Being a councillor

Un Llais Cymru
One Voice Wales

What is a councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward or - mainly in smaller communities - the entire community or town council area. They are generally elected by the public every four years.

What do councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. Decision making - Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented. In undertaking their role they are bound to observe the provisions of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

2. Monitoring - Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

3. Getting involved locally - As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:

- Going to meetings of local organisations such as tenants' associations.
- Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community.
- Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public.
- Running a surgery for residents to raise issues.

Meeting with individual residents in their own homes.

Visiting your council is the best way to find out what happens there. Give the council a call and find out when its next public meeting happens. By law, members of the public are allowed to be present at most council business.

How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about three hours a week. Obviously there are some councillors who spend more time than this - and some less, but in the main, being a community or town councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community, and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

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