

From dawn to dusk



Cllr Sarah Cursons of Leighton-Linslade Town Council in Bedfordshire, and winner of Star Councils' Young Councillor of the Year 2016, reports how being a councillor can vary immensely, and just how gratifying it is

Being a councillor is a rewarding job and I am a firm believer that anyone can be a councillor, as long as they believe in the people they represent. I would encourage anyone who is reading this article to get people around them involved and become a councillor.

My typical day as councillor starts by checking my emails in the morning to see if anyone had sent me any questions or queries. I make sure that I send a response as soon as I get these to show my high level of care towards the community.

It shocks people a lot when I tell them that as a town councillor I do not get paid

and I do it because I care about people. I have a nine-to-five job as well as the voluntary work I do. I go to work and in the evenings I come home and attend council meetings where I actively get involved. I

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tend to have at least one meeting a week, which can be on anything from planning and transport to a full council.

This year I was given the privilege of becoming chair of the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee. Being offered this opportunity was such an amazing feeling, as it allowed me to show my skills and that young people can make a difference. One thing I will never forget is hearing the grants applications and listening to what others wanted to achieve in the community. One of my favourite examples was a community transport programme that offers lifts to the hospitals for people who would otherwise be unable to get there for appointments. It nearly reduced me to tears hearing how much others care about the people around them, and approving the application made my night.

Events

Sometimes there are events that I get to attend, such as the Mayor's Charity Ball and the Remembrance Day parade, that allow me to interact more with different people, and as a result it is one of my favourite things about being a councillor. I remember going to an event where I got to speak to young people about the good work they do in the community.

In the evenings, I enjoy going for a run or a hike around the local area I represent because I am proud of it and I am so happy that I live in a beautiful area that has plenty of green space – from Linslade Woods to the trees on Stoke Road.

It is a busy job being a councillor but it definitely has its rewards, such as the feeling of knowing you are doing something good for someone else and making a positive impact in their lives. Being on the council has taught me many skills that I will always remember, and it has inspired me to keep standing. By the end of my term as a councillor, I hope to inspire young people to get involved in politics, and people from different backgrounds to stand as a councillor. ■