**Stand for what you believe in**

**The next elections for Parish and Town councils are on 2nd MAY 2019**

**Getting Elected**

To stand for election to Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Parish Council you must:

* be a UK or Commonwealth citizen; or be a citizen of the Republic of Ireland; or be a citizen of another Member state of the European Union
* be at least 18 years old

To be eligible to stand for election you don’t have to be connected to a political party but you must:

* be an elector of the Parish or in the past 12 months have occupied land or other premises in the Parish (as owner or tenant) or work in the Parish (as your principal or only place of work) or live within three miles of the Parish boundary.

**What does the Parish Council do?**

A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the Parish. It is the level of local government closest to the community, with the Unitary Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council) further up the hierarchy.

Parish councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that Parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention and roads & highways.

Parish councils have a number of powers they can use and have the ability to negotiate with other decision making organisations such as the unitary authority, health authorities, police etc. In this respect Parish councils are extremely powerful. These organisations know that a Parish council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something and its views should be taken seriously.

**How much time does it take up?**

The Parish Council meets in alternate months for the council meeting to which members of the public are also invited. Meetings may last two or three hours, depending on what’s on the list of items to discuss. Councillors may also have responsibilities for specific subjects, such as planning matters.

**How long do I serve for as a Parish Councillor?**

Once elected, Parish councillors sit on the council for four years. If they then want to stay in the post they can stand for re-election. This does not mean that you have to stay for four years. If you find it’s not for you, or you can no longer meet the commitment, you can stand down.

**For more information please contact the Parish Clerk on 01767 631383 or** **wrestlingworth@aol.com** **.**