

Severn Stoke and Croome D'Abitot Parish Council

What are parish councils? There are around 10,000 community, parish and town councils in England and Wales. They are 'government closest to the people' and have a powerful voice to represent residents. Very importantly, these councils can "precept" - raising a sum collected with the council tax each year to improve local facilities and services. They have a number of basic responsibilities in making the lives of communities more comfortable. Essentially these powers fall within three main categories: representing the whole electorate within the parish; delivering services to meet local needs; and striving to improve quality of life in the parish. Specific powers include collaboration with community transport schemes and traffic calming measures, local youth projects, tourism activities, leisure facilities, car parks, village greens, public lavatories, litter bins, street lighting, burial grounds, allotments, bus shelters, commons, open spaces, footpaths and bridleways (location/ownership dependant) and participation in crime reduction measures. Parish councils can also comment on planning applications and can be represented at public inquiries. Parish Councils do not however have the final say in planning matters. A **parish councillor** is the voluntary, unpaid holder of a public office, whose main job is to actively participate in the collective decision-making processes of the council. A councillor's normal term of office, when elected by a general ballot is for 4 years. Anyone aged 18+ who is a citizen of the UK, lives or works in the Parish (or within 3 miles) may put themselves forward to be a candidate. Occasionally, vacancies arise and subject to various statutory notices, consultations and periods of time, these can be filled by co-option - known as a Casual Vacancy. Seeing a community change for the better, as a result of decisions you as a parish councillor have helped make, is something that can give you a sense of achievement and pride. *Source: National Association of Local Councils.*

Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.

NEXT MEETINGS: (1) **Wed 10th May - Annual Meeting of Parish Council & formation of new council post 4th May elections. 7.30pm at SOQ meeting room Croome National Trust.** (2) **Annual Parish Meeting on Wed 24th May 2023, 7.30pm at St Denys' Church.**

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