



BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Burgess Hill Town Council is an innovative, forward thinking, progressive town council, committed to developing the best possible quality of life for its residents and taking every opportunity to improve the delivery of services for residents, business and visitors. It has achieved Quality Town Council status, in 2006 it was awarded Local Council of the Year and in 2007 was runner up in the Customer Service category of the Sussex Business Awards.

Based in the heart of the shopping centre the Town Council offices include a Help Point staffed by our Customer Service team. The Help Point is the focal point for public services, business support services, and tourist information in the town processing over 32,000 enquiries a year. The aim of the Help Point is to provide a comprehensive range of services for residents, the business community and visitors to the town. This includes information services, exhibitions and consultation exercises, surgery sessions in the Help Point and direct links to partner organisations such as District and County Councils. To achieve such a service the Town Council has entered into partnership arrangements with a variety of organisations whose services affect the residents of Burgess Hill.

The Help Point has been awarded Charter Mark status and was the host venue for the successful Beacon Status bid by West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council for accessible services. Engagement with the community is a vital part of this process and the Help Point Roadshow has been taken to local fetes and The Olympus Burgess Hill Leisure Centre. To date over 100 local authorities from around the country have visited the Help Point to see how the partnership operates.

Partnership working has also been extended to our Operations Team and the Mobile Maintenance staff now undertake 'delegated functions' on behalf of both Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council. These include highway weed spraying, road sign cleaning, removal of flyposting and maintenance of street nameplates. The aim is to provide an improved and more responsive service locally and upgrade the appearance of the town. The Town Council has been nationally recognised as an innovative example of partnership working.

The Town Council's Operations Team also has an excellent working relationship with Sussex Police and other members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership within Mid Sussex. The Town Council works closely with local groups such as Shopwatch and Pubwatch and deals with reducing anti-social behaviour and criminal damage within Burgess Hill. The team also organises local 'Beat Sweep' initiatives. This is where officers from agencies such as the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency), VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency), Sussex Police, Housing Associations and Principle Councils come together to work along side the Operations Team in looking at particular areas within Burgess Hill. The team addresses issues such as speeding, anti-social parking, litter, graffiti and overgrown vegetation to name but a few topics. We believe that if the town is cared for then this helps reduce criminal damage and the perception of crime and people are more inclined to look after the areas in which they live.

Engaging with the community is vital in the delivery of local services. One of Burgess Hill's strengths is its community spirit. The Town Council has a proactive Community Development Officer and a good track record in undertaking a wide range of community initiatives. These range from the Burgess Hill Business Parks Association to the Multicultural Group. It also has extensive partnerships with the voluntary sector and the associated community development programme. Currently the Town Council is working with Mid Sussex District Council and the community to deliver a sports and community facility on the Sidney West site in Burgess Hill.

Burgess Hill faces an exciting future. A master planning exercise is currently underway for a new town centre and the wider town's future development is being shaped through the Core Strategy and South East Plan. It is anticipated that this process will result in a number of infrastructure improvements, an increase in housing numbers and new facilities in Burgess Hill. The Town Council is heavily involved in the process.

The Corporate Services Team manage the Burial Ground, payroll, Chairman's engagements and provide other services to assure the smooth running of the Town Council. There is a strong team ethic throughout the Town Council which has played a significant part in its success.