

Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council needs **YOU**



*Siegfried Sassoon, soldier-poet,
recipient of the Military Cross
and son of this parish **

Harsh reality No 1...

The Parish Council has existed, in one form or another, since 1895. It is in danger of losing control over local decisions.

Harsh reality No 2...

In May 2021 there will be 9 vacancies on the PC, with the new councillors electing a Chairman.

Harsh reality No 3...

At least 3 councillors are needed for meetings and decisions. The Borough Council will appoint members to ensure 3 councillors are present ... nobody wants that!

Harsh reality No 4... the Big One

If no more than 9 people apply to be Councillors there will be no election, they will *automatically* become Parish Councillors. They will be able to tax you and make important local decisions on your behalf but will not have been democratically elected... imagine that in Downing Street!

It's not like this any more:



It's more like this:



The good stuff matters...

Matfield Green and Pond;
Porters Wood; Cinderhill;
Playground; Allotments;
Streetlights; Benches;
Signs; War Memorials;
Christmas; Supporting
residents.

The challenges matter...

Planning; Development;
Traffic; Road Safety.

The Parish Council...

Holds KCC to account
Holds TWBC to account
Meets with Greg Clark MP

Do you wonder what the Parish Council does? Do you wonder why it seems so difficult to sort things out and why things take so long? Do you think you could do better? Do you have skills, experience and a passion for your villages? Then stand for election to the Parish Council, it cannot exist without councillors. PTO

Q. How many hours will it take?

As many as needed to ensure the Council can fulfil its projects, so it depends how active a Council you decide to be - of course there is no point in the PC being inactive!

Q. Seriously, how many hours will it take?

A. Minimum of 5 per week, 10 to do it well, 15 if you Chair a Committee or the Full Council. But, honestly, limitless. It is a responsible, worthwhile role.

Q. What if I have other commitments?

A. Work, family, hobbies, pets... all part of life. But being an elected public servant should be near the top of your list, if you want to do it properly.

Q. What if I don't understand some issues?

Who does? There is training, there are colleagues, there is the Clerk, there are 100 other Councillors in the Borough, we help each other. It's a fascinating learning curve.

Q. Am I too old? **A.** No, we need your experience and local knowledge. **Q.** Am I too young? **A.** No, we need your energy and ideas.

Q. What if I don't enjoy it/find I don't have the time/don't like the way it works? **A.** Leave, head held high, add it to your CV.

So, tell me, what will I actually spend my time doing?

- There is one Full Council meeting every month, usually on a Monday night. Other meetings are held once or twice a month (you will not need to attend all of them).
- Other Committees currently include Planning, Finance, Policy and Management. A newly elected Council can have whichever Committees it wants. You might add Committees for Volunteers, Amenities, Traffic, Environment, Communications, Events or putting up hanging baskets - it's up to you.
- You may choose to be assigned to a specific area, discuss ideas with others, do some research, write reports, recommend actions. You will answer questions and vote on decisions.
- There are numerous training opportunities, and much to read and learn. The PC is a tier of government, you will need to understand the statutory and legal duties.
- You will be asked your opinion most days, sometimes you will be asked for information on your specialist area. You will talk with residents and staff, come up with ideas and challenge others.
- You might do something active, the PC needs a Pond/Tree Warden, we have a stall at Matfield Fête, you might need to check on the playground, the footpaths or help with the Xmas lights, it can be outdoorsy too.

Oh I don't know, I quite like the idea, I know it's important, but I need to be sure...

- Look at the Parish Council website page www.brenchleyandmatfield.co.uk/parish-council/
- Look at the Parish Council Facebook page www.facebook.com/brenchleyandmatfieldpc/
- Contact the Clerk to the Parish Council, Chantal Brooks, for an information pack. She can tell you more... but she isn't a member of the Council, she is the adviser and administrator.

T: 01892 723586 E: clerk@brenchleyandmatfield.co.uk

- Contact a current or ex Councillor, each has their own experience of being a Councillor but will be able to tell you why it is worthwhile. If you don't know any then this is why the Parish Council needs to raise its profile!
- Contact the Clerk for a Zoom link to an informal **Q&A event** for prospective candidates at 7.30pm on Monday 22nd March 2021.

Yes, I'm in! Can't wait to get started. What do I do now?

1. Your application needs to be sent to the Borough Council by 8th April 2021
2. The election is on Thursday 6th May 2021
3. The Induction Session will be at 10.30am on Saturday 15th May 2021
4. The first meeting of the Council will be at 7.30pm on Monday 24th May 2021



The election process is run by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
The Democratic/Election Services Manager can be contacted for further information.
T: 01892 554403 ext: 4403 E: mathew.jefferys@tunbridgewells.gov.uk



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