Milton under Wychwood Parish Council

An introduction to Milton under Wychwood Parish Council

Milton under Wychwood Parish Council exists as part of the democratic framework of the UK to represent the interests of villagers within the broader landscape of national governance. The parish of Milton under Wychwood extends from Crow's Castle in the south west to Heath Farm in the north east and from Milton Downs Farm to the boundary with Shipton under Wychwood. It is predominantly rural and comprises the village of Milton under Wychwood, the hamlet of Upper Milton, plus the settlements of Heath Farm on Lyneham Road, Springhill Farm, High Lodge Farm, Lower Farm, Milton Downs Farm, Quarry Hill Cottage, Crows Castle and the sewage works. It has around 1500 registered voters, with a fairly even distribution of ages, with the smallest age category being adults in their 20s.

What does a Parish Councillor do?
The Parish Council meets together with the Clerk, on the third Wednesday of every month with the exception of August and December, when, unless there is an urgent matter to discuss, the Council is in recess. Councillors are summoned to the meetings and their attendance is expected at every meeting. Between meetings Councillors are in regular communication with each other regarding matters arising from the meetings with each Councillor taking responsibility for a particular area of village life as well as taking an interest in a given geographical location within the village.

Term of office is four years and potentially longer should the Councillor enjoy the role and wish to be nominated for re-election after this period. A Councillor's skills, interest and experience will be considered in assigning them their designated area of responsibility. Councillors are expected to keep abreast of all emails sent to and from the Clerk in preparation for discussion of the Agenda items listed each meeting. The Agenda, together with briefing notes, are sent out ahead of the meeting and it is essential that Councillors are well-briefed and informed to facilitate clear and sensible discussion of issues arising. There is a degree of initiative expected and information provided by the Clerk is by no means all that is required in order for Councillors to participate in meetings. A Councillor may find that his/her own research on matters arising on the Agenda will better inform him/her and aid the rest of the Council in the decision-making process.

Councillors are given the opportunity to attend training courses for particular areas of Council activity, such as Roles and Responsibilities, Auditing, Chairmanship, Neighbourhood Planning as well as more general courses designed to give an overview of Parish Council life for new Councillors. Councillors are more effective in their role if they are engaged with their immediate community on a personal level in order to note the issues affecting local residents and the needs and hopes of all sectors of those sharing the village. There is increasingly more cooperation and networking with Councillors from neighbouring villages and taking the opportunity to chat with Councillors and Clerks from other parishes can be invaluable in contributing to projects undertaken or considered by Milton Parish Council.

What qualities does a Parish Councillor require?
The Parish Council needs people who are proactive, committed and interested, who are positive about living in the Wychwood community and wish to serve in a practical and

thoughtful way. Councillors are elected to represent every villager and therefore being objective is an important quality and selflessness may be required on more occasions than not. Tact, sensitivity and discretion are necessary when dealing with issues of a controversial nature and Councillors are to be aware that whether in active service of the Parish Council or not, the title of Councillor holds a certain responsibility necessary to maintain at all times so as to maintain the reputation of the Council and its activities. Councillors individually, can and should be very different in their skills base, experience and work status, all of which contribute to a good and balanced representation of the village. The ability to take the initiative, be creative and have time to give to the role are all very important aspects of being a good Councillor.

What should I do next?

If you would like to seriously consider stepping into the role of Councillor and a position becomes vacant, you will have the opportunity to be co-opted onto the Council if it is during the four years term. If another candidate is interested in being co-opted onto the Council, the Parish Council will consider the candidates and choose whom to co-opt. Following this the Clerk will issue you with a pack of essential reading material and your co-option will be reported to the Returning Officer at West Oxfordshire District Council. A Declaration of Interests will be completed for the Returning Officer as well as an Acceptance of Office which you will sign and return to him as soon as you are co-opted. If you have any further questions about the role not answered here, please contact the Clerk at clerk@miltonunderwychwood-pc.gov.uk