of an issue and to think of different ways to resolve it