

Working for Stroud Town Council

Brief history of Stroud

The first parish of Stroud, a settlement based on the production of woollen cloth, was recognised in 1304. Currently, it has a population of around 13,500 and an electorate of just over 10,000. Stroud is seen as a very friendly, tolerant community, accepting a wide range of views. We have a history of non-conformism, dissent and direct action. The environment and sustainability are priorities for many residents.

The parish, approximately 2.5 miles long and 0.75 miles wide, includes the town centre trading and market area, established residential communities amongst the surrounding hills and valleys, and mostly new-build settlements along the canal, which is currently undergoing restoration. The parish's division into six wards reflects, to a reasonably accurate degree, these differing settings. There is a rail station with good connections to London, Swindon, Cheltenham and Gloucester and a reasonable range of bus services.

A fine network of footpaths also permeates the parish but density of motor traffic can hinder movement around town by vehicle and there are limited safe cycle routes.

There is a strong creative element in the town and surrounding area, which provides a base for several arts festivals, some of which have achieved national acclaim. The town centre supports a long established twice-weekly market in the medieval Shambles and an award-winning weekly Farmers' Market, which draw in visitors from some distance.

Stroud Town Council

The council was formed in 1990. We have 18 councillors representing 6 wards. Elections are held every four years.

We have offices close to the town centre with a double fronted window used for displays and notices. The main committees are Consultations and Highways (planning), Finance and Policy, Community, Environment and Regeneration.

The Council staff work in two teams headed by the Town Clerk. The office team includes a Deputy Clerk, a Communications and Engagement Officer, a Project Officer, a Community Development Officer, five part-time administration staff (Assistant Clerk, Administration Officer, Project Assistant, Senior Finance Administrator, Finance Assistant) and a cleaner.

The Green Spaces team includes three full-time Rangers and a part-time Assistant led by the Green Spaces Manager.

The Green Spaces team are responsible for the day-to-day management of the green and open spaces around the town. These include two town centre gardens, two cemeteries (one active and one closed), five play areas, two closed churchyards and a number of amenity spaces.

The Council owns five allotment sites providing just under 200 plots. Each site is managed by a plot-holder association.

Amongst the Council's recent projects are revamping Lansdown Hall & Gallery for community use and developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the town.

We have recently agreed to transfer ownership of a range of assets from Stroud District Council, including in 2019 the Stroud Subscription Rooms.

Stroud Town Council is a larger town council that is committed to improving the quality of life of all members of its community. The council provides core support to a range of partner organisations involved in regeneration and meeting key social needs of its residents, as well as supporting arts development in the town.

We have shown long-term commitment to improving the environment, for example, by taking on the management of parks and green spaces in the town, increasing the number of open spaces with public access and improving the quality of children's play areas.

In 2018 Stroud Town Council was one of the first local councils in the UK to declare a climate emergency and set a target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

We have an established reputation for taking a leading role in community development.

We sustain four community grants programmes and a number of service level agreements with voluntary and community sector organisations.

We are a Quality council and have adopted the General Power of Competence. We have an annual expenditure budget of about £1m of which the precept makes up around 80%. The balance largely comes from grants and cemetery income.

Working for Stroud Town Council

We pride ourselves on providing a positive working environment for all of our staff and councillors. A range of benefits are available as follows:

- All eligible staff are enrolled in the Gloucestershire Local Government Pension Scheme.
- The Council is a Foundation Living Wage employer. For more information please visit: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>
- Training is provided and all staff are encouraged and supported to develop their skills and knowledge in their roles.
- Council employees can access to a Cycle to Work Scheme enabling them to spread the cost of purchasing a bike and accessories through a salary sacrifice scheme.
- A confidential Employee Assistance Programme is available to all staff providing telephone support, specialist advice and online support for any work or personal issues.