

Newsletter from Maresfield Parish Council

October 2024

What is a Parish Council?

English counties are divided into areas known as Parishes which are mostly served by Parish and Town Councils. These are elected units of local government whose activities are controlled by Acts of Parliament and are responsible for local matters and community needs which can include: street lighting, local transport, allotments, cemeteries, recreation grounds, war memorials, seating and shelters, some leisure and sporting provision, community safety, affordable housing, tourist information and litter and dog bins. In addition, Parish councils are consulted on many issues and are statutory consultees for all planning applications in the Parish. Responsibilities include representing the whole electorate, delivering services to meet local needs and striving to improve the quality of life in the Parish. District Councils (ours is Wealden) tend to take care of planning, refuse collection, trading standards, environmental health and leisure activities, housing and homelessness. County Councils (East Sussex CC) look after, amongst other things, adult social care, highways, education, libraries, fire and rescue, trading standards, waste disposal and children's services.

Parish Council membership

Parish Councillors are elected by the public and serve four-year terms; they can also be co-opted to fill a vacancy. Traditionally unpaid, however, very modest allowances at the discretion of individual Councils can be made available. Most Parish Councils run on a non-party political basis. On average Parish Councillors may devote three or so hours a week which will include attendance at meetings as well as the necessary preparatory work. No particular skills or qualifications are required but a good councillor will get along with others, will understand different views and have the ability to compromise. Being a Parish Councillor can be a very rewarding role in the community and full training is given.

Your Parish Council

Maresfield Parish encompasses the three quite distinct villages of Fairwarp, Maresfield and Nutley. We are supported by our Parish Clerk, her assistant and our planning committee clerk, all of whom work part time and are based in the Parish Office in Nutley. We are entitled to have fourteen Parish Councillors but currently our complement is ten and so we would welcome volunteers for co-option. Our Parish Council meets ten times a year with Committee meetings mostly quarterly except for the planning committee which meets every three weeks. Should you be interested, the Parish Clerk and I would welcome an initial discussion.

Your Council Tax

The Parish Council sets a budget each year and this expenditure becomes the Parish Precept part of your annual Council Tax Bill. The budget setting process for next year starts at the October 8th meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee. All Parish Council and Committee meetings are open to the public and are held in one of our Village halls or in the Parish Office. All meetings start with an allocated time for members of the public to raise issues and ask questions. It would help if you would let the Parish Clerk (714555) know that you are attending.

The Annual Parish Report

This Report is available on the Council's web site www.maresfieldparish.org.uk. I do hope you find it interesting and we would appreciate any feedback.

To keep up to date about local matters the internet and social media are invaluable resources. Useful links are:

<https://my.wealden.gov.uk/>

<http://www.maresfieldparish.org.uk/>

<http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/>

<https://www.ashdownforest.org/>

And you can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Martin Craddock – Chairman Maresfield Parish Council