

## THE ROLE OF KILMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the Parish. It is the level of government closest to the community, with Wiltshire Council above it in the hierarchy. As it is the authority closest to the people, parish councils are invariably the first place people will go to with concerns or ideas. It has a variety of duties all of which impact directly on the community.

**Statutory Power:** Whilst Kilmington Parish Council has little in the way of statutory powers, it provides the link between the community and the Wiltshire Council and will be consulted by them on many issues that may directly affect the Parish. So, Kilmington Parish Council will be asked to give comment to consultation documents that may be on housing, highways, etc.

**Planning:** It is a statutory consultee on planning matters relating to the parish. It is notified of all planning applications that are submitted in the Parish. However, there is no legal requirement for the Wiltshire Council's Planning Department to act on the recommendations of the Parish Council. (please see separate sheet on Planning)

**The Playing Field:** The only land that the Parish Council owns is the Playing Field located in The Street. It was purchased from the National Trust in 2000 but there are various covenants in place on its use/and or sale or disposal. It is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of this land and a contractor is paid to mow the grass on a regular basis during the spring, summer and autumn. As well as a playing field, there is a children's play area with swings, climbing frames etc and some skateboard ramps and a tarmac basketball area for the older children. The equipment is checked weekly by a resident of the village who receives a nominal payment; all equipment used in publicly accessible areas should meet with the requirements of the relevant listed standard hence, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) perform an annual inspection. This provides a comprehensive report which can highlight if there are any items which may need to be monitored or requiring remedial action. There is a Playing Field Committee consisting of two Parish Councillors and one resident of the village who meet 2-3 times a year and volunteer their time to keep everything in order.

**Bus Shelters:** The parish council owns four concrete bus shelters - two located in The Street (by the playing field and the flats), one in Cote Lane and one on the B3092 at Norton Ferris.

**The War Memorial** is maintained by the Parish Council. It comprises of a two-stepped hexagonal base surmounted by a hexagonal section, top chamfer-edge plinth and square-footed, octagonal sectioned tapering shaft, boss and cross.

The inscription reads:

***"In proud and grateful memory of all those who gave their lives for us in The Great War 1914-1919 especially the following from this Parish"***

W. Grey; A. Lapham; W. Newton; A. Norris; C. Penn; L. Penn; S. Prince; W.J. White

**Highways:** Kilmington and Norton Ferris has the B3092 running through it. It has a number of C roads. Signage, white lines, speed restrictions, highway maintenance etc are the responsibility of the Highways department of Wiltshire Council. For any highway safety improvements that the Parish requests, the Parish Council will be expected to pay for at least a 25% contribution towards the cost. Applications for Highway improvements are submitted to the Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) where they will compete with other parishes for funding and then approved by the Area Board.

**Area Board:** Kilmington Parish Council comes under the jurisdiction of South West Wiltshire Area Board which covers the Electoral Divisions of Mere, Tisbury, Nadder Valley, Fovant & Chalke Valley and Wilton.

**Parish Steward:** Wiltshire Council offers a Parish Steward service free of charge. The Parish Steward visits our parish for half a day each month and is able to carry out a number of tasks such as drain clearing, vegetation clearing, cutting back overgrowth, etc. Our Steward reports to the Chairman who will pass on tasks collated by him from other councillors.

**Precept:** This is the element of the Council Tax that is paid to the Parish Council. The current precept for the 2023-24 financial year is £10323.00. This equates to £73.09 per annum per household in Band D.

**Clerk:** There is one sole employee of Kilmington Parish Council and this is the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. She is paid for 12 hours per month and is given an allowance of £10 per month for using her home as an office.

### **The Role of the Parish Councillor**

Parish Councillors work together to serve the community and to help the Council to make decisions on behalf of the local community. Whilst Parish Councillors are often deemed to be volunteers, they are in fact public servants. They sign an acceptance of office at their first meeting after they are elected and they agree to abide by a Code of Conduct. They are not paid but take on the role to serve their local community. To stand for election you must be a UK or Commonwealth citizen; at least 18 years old; an elector of the local council; or in the past 12 months occupied land or other premises in the area the local council serves (as owner or tenant); or work in the parish (as your principal or only place of work); or live within three miles of the local council boundary.

### **Parish Council Elections**

The following is a very brief outline of the process for Parish Council elections which take place every 4 years. Elections are held on the first Thursday in May unless a different date is fixed during the preceding year by an order made by the Home Secretary – therefore, at this moment in time the next Wiltshire Parish Council elections will be held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025. The ordinary election of local councillors is to proceed by means of nomination of candidates by two local government electors for the parish. An election will take place if the number of candidates properly nominated exceeds the number of seats on the local council, otherwise the candidates will be returned unopposed. The Electoral Commission has produced an overview document [Guidance for Candidates](#) which can be accessed here. This gives a full description of the whole process.

In Kilmington there are 7 seats for councillors. Full details of how nomination papers may be obtained and all the deadline dates will be posted on the Kilmington Noticeboard usually at least six weeks before the election date. These are statutory notices and there will be links to various informative documents on the Wiltshire Council website.

If there were insufficient candidates to require an election, the Parish Council will take steps to fill any vacancies by making co-options within 35 days (not counting weekends and public holidays). However, if the number of newly elected members is less than the number that constitutes a

quorum, the Wiltshire Council returning officer must order a fresh election to fill the vacancy or vacancies remaining unfilled. In the case of Kilmington a quorum is no less than three members.

### **Casual vacancy**

A casual vacancy is a seat that becomes available between elections, which may occur for several different reasons, such as a councillor resigning, becoming disqualified (by committing an offence) or not attending any meetings in six months.

The parish clerk will declare the vacancy by posting a note within the parish and notifying the electoral returning officer.

This notice will also confirm that a by-election will be held if at least ten electors request it within 14 days (not including weekends and public holidays). If there is no demand for a by-election, the council will fill the vacancy by co-option.

### **Could you be a local Parish Councillor?**

Do you have a desire to help and become involved in your community?

Do you believe in helping others to help themselves?

Do you like a different challenge every day?

Have you ever shouted at the TV and thought you could do better?

Are you prepared to stand up and be counted?

Are you self-motivated?

Are you prepared to take part in learning and development opportunities?

Do you have time to spare to meet this significant commitment?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it might be time for you to stand as a local councillor.