**Being a parish councillor**

The position of parish councillor is a voluntary position, and unpaid.

To be eligible to be a parish councillor you must be at least 18 years old, be a British or Commonwealth citizen, and either (a) be a local government elector or (b) live within 3 miles of the parish, or work in or rent/own land in the parish of Acle.

There are 12 parish councillors for Acle Parish Council. Every parish councillor stands down at each parish council election, normally linked to district council elections, and usually every 4 years.

At the time of a parish council election, if 13 candidates stand then an election is held. If 12 or fewer stand, then everyone is automatically confirmed as a parish councillor.

If fewer than 12 people stand to be councillors, or when someone resigns or dies mid-term, then there is what is called a casual vacancy. The existing parish councillors vote on who they would like to be the new parish councillor, known as co-option.

Generally, candidates are invited to attend the parish council meeting and, at the end, to say just a few words about why they would like to be a parish councillor, what they care about particularly in the area, and what their interests are. The councillors then discuss the candidates in private and vote on which person to choose. The councillors look for someone to complement the existing skills base within the council, or someone who has an interest in or enthusiasm for a forthcoming project.

The parish council employs a parish clerk (25 hours per week) and a part-time cleaner for the public toilets and for some open spaces. The council looks after street lights, 3 play areas, the cemetery, some grasscutting, the allotments, and some bins and benches. It also pays for the youth club and helps the Recreation Centre, Social Club and other village groups and clubs. The council owns the Pre-school building (known as the Fletcher Room), the former Barclays Bank building and the Chocolate Box, and is currently working on the refurbishment of these buildings.

The council is consulted on planning applications in the area, and on some larger projects in the county.

Meetings are usually on the last Monday of each month, apart from when that falls on a bank holiday, when the meeting is moved forward by one week. Meetings are held at 7.00pm, usually in the Methodist Meeting Room, but currently on Zoom.

New councillors are encouraged to undertake some introductory training courses, which are paid for by the council.

For more information, please contact the clerk, Pauline James, on 01493 751070 or PaulineJames@aol.com