

# LOCAL COUNCILS

## What do they do?

In England, a Local Council may be formally known as a Parish, Town, Community, Neighbourhood or Village Council

This leaflet tells you what they actually do, and how you can get involved.



Produced by Buckinghamshire  
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## WHAT IS A LOCAL COUNCIL?

- ◆ Local council is a universal term for community, village, neighbourhood, parish and town councils. Established by legislation in 1894; Oldest type of Local Authority in England and Wales.
- ◆ They are the first tier of local government and are statutory bodies. They serve communities and are elected by residents. There are 10,000 local councils in England and 120,000 councillors who serve on these local councils.
- ◆ Provide services to meet local needs. Improve quality of life and well being in the community
- ◆ Your Local Council is a statutory body with certain duties and legal powers. They are democratically and financially accountable to the local community. They can raise their own precept (a form of council tax).
- ◆ Local Councils have the legal right to be informed about planning applications and other issues.
- ◆ Give the local community a more powerful voice in the local area.
- ◆ Help support local groups in their area. This may be through funding, provision of meeting places, or through publicity. This could include voluntary groups that help young people or the older generation to name but a few.

## WHAT DO LOCAL COUNCILS DO?

- ◆ Local council have overall responsibility for the well-being of your local community. Improve the quality of life for residents
- ◆ Give communities a democratic voice
- ◆ Provide, maintain or contribute to the services of their council - Here are a few examples:
- Village Halls, Community Centres and leisure facilities
  - Local Youth projects
  - Bus shelters, car parks and community transport schemes
  - Crime reduction measures –CCTV and Anti Social Behaviour
  - Cycle Paths and traffic calming measures
  - Festivals, celebrations, illuminations and tourism activities
  - Allotments , parks and open spaces
  - Community Safety Schemes



## Who is eligible?

Any person over the age of 18 who is a citizen of the United Kingdom, The European Community, or the Commonwealth can be a Councillor if they are an elector in, work in, live in or live within three miles of the area of the local Council.

## What will I do if elected?

Raise matters that the Council can consider and formally decide to take action about at meetings

Attend Council meetings

Make informed contributions which influence the debate on the business that needs to be decided at those meetings

Participate in the Council's decision making process, which in itself is subject to strict rules and guidelines

Represent the Council externally

## So, what are you waiting for?



Advice is always available regarding becoming a councillor.

Contact your local council today to find out more!