

## The role of your Clerk

Less of this....



More of this....



Clerking is a career with a high level of responsibility, varied demands and a very wide scope. It has a professional body to support it, the Society of Local Council Clerks, and several levels of qualifications to underpin it. The role of a Parish Clerk has evolved over many decades and bears very little resemblance to the wonderful old days when legislation was minimal and wish-lists were short.

Most Parishes in our Borough have a part time Clerk, some have assistants and grounds staff, some work from an office or village hall. In my case I am contracted work 30 hours per week from home but use Matfield Pavilion as a base several times a week. I also attend evening meetings, up to 4 times per month, travelling from my home in Tunbridge Wells. Of course much time is also spent driving around the parish, noting things that require attention.

In its simplest terms, the Clerk's role is to carry out the decisions of the Council and manage its statutory functions. The Clerk also supports the Parish Councillors in delivering their own responsibilities in numerous areas. The generic job description of a Parish Clerk is lengthy, it includes:

- Advising the Council on legal, financial and procedural matters
- Preparing agendas and information notes and producing minutes
- Responsibility for all key aspects of the Council fiscal policy and the day to day financial activity.
- Preparing the annual accounts and governance statement
- Payroll, VAT, HMRC, Pension, invoices, quotations, fees, grants
- Advising the Council on the yearly budget and setting of the precept
- Asset Management including repairs to assets such as streetlights, bus shelters
- Management, bookings and maintenance of Matfield Pavilion
- Management of projects for Section 106 developer contribution schemes
- Managing and reviewing contracts such as mowing, cleaning, toilet management
- Management of the Allotment site
- Management of the Playground
- Management of Planning applications
- Website content management – Parish Council pages

- Event planning and management, volunteer co-ordination
- Updating residents on Parish Council works via Facebook, noticeboards and email report
- Carrying out the Council's policies on Health and Safety and Risk Assessments
- Communications with public bodies, local government, MP, residents, businesses

On top of this rather prosaic list of jobs there are the other things that you inevitably become involved in and which comes under the banner of "any other things that are needed to keep the Parish in good shape and support its residents". These are the everyday things that makes the Clerk's job so much more personal and rewarding.

In order to demonstrate what that might include I will merely print this picture



Whilst there is a finite number of issues I can deal with in the hours I have, I am dedicated to the Parish and will always do as much as I can to promote it. As another Clerk said to me when asked what her residents see her role as... "if you can't find someone to solve your problems call the Clerk!"

Chantal

Chantal Brooks

Clerk to Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council

Started 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017