



Some general information about Parish Councils, and what Parish Councillors do, from the Shropshire Association of Local Councils

HOW TO BECOME A LOCAL COUNCILLOR ...

As a councillor and a community leader you can be a voice for your community and bring about change by representing the aspirations of the public you serve. Parish and town councillors are the first and most local level of government, our democratic system and are closest to the public. Stand for election and see what difference you can make to your local neighbourhood.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR?

Councillors have three main areas of work:

1. **Decision-making:** through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
2. **Monitoring:** councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
3. **Getting involved locally:** as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available. The day-to-day work of a councillor may include:
 - going to meetings of local organisations such as tenants' associations
 - going to meetings of bodies that affect the wider community, such as the police, the Highways Authority, schools and colleges
 - taking up issues on behalf of members of the public, such as making representations to the principal authorities
 - running a surgery for residents to bring up issues
 - meeting with individual residents in their own homes

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE UP?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about three hours a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a local councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

AM I QUALIFIED?

Most people are. However, there are a few rules. You have to be:

- A British citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union, and 18 years or older on the day you become nominated for election.

You cannot stand for election if you:

- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order
- Have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a prison sentence (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine
- Work for the council for which you want to become a councillor

There are specific rules around candidacy. The full range of disqualifications for candidates is quite complex and some exceptions may apply. Full details can be found on the website of the National Association of Local Councils (see further information below for contact details).

I AM NOT YET 18 SO HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED

Some local councils also run youth councils, which are often made up of young people representing their local schools and colleges. This provides young people with a time and place to meet and discuss matters that affect them. These youth councils are in direct communication with their parish, town, community or neighbourhood council so they can also be involved in decision-making. Contact your local council, or speak to your school or local youth service to find out more.

If there isn't a local youth council, you could get together with friends and put forward a proposal to set one up.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The National Association of Local Councils is the national representative body for parish and town councils in England. Elections advice and resources are available on its website - [click here](#). For additional advice or support, please contact 020 7637 1865.

[The Electoral Commission](#) is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process.

For public awareness, materials visit [Do Politics website](#)

For more information on registering to vote or elections visit [About my vote website](#).