



**Please find below some information about Wimborne Minster Town Council
we hope you will find useful.**

What does Wimborne Minster Town Council do?



Established in 1974 as the successor to Wimborne Urban District Council, the Town Council is a corporate body and a legal entity, separate from its individual councillors. This means that decisions are the responsibility of council as a whole, not individual councillors.

The Town Council has been granted powers by Parliament and must have a legal power to act. Our role is to serve and represent our electorate by improving community well-being and delivering services to meet local needs. Our services and facilities include:

- allotments at Parmiter Drive
- Redcotts Recreation Ground, including a children's play area, skate park, petanque pitch, toilets, football pitches, basketball area, table tennis and other buildings some of which we lease
- Leigh Park open spaces, toddler and older children's play areas, two rugby pitches and two buildings which we lease
- the Town Council offices, Jubilee Garden and Gazebo building, Committee Room and Chamber which we hire out and is a wedding venue
- Wimborne Cemetery and allotments, managed in partnership with Colehill Parish Council and Pamphill and Shapwick Parish Council
- support for local services, including the Community Bus 88 Service, Citizens Advice and other local organisations via our Community Grants Scheme
- supply, maintenance and cleaning of street furniture including bus shelters, bins and noticeboards
- CCTV at Redcotts Recreation Ground and various locations throughout the town centre

The Town Council (which we refer to as Full Council) meets once a month on a Tuesday evening (excluding August) in the Council Chamber. We also have five standing committees which usually meet once every two months:

- Recreation, Leisure and Buildings Committee

- Finance and Governance Committee
- Planning and Environment Committee
- Community Events and Liaison Committee
- Human Resources Committee

We currently have 14 elected councillors and this will be increasing to 16 at the elections on 2 May 2024.

What am I letting myself in for?



Our aim is to make Wimborne Minster a better place to live, work and visit – your role to meet these aims is to act as a champion for our community and give our residents a voice on the decisions we make. You can achieve this by working in collaboration with others and by engaging with residents, our partners (such as Dorset Council and our neighbouring town and parish councils) and local groups.

If elected your first meeting will be in May, and you will cover a five year term. Our meetings are important – they are formal events open to the public and press where councillors discuss and debate agenda items and make decisions, as required by law. Our municipal year runs from 9 May 2023 to 13 May 2024 and we will have held 67 meetings (not including working groups and Town Liaison Group meetings). It's a big commitment.

Our meetings usually take place on a Tuesday evening at 7pm. Our committee meetings take place in the Committee Room and Full Council in the the Chamber. Councillors and the public are formally notified about meetings when the Town Clerk publishes an agenda (this acts as a legal summons). The agendas and supporting documents provide information on the business to be transacted at the meeting and are emailed out five clear working days of the meeting. We cannot lawfully transact any business that is not included on the agenda. We must have a minimum of four councillors at committee meetings and five at Full Council (we refer to this as being quorate - having a sufficient numbers of officers or members present to transact business). If a councillor cannot attend a meeting their absence must be approved otherwise a councillor could fall foul of the six moth rule (disqualification due to non- attendance).

Decisions made at meetings are formally recorded as resolutions, and are made using the following process:

- a councillor makes a proposal
- if supported that proposal is seconded by another councillor
- there is an an opportunity for debate
- the proposal gets voted on - there must be a majority in favour of the proposal for it to go through and if the vote is tied the Chairman has the casting vote.

As a councillor you will be expected to consider a number of documents for meetings, take part in meetings and respect decisions made by the majority. You will also ensure, with other councillors, that the Council is properly managed.

Membership onto committees and representatives onto local organisations are allocated at Full Council's annual meeting in May where we also approve our governance and other legal requirements. Most importantly we elect a Chairman for the year who is responsible for making sure our meetings comply with our Standing Orders (written rules for managing meetings and behaviour). The Chairman also has the civic role of Town Mayor and as the First Citizen of Wimborne Minster acts as our ambassador at public and civic events and undertakes charitable fundraising.

The Town Council's unique relationship with the Wimborne Militia is cemented every year in May when the Town Mayor commissions the Militia to protect the Town Mayor and town from disorder and rebellion.

Councillors, as elected members in a public role, are expected to follow the seven Nolan principles of conduct in public life:

- selflessness - holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest,
- integrity - holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work, or act / take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends, and must declare and resolve any interests and relationships,
- objectivity - holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias,
- accountability - holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this,
- openness - holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing,
- honesty - holders of public office should be truthful,
- leadership - holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour, actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We have also adopted the national Code of Conduct which sets the minimum standard of conduct required from a parish or town councillor.

Our financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and our current budget is £683,183 with an income of £98,590 (from bank interest, grants, fees and other income sources) and the balance funded through the precept (an annual amount that we instruct Dorset Council to collect as part of the overall Council Tax and is often expressed in terms of the amount Band D households will pay annually).

How will I be supported?

Your main support is provided by staff who work out of the offices at the Town Hall, led by the Town Clerk. Office staff also include Kevin the Deputy Town Clerk, Jam the Office Manager, Genny the Finance Manager, Rebecca the Cemetery Manager and Gary our Events and Communications Officer.



Office staff are responsible for the administration of council business including finances, led by the Town Clerk who is also responsible for governance, managing staff, advising council at meetings and implementing council decisions. Out four grounds staff are based at Redcotts Recreation Grounds and Wimborne Cemetery.

Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council (DAPTC) is an organisation that represents and supports local parish and town councils throughout Dorset and provides training and networking opportunities to help councillors fulfil their roles effectively.

Other information you may find useful

Our website www.wimborne.gov.uk has useful information including our governance and finance documents, our draft Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2029, councillor and staff profiles, calendar of meetings and services. Please contact the Office on 01202 881655 or email office@wimborne.gov.uk for more information.

Dorset Council are in charge of the elections in May. If you need more information on the election process please contact the Electoral Services Team at elections@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or call 01305 838299.

Election and eligibility information is available at www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor/becoming-councillor

You have until **5 April 4pm** to submit your nomination papers to Dorset Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Harrison'.

Louise Harrison

Town Clerk to Wimborne Minster Town Council

The Town Hall, 37 West Borough, Wimborne Minster BH21 1LT

louise.harrison@wimborne.gov.uk