**THINKING OF CHANGING FROM A PARISH COUNCIL TO A TOWN COUNCIL?**

**In the summer of 2017, Quedgeley successfully changed from a parish council to a town council. We asked the clerk, Jacquie Webster, to tell us how they did it.**

Quedgeley has been deliberating over this change for many years and when it was discussed at full council, I wanted to be sure that the council felt that it was in a good enough position to avoid any criticism. By that I mean that the Council had achieved Quality Status under the Local Council Award Scheme, all policies were up to date and in place and community engagement had improved. Once this was all in place, the council then revisited moving to Town Council and I was asked to find out legally what the correct course of action would be.

The monitoring officer at Gloucester City Council confirmed that, because there is no legal difference between a Parish or Town Council, the change could be done just by resolution at the meeting. Therefore, this was placed on the agenda and councillors resolved to take this step. It might be a good idea prior to this stage to put it to the Annual Meeting of the Parish to enable residents to comment.

Following on from this I then had to contact the following, as advised by GAPTC:-

• The Secretary of State

• The Electoral Commission

• The Office of National Statistics

• The Director General of the Ordnance Survey

• Any District Council, County Council within whose area the parish lies

• Suppliers, banks etc.

Once I had publicised the fact that Quedgeley was now to be considered as a Town Council, the press got in touch and The Chair went on air to explain the change and provide definitions regarding the difference between a Village and a Town. We received very mixed responses, some saying that Quedgeley is now so big it was the right move, some saying that we should have consulted with the public more. Some residents were confused as they thought that Quedgeley itself was turning into a town and we had to confirm that Quedgeley still retained the same identity, but the council had a right to consider itself as a Town Council. In total, we received 17 responses and despite advertising it as a Q&A session at the Annual Meeting of the Parish, there were no further remarks. To put it into context, that equates to only 0.85% of the population of Quedgeley so very much the minority.

Now that the dust has settled, the council is very much business as usual and we are currently working to achieve Quality Gold to further justify the change. The main reason for the council wanting to change was to recognise the sheer size of Quedgeley and it was also felt that the word ‘Town’ provided more kudos in certain matters such as planning, etc. The Council opted to retain a Chairperson rather than a Mayor, in order to be cost effective. All in all, the council has worked hard to justify the change and has remained confident in its decision throughout.

The costs involved were signage for our buildings, Town Council Office and website, etc and indirect costs were staff time in dealing with queries, changing letter heading on documents, etc.