

# STALBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

## ELECTION SPECIAL NEWSLETTER – ELECTIONS MAY 2015



## Why not become a Local Town Councillor?

### Have a voice – Stand for election NOW

Many people wish to become involved in local governance but do not know how to begin.

Local elections will be taking place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015. If you are interested in becoming a Town Councillor please feel free to come to the Town Clerk's office for an informal chat.

What is a Town Council?

*A Town Council is the collective voice of its community.*

Did you know that your local Councillors are consulted on nearly everything that happens in your area? They take an active part in influencing what services are and are not provided and that affects you and your family!

The 11 members of Stalbridge Town Council are responsible for Stalbridge and Stalbridge Weston.

Our responsibilities include;

- Management of the Jarvis Field and Jubilee Play areas.
- Management of The Hub, including the Community Library.
- The provision of street cleansing.
- Management of the public WCs at Station Road car park.
- Provision of street furniture including benches and the bus shelter.
- Management of The Ring and grass cutting of other open spaces.
- Consultee on planning applications within the Town.
- Provision of grants to local organisations.
- Liaison with the District Council with regard to rights of way and footpaths.

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The Town Council represents the concerns and aspirations of our local community. It is not a voluntary organisation or a charity.

Despite being strictly audited each year, the Town Council is the most non bureaucratic and the cheapest kind of local authority in existence.

Stalbridge Town Council has a Planning Committee which includes all members at present. The standing sub-committees are the Information Team, Community Library Team and the Lights Group. From time to time based on projects and tasks further sub-committees are appointed on a task to finish basis.

### **What can we do?**

As Town Councils were created by law, they can only act within the law by exercising powers and functions which have been conferred to them by Statutes (i.e. Acts of Parliament). It is how and which of these powers entitled to us that our Councillors decide to use, that makes a vibrant forward thinking Council and can bring positive benefits. The basic responsibility of the Town Council is to make the lives of our local communities more comfortable by representing the whole electorate within their area of responsibility, delivering and co-ordination of services to meet local needs and striving to improve quality of life.

The Town Council does not receive any Government funding or income

from business rates but is primarily funded at present from a small percentage of the Council tax charge made by the District authority to local householders (Precept) . It raises further income from the services it provides.

### **What does a Councillor do?**

A Councillor signs a declaration of acceptance of office and thereby undertakes to observe an ethical code of conduct when dealing with matters on behalf of the community. A Councillor also completes a register of interests.

### **Listening:**

One of the most important tasks of a Councillor is listening to and understanding the views of the people in their community.

### **Meetings:**

Stalbridge Town Council holds a meeting of the full Council once a month and planning committee meetings are held every two weeks, subject to planning consultation. Meetings are held at 7pm on Wednesdays at TheHub@Stalbridge.

### **Representation:**

Each Councillor may be asked to serve on certain local groups or attend functions on behalf of the Council. Councillors act as ambassadors for their communities, keeping everyone aware of local needs and concerns and reporting back on District, County and regional changes.

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### **Extra skills and training:**

No individual Councillor is responsible for any single decision. This is democracy at its best. Training is available for Councillors from the Local Association (Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils). Advice can also be sought from the Clerk to the Council and support given from colleagues.

### **Applying to become a Councillor**

Town Councillors are elected by the public and serve a four year term of office.

### **If you wish to stand as a councillor you must satisfy these requirements:**

- You need to be over 18 years of age
- A British citizen, a qualifying commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union.
- On the Electoral Register for the council area for which you wish to stand
- A local government elector of the Town; or a person who during the whole of the twelve months before the nomination as a candidate occupied land or other premises as owner or tenant in the Town; or has, during the same period, resided in that area or within three miles thereof; or has during the same period, had a principal or only place of work in that area.

### **You cannot stand for election if you:**

- Are bankrupt and an Order or Interim Restriction Order has been imposed.
- Have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine.
- Work for the Council where you are intending to stand for election (But you can work for other local authorities, including principal authorities that represent the same area).
- Have been convicted or reported guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court, or have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority.

### **Procedure for applying:**

Nomination forms can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office or North Dorset District Council Offices in Blandford, online at [www.dorsetforyou.com/elections](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/elections) or [www.electoralcommision.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommision.org.uk).

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**Apply today and have a say in what happens tomorrow**

### Diary of events

#### Open meetings for prospective Town and Parish Councillors

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 7pm to 8pm  
Sturminster Newton Town Council  
Offices, Council Chambers, Old  
Market Hill, Sturminster Newton  
DT10 1FH

#### Notice of election – Monday

**16 March 2015** – This will be displayed on the Town notice board and Town Council web site.  
[www.stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)

#### Close of nominations – 4pm on Thursday 9 April 2015.

Elections' Officers will let you know who is standing in your area and if the election is contested.


#### Close of withdrawals – 4pm on Thursday 9 April 2015

The deadline for withdrawing a nomination.



Stalbridge Town Council  
TheHub@Stalbridge  
Station Road  
Stalbridge

Sturminster Newton  
Dorset DT10 2RG  
Clerk: Tracey Watson

 01963 364276

[clerk@stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)


Web site

[www.stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)


**If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Town Clerk or a Town Councillor.**

### Contacting your Councillors


Cllr. P Ashcroft  
2 Harvicross, Thornhill Road,  
Stalbridge

 01963 362681  
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Cllr. W Batty-Smith, Thorpe  
House, Church Hill, Stalbridge

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Cllr. T Bishop  
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Cllr. J Cowley, 3 Lower Road,  
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Cllr. K Garland, The Orchard,  
Poolestown

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[jan@janwardell.plus.com](mailto:jan@janwardell.plus.com)