

Local Councils are delivering more services for residents than ever before and with changes to legislation and cuts to funding, Town Councils are taking on more services previously provided by Principal authorities.

Watchet Town Council is a pro-active Council that is well led, accountable, visible and representative, this was demonstrated in the Town Council being awarded the runner up position in the 2018 'Star Councils' ran by NALC. The Town Council has a qualified Clerk through the Certificate in Local Council Administration. The Clerk has also undertaken extensive training to gain an HSC in Community Engagement and Governance. She also sits on the Branch Executive for the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and is the representative for the West Somerset area.

The Clerk is also the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) for the Council and accounts must be kept and audited by both internal and external auditors annually.

A Clerk is employed to advise on government legislation and lawful procedures and seek advice on behalf of the Councillors and to assist them in their decision making.

The Council also employs a part-time Clerical Officer and a part-time Admin Support Officer, a full-time Groundsman and part-time Operations Assistant, who ably assist the Clerk in ensuring that the town is well maintained, represented and promoted.

The office is open to the public Monday – Thursday 10.00am – 12.30pm. Communication through the internet, phone or post, including visits to the Office, ensures that there is access for all and information and queries can be addressed.

Watchet Town Council adopted the following "statements".

VISION STATEMENT

"To protect the individual character and identity of Watchet as a friendly and vibrant harbour town, and provide a safe environment for all who live and work in the town. To continually work in partnership with all sectors of the community to enhance the social and economic well-being of the town's inhabitants, so it is an even better place to live, work and visit"

MISSION STATEMENT

"Watchet Town Council works to constantly improve the quality of life for those who live, work and visit Watchet"



Watchet Town Council Office

2021 Watchet currently has an electorate of 3078

A pro-active Council offering a valued Service
Watchet Visitor Centre, Harbour Road, Watchet, Somerset TA23 0AQ

Tel: 01984 633344

Town Clerk: Sarah Reed E-mail: townclerk@watchettowncouncil.org

Website: www.watchettowncouncil.org

2021 MAY BI-ELECTION

- Why is it so important to vote?
- What difference will it make if I do?
- What is a Town Council?
- What does being a councillor mean?
- Could I do it?



Why is it so important to vote?

- Everything we come into contact with on a daily basis affects how we feel and what we do
- How much effort do you actually make to get your opinions known?

What difference will it make if I do?

- By voting you are ensuring that your chosen candidate has your backing and support
- By voting you are prepared to show you care what happens in your community
- By voting you take your place with others who care

What is a Town Council?

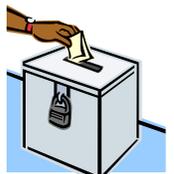
- Town Councils represent the concerns and aspirations of a genuine local community
- Town Councils are approachable and pro-active
- The basic responsibilities of Town Councils are to make the lives of their local communities more comfortable by representing **all** members of the community and delivering or co-ordinating services to meet local needs whilst striving to improve the quality of life in the town
- A Town Council is the collective voice of its community
- Stand for Town Council and you **can** make that difference

What does being a councillor mean?

- Do you often hear yourself saying "someone should do something about it"?
- Why not be that someone and become a Councillor and "do something about it"
- You will be the representative on different committees and outside organisations
- You will be able to share your strengths and skills with fellow Councillors
- Living in the community you will be aware of problem areas and hear the community voice
- The rewards for your time and efforts will be both valuable and worthwhile

Could I do it?

- Are you British, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union;
- Are you 18 years of age or over;
- Are you registered to vote in the area or within 3 miles of the town or have lived, worked or owned property for at least 12 months before an election;
- If **you** care enough about things that affect you and your community then the answer is 'yes' you can



Watchet Town Council

- Watchet Town Council consists of 12 members

1. Environment & Planning Committee

This committee has overall control of the following:

- Street lighting (44 street lights within Watchet and the Liddymore Estate)
- West Street car park – Council owned and administered
- Allotments – ten council owned and administered at two sites
- Street signage
- Highway improvements
- Statutory consultees on planning applications for Watchet

2. Finance & General Purposes Committee

This committee has the overall control of budgets and is responsible for:

- Watchet Cemetery
- Staffing issues
- Grant funding
- Administration costs
- The Personnel Committee is also under their remit

3. Tourism & Leisure Committee

This committee oversees recreational areas including:

- Memorial Ground and children's play area
- Liddymore play area
- Henry Davey playing field
- Play equipment
- Flowers and planting on municipal areas
- Events and approval of bookings as managers of the Esplanade on behalf of Somerset West & Taunton Council

4. Watchet Community Centre Management Committee

This Committee oversees the management of the centre, including Youth provision through an outside agency to ensure two youth club sessions per week, management of bookings and maintenance of the building

Each councillor has the opportunity to choose which committee/s they sit on. The Annual Council meeting held each May elects a new Chairman and Vice-Chair of Council and the Committees elect their own Chair at their first committee meeting following the Annual Council meeting.

Council Meetings

The Full Council meeting is held on the second Monday in each month. During August there is usually a break (unless any vital decision must be made).

The Committees meet once a month and have delegated powers (ie can make decisions within the meeting without having to go back to full council for ratification). Government legislation supports Committees with delegated powers in favour of expediency and good governance.

Each committee has its own budget, and this is set at the end of each year prior to the application for the annual precept (the funding received from local government ie West Somerset Council), and is taken from the council tax each householder in the town pays to West Somerset Council.

All Councillors have the opportunity of representing the Council on outside organisations, ie Conservation Society, Watchet Carnival Club, Watchet Market House Museum, WACET (Traders Association), Area Panel, Quantock Food Bank, West Somerset Citizens Advice, Harbour Advisory etc.

Duration of office for each elected councillor

Councillors stand for four years and can stand for re-election or stand down if they wish

Roles and responsibilities

- Representing your electorate
- Decision making
- Developing and reviewing Council policy on a range of issues

What you can offer your community

The knowledge and experience you have picked up through your personal and professional life are important. While you don't need any special or formal qualifications to be a Councillor, having or being able to develop the following skills, knowledge and attributes will help you in your role:

- **Communication skills:**
These include listening and interpersonal skills, public speaking skills and the ability to accept alternative points of view as well as the ability to negotiate, mediate and resolve conflict
- **Problem solving and analytical skills**
This include being able to get to the bottom of an issue and to think of different ways to resolve it, including advantages and disadvantages of each
- **Team working**
Including being able to work with others in meetings and on committees and being able to complete on time any tasks that you agree to do
- **Organisational skills**
These include being able to plan and manage your time, keep appointments and meet deadlines
- **Ability to engage with your local community**
You may have to make yourself available through meetings, the media, the internet, public forums, debates, on the phone and face to face

You might also have specific skills and knowledge gained from professional experience or from working with other groups which might assist with understanding:

- the needs of specific groups, such as children and young people, older people or those with health problems
- financial management and reporting processes
- legal and regulatory systems or procedures
- housing, regeneration or environment issues

You will not be alone!

Whilst Councillor training is not compulsory it is available to all Councillors, this can prove invaluable for new and more experienced Councillors with ever changing legislation and procedures. A support system is in place via the Town Clerk, who will conduct an induction meeting with you and ensure throughout the Council term information and advice is readily available

With a positive outlook you will find the step you have taken exciting, challenging and rewarding.

Speak for your community, Stand for your town

Bi- Election: 6 May 2021
Look out for the 'NOTICE OF ELECTION' on
www.watchettowncouncil.org
Or the Town Councils Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/WatchetTownCl>
or the Noticeboard outside the Council Office for details of
how to stand or contact Sarah Reed, Town Clerk on:
townclerk@watchettowncouncil.org **who will assist with**
any queries or questions.

