



*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 Play Park, Highfields Play Area, Kingshill Cemetery, St Mark's Burial Ground and Kingshill allotments. It 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 seventeen Town Councillors representing one of the three wards.

- Highfields
- Central
- Kingshill

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 need to be:

- British or a citizen of the Commonwealth. You may also be eligible as a citizen of the European Union, however the criteria has changed now that the UK has left the European Union. Please check on the [gov.uk website for advice about EU citizens' voting and candidacy rights](#) in local elections.
- Registered to vote in the area or have lived, worked, or owned property there for at least 12 months before an election.
- At least 18 years old.

Who can't be a councillor?

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

- Work for the council you want to be a councillor for, you can work for another local authority as long as you are not in a political restricted post.
- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.
- Have been sentenced to prison for three months or more (including suspended sentences) during the five years before election day.
- Have been convicted of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court.
- Are subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, in respect of a sexual offence.

Please read the full [eligibility criteria from the Electoral Commission](#). If you are in any doubt about whether you are eligible to stand as a councillor, you should contact the Electoral Services or Democratic Services team at your local council or the Electoral Commission for advice.

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 find the underlying cause of an issue and to think of different ways to resolve it
- 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 a 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 workplace.

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, Gloucestershire GL11 4BS

Tel: 01453 547758

E-mail: clerk@dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Visit us at our office

We are open Monday to Friday 10:00am -3pm (or at other times by appointment)