



Frequently Asked Questions

The Town Council

What is a Town Council?

Town councils are made up of unpaid councillors who are elected to serve for four years. Town Councils were created in law, they can only act within the law by exercising their powers and duties which have been conferred on them by statutes, this is the first tier of local government. It is an elected body corporate and has an important role in promoting the town, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community.

Town councils also have by law the right to be asked about their view on some services that are the responsibility of other levels of local government.

What does a Town Council do?

The main role of a Town council is set out in law and they have a wide range of powers and duties they can use, it is how and which of these powers that Councillors decide to use, that makes a vibrant forward-thinking Council. Their activities fall into three main categories:

- Representing the whole electorate
- Delivering and coordinating services to meet local needs
- Striving to improve quality of life and community wellbeing.

The Town Council can do these things by providing them itself or by funding other organisations, such as a charity, to do them through grants or contracts.

How does the Council work?

Considering its Statutory obligations and government best practice a set of rules is created called Standing Orders. These set out how the Council can function and what it's internal rules and regulations permit. All Town Councillors are bound by a Code of Conduct which defines acceptable behaviour, standards and principles.

Full Council meets on a monthly basis, there are other Committee meetings held regularly which focus on specific areas or services.

Council meetings are open to the public and the Annual Town Assembly for all electors is held annually between 1st March and 1st June.

What is the difference between a Parish and Town Council?

There is some confusion as to what the difference between a Parish and Town Council is. The answer is simple – nothing, they are exactly the same. There is no legal difference between a parish and a town council, they both have the same powers and functions; the

only difference is in the name. However, a Town Council can elect a Mayor to be Head of Council instead of a Chairman.

Where does the Council's money come from?

Many people do not realise that the Town council does not receive any revenue support from central government. Town councils do not receive Council Tax directly from the public. Town councils have the power to tax their residents to support their operations and to carry out local projects.

The Town Council is primarily funded, from a small percentage of the Council Tax charge made by Winchester City Council. This levy is known as the Precept and each year the Town Council agrees its precept to fund the budgeted expenses.

What is the money spent on?

The funds raised are reinvested into the local community to provide services to the residents of New Alresford. The Council is involved in many projects and events across the whole year, from Grass Cutting, supporting Alresford Sporting Groups, Hanging Baskets, allotments and a myriad of other topics.

As part of the Precept the Council also has an Annual Grant fund, to which members of the local public and local organisations can apply.

Who are the Town Councillors?

The Town Council is made up of members of the public who have volunteered to join the council having received enough votes during a public election.

Who is the Chairman?

At the Annual Meeting of the Council one of the Councillors is voted as Chairman. The appointment lasts one year until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

Can I be a Councillor?

Anyone living within a 3-mile boundary of New Alresford who is 18yrs or older and on the Electoral Role can put their name forward at election time to become a Councillor. The role is voluntary and unpaid.

When are the Council Meetings?

The Town Council meets once a month at Full Town Council meetings. The Agenda is fixed 3 working days before the meeting date and then cannot be changed. At the meeting only topics already on the Agenda can be discussed. A Clerk takes minutes of all these Council Meetings as a record of what was discussed and decided. Minutes can be found on the NATC website. www.newalresford-tc.gov.uk

Are there other Council Committees?

New Alresford Town Council,
Alresford Recreation Centre, The Avenue, Alresford, SO24 9EP

There are Environment & Recreation, Economy & Tourism, Facilities, Finance, Planning and Staffing. Any Councillor can be a member of these Committees, joining voluntarily at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Can I attend these Meetings?

Any member of the public can attend meetings. The public can use a 15-minute participation section to ask questions or make a statement. After this, only the Councillors can take part.

How do I know when the Meetings are?

The Agenda for meetings can be found on the Council website plus in print on the Public Notice boards outside the Co-op and in Broad Street.

How are decisions made?

Decisions or actions are called Resolutions. Any Councillor can suggest a Resolution, and in order for it to be agreed, there needs to be a proposer and a seconder and a majority of Councillors must agree. Once a Resolution is made, it cannot be revisited or revised for 6 months except under exceptional circumstances.

What is the role of the Town Clerks?

The Town Clerks are the first point of contact for members of the public. They offer information and guidelines to Councillors, to ensure the rules of the Town Council are upheld. All Agendas, Minutes and correspondence comes from the Town Clerks Office.

For further information please visit www.newlaresford-tc.gov.uk