



Welcome from the Chair

As you will see this newsletter focuses on the forthcoming elections; please take the time to consider whether you can stand as a Councillor.

I will not be standing again as a Councillor. I have tried to serve our community well over the last 10+ years. It has been a privilege to serve, at times challenging and at other times very rewarding. I fervently believe that working with and through the Parish Council does help us all get the changes we need to help our area, albeit it can feel slow at times.

Our experienced Clerk is very supportive and will help any newcomers to settle in and understand their role. I would be very happy to talk through what it means to be a Parish Councillor with anyone who is interested. For a wider perspective on the role, sign up at https://www.wiltshire-alc.org.uk/council_events/your-parish-council-needs-you-march-5th/ for an online introduction between 7 and 9pm on Wednesday 5th March. Thank you to everyone in our community who has helped and supported me over the last few years.

Councillor Dee Nix

SPECIAL EDITION – LOCAL ELECTIONS - THURSDAY 1st MAY 2025

On Thursday 1st May, Local Elections will be held across Wiltshire. Ordinary local elections are held every four years, the last having been held in 2021. As Wiltshire Council is already a Unitary Authority, elections in Wiltshire are not being postponed, as they are being in some other areas.

For Wilcot, Huish and Oare parishioners, the local elections will involve electing a Unitary Councillor to represent the Pewsey Vale West division at Wiltshire Council, and electing nine parish councillors, to sit on Wilcot, Huish & Oare Parish Council.

If fewer than nine candidates stand for election to the parish council, the election will be 'non-contested' and those candidates who stood will automatically form the new parish council.

If there are more than nine candidates, the election will be 'contested' and residents will vote for the nine candidates they wish to form the new parish council.

A parish council can only function with at least three councillors, as that is the minimum number of councillors required to give assent to

decisions taken by the parish council and give those decisions legal validity.

If insufficient candidates stand for election, Wiltshire Council has the power to appoint sufficient councillors to form a parish council.

As parish elections always run in tandem with Wiltshire Council elections, Wiltshire Council has historically funded the entire process. Previously, the only elections which parishes were expected to fund were contested 'by-elections' where vacant seats were contested in between the regular four yearly polls. Even those were historically paid for by Wiltshire Council!

However, 2025 is the first time that Wiltshire Council will reclaim all 'ordinary' parish council election costs from the parish, whether contested or non-contested. A contested election will cost more per resident than will a non-contested election. Initial indications are that a contested election will cost in the region of £1.40 per elector, which would be approximately £600 for this parish.

Qualifications to stand

Candidates must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. be registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish; or
- b. during the whole of the preceding 12 months, occupied, as owner or tenant, land, or other premises, in the parish; or
- c. principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in the parish; or
- d. during the whole of those 12 months resided in the parish, or within 4.8km/3 miles of it.

The role of a parish councillor

Parish councils are the lowest level of government, and the only level which is not 'party-political.'

Wilcot, Huish & Oare Parish Council meets approximately seven times each year, usually on a Tuesday evening at 7.00pm, for two hours.

Among other things, parish councillors discuss and agree responses to planning applications; oversee and finance the provision of defibrillators throughout the parish; cooperate with neighbouring parishes to provide SIDs (Speed Indicator Devices) on a rota basis; work with landowners and Wiltshire Rights of Way officers to ensure public footpaths and bridleways are maintained; work with Wiltshire Highways officers to address any maintenance and improvements to the roads; respond to any matters raised by residents.

There is some reading to do between meetings, probably an hour a week at most. If you would like to discuss the role further, please do contact the Clerk, who will be able to answer any questions you may have.

As with most voluntary service, parish councillors vary in the amount of time they put in; essentially, the role entails receiving information through the Clerk and then making decisions in the best interests of the parish.

How to stand

There is plenty of information, including nomination papers for download, on the website of the Electoral Commission.

[Guidance for Candidates at Parish council elections in England | Electoral Commission](#)

Candidates need to be proposed and seconded by parishioners who are registered on the electoral roll for the parish.

Nomination papers must be submitted by hand between 10.00am and 4.00pm on working days, from 12th March to 2nd April. An appointment must be made for delivering papers to Wiltshire Council offices in Salisbury, Chippenham, or Trowbridge.

The Clerk is willing to submit nomination papers on behalf of anybody who wishes her to do so, to maximise efficiency and to minimise car use. If you wish to take advantage of this, please ensure any nomination papers are with the Clerk by 25th March. Please double-check papers for accuracy as there will be little time for corrections after that date.

Parish Council Meeting Dates 2024/2025

All meetings start at 7.00pm-NB changes to previously published information!

Tuesday 25th March 2025, Wilcot Village Hall

Tuesday 29th April 2025, Wilcot Village Hall – Annual Parish Meeting for all electors, with drinks and nibbles, to be followed by a short meeting of the current parish council to sign financial documents relating to 2024/2025.

Wednesday 14th May 2025, Oare Village Hall – Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, of which the first business for the new parish council will be to elect a chairman for the forthcoming year.

Wilcot, Huish & Oare Parish Council

Chair: Dee Nix

Vice Chair: Dawn Wilson

Clerk: Ruth Kinderman

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