

**HAMBLETON**

**DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# Becoming a Parish Councillor 2022

a place to  
*grow*

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## What is a Parish/Town Council?

A parish/town council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish. It is the level of local government closest to the community.

## Parish/Town Elections 2022

The parish areas of Hambleton District are made up of 123 parishes with 556 seats representing 77 parish/town councils. Elections are administered by the Returning Officer at the District Council on behalf of the Parish Council. The District Council is assisted by the Parish/Town Council's only employee, the Proper Officer, or as more commonly known, the Parish Clerk.

The next scheduled elections were due to take place in May 2023. However, the Government has proposed to align the parish elections with the new unitary council elections that will take place on Thursday 5 May 2022. Elected parish councillors will serve until 2027.

## Why become a Parish Councillor?

By becoming a parish councillor you become someone your community will look to for help, guidance and support - a community leader with the power to influence decisions for the benefit of the people you serve.

## What is expected of a parish/town councillor?

- Representing the views of residents within your parish.
- As part of the council you will have responsibility for running local services which may include: open spaces, play areas, village halls, and potentially much more.
- Deciding on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver your council's services.
- Influencing and shaping the long term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish.
- Improving the quality of life and the environment in their local area.

- Working to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent.
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects.
- Lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

## How much time does it take up?

Councils meet regularly. The length of meetings depends on what's on the agenda. Members of the public are also invited to attend these meetings.

In addition to the regular meetings, Councillors may be required to attend 'ad hoc' meetings - for example, with architects or agents to discuss planning applications which the council may comment on.

## How long does a Parish Councillor serve for?

Once elected, parish councillors sit on the council for usually four years. If they then want to stay in the post they can stand again for re-election. This does not mean that you have to stay for four years. If you find it's not for you, or you can no longer meet the commitment, you can resign from the position.

## Are you interested in becoming a Parish Councillor?

The best way to find out what it's like to be a parish councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now. Go along to a parish council meeting, speak to one of the councillors and find out what they think of the role.

## Can I become a parish/town councillor?

The easy answer is, "almost definitely".

As long as you are:

- at least 18 years old on the day of your nomination, and
- a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union, and

You must also meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards, or
- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election, or
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area, or
- You have lived in the parish area or within 4.8 kilometres of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

You can't be a councillor if:

- you are employed by the parish council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees), or
- you are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order, or
- you have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day, or
- you have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations) or under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

If you are in any doubt about whether you are eligible to stand as a parish councillor, you should contact the Electoral Commission.

## How do I become a candidate?

A Notice of Election is published by the District Council at the start of the election. This gives details of the electoral areas, date and time of election, the number of councillors to be elected, and the timetable for submitting nomination papers.

To stand as a candidate at any election a nomination form, a home address form and your consent to nomination must be submitted. The

nomination form requires details of the candidate such as their name, address and description (if any). These details will be printed on the ballot paper if the parish you are standing in is contested.

Parish nomination forms require a signature from two registered electors within the parish (one proposer, and one seconder).

You can stand as an independent candidate or party candidate. Please look at the Electoral Commission's Guidance for Candidates and Agents for further information. If you are a candidate for a registered political party, you must also submit a certificate of authorisation and an authorisation to use the party's emblem if required. You can either appoint an election agent to manage your election campaign or, alternatively, you can act as your own agent. It is the candidate's responsibility - or that of the agent - to present nomination papers to the Returning Officer before the deadline.

A copy of the election timetable and a nomination pack can be obtained from the Electoral Services team. The pack will contain all the forms and information you will need to become a candidate.

A statement of persons nominated is published after the nominations period has closed. If there are more candidates than vacancies, then an election will be held.

Candidates can appoint election, polling and count agents. Further details are provided in a candidate information pack.

## Completing the nomination

- don't leave it until the last minute - your papers will need verifying so give yourself enough time to correct mistakes.
- read the nomination paper and supporting material carefully.
- when collecting your signatures ensure their names are on the electoral register and also that their polling district and number are included on the form.
- electors who sign a nomination form may not sign more nomination forms than there are vacancies in that parish.

## Election Expenses

If you decide to become a candidate it is important that a record of expenditure is kept. If you are a member of a political party there may be financial help available. You will need to submit a statement of election expenses shortly after the election. If you have incurred no expenditure you must still submit a nil return. The purpose of the statement is to ensure that you do not spend more than the permitted limit of £806.00, plus 7p for every voter in your parish.

For more information about expenses contact the Electoral Commission. You will not receive any reimbursements for the expenses incurred.

## Useful contacts

The legislation relating to elections is extensive. Candidates and agents are advised to familiarise themselves with the provisions.

The Returning Officer and his staff are required to be impartial and can only provide certain advice. For detailed advice on individual matters, candidates and agents should contact the Electoral Commission.

### Electoral Commission including the political parties register

3 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ

0333 103 1928

[info@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:info@electoralcommission.org.uk)

[pof@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pof@electoralcommission.org.uk) - expense enquiries only

[electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england)

### Electoral Services

01609 767263 or 767130

[elecereg@hambleton.gov.uk](mailto:elecereg@hambleton.gov.uk)

[hambleton.gov.uk/elections](http://hambleton.gov.uk/elections)

**Local Government Association** [local.gov.uk/be-councillor](http://local.gov.uk/be-councillor)

**New North Yorkshire Council** [northyorks.gov.uk/new-council-elections](http://northyorks.gov.uk/new-council-elections)

**Parish Council Clerks list** [hambleton.gov.uk](http://hambleton.gov.uk)

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**This information is available in alternative formats and languages**