

Standing for election as a Parish or Town Councillor

Getting elected to most parish or town councils is not difficult. The actual process of standing for election is very simple. If in doubt contact the monitoring officer at your principal authority (your Unitary, District or County Council)

Why?

Your parish council may be doing good things with your community and you wish to have more involvement in the decision making process. You may feel that you have the time and ideas to work with your community and council to make further improvements in local services and facilities.

Equally you may be dissatisfied with your parish or town council. It is very easy to just sit on the sidelines and complain. It is far more productive to get elected and try to make changes from within. The 4 yearly elections are a good time for a committed group of residents to all stand for election and effect real change especially in those councils where there has not been a contested election for many years.

How, what you need to do...

1. Ordinary v by-elections. Ordinary elections are held every 4 years. All existing councillors stand for re-election. By-elections arise when a council seat becomes vacant between ordinary elections. This is known as a casual vacancy. Elections must be advertised by town and parish councils for casual vacancies
2. Are you qualified to stand?
3. Ensure you are a registered elector and on the electoral roll
4. You do not need to be a member of any political party
5. If you do not plan on spending any money getting elected you do not need an election agent. There are strict legal conditions on what can be spent by whom and on what.
6. The organisation of elections varies from principal authority to principal authority. Principal authorities organise parish council elections to coincide with their own ward elections.
7. In some instances all principal authority councillor elections are held at the same time for all wards every 4 years. In others an election cycle is used with 1/3 of councillors retiring and elections being held 3 years out of 4. If the principal authority has 42 councillors then 14 will be standing for re-election three years out of four. If in doubt ask the monitoring officer.
8. In parish council elections all councillors retire and may offer themselves for re-election.
9. Get the forms from your principal authority monitoring officer. Their details are often to be found under "Democratic services" although some authorities may use a different name.
10. Ensure you understand the times when you MUST return the completed forms
11. Do not rely upon another person to get the forms for you. If possible collect them
12. Complete the forms and get them signed by your proposer and seconder
13. You will need the electoral roll numbers for your proposer and seconder. The monitoring officer will provide these for you
14. Double check the forms and ensure that they are signed and dated
15. Take the completed nomination forms back to your principal authority monitoring officer and hand deliver them. Get them to check that the forms have been correctly completed.
16. Ensure that you get a receipt for the forms which is signed and dated. Errors have been known to happen.
17. In the majority of cases particularly in rural areas you may be elected unopposed as many councils have vacancies which they have or are unable to fill. This is known as an uncontested election as the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of council seats
18. Those candidates with the most votes are elected until all the council seats have been filled

For further details contact your local parish or town council