

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 paper and consent to nomination must be submitted. The nomination paper 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.

All nomination papers 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 take a look at the Electoral Commissions Guidance for Candidates for further information. If you are a candidate for a registered political party, you must also have a certificate of authorisation and 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. After the close of nominations, if there are more candidates than vacancies, then an election will be held.

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

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 no expenditure you must still submit a nil return. This is to ensure you do not spend more than the permitted limit. For more information about expenses contact the Electoral Commission

Useful contacts:

The legislation relating to elections is extensive. Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the provisions. The Returning Officer for Breckland District Council can give general advice to candidate with further advice available from the Electoral Commission:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england>

info@electoralcommission.org.uk

Breckland District Council - <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/3429/Elections-in-Breckland>



Watton Town Council

Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AG

BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

Local Council Elections May 2023

A Parish or Town Council is a statutory body
and is the most local level of government.

Watton Town Council

Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton

Thetford Norfolk, IP25 6AG

Telephone: 01953 881007

Email: clerk@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk



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. However, many responsibilities for the area are held by the district authority (Breckland District Council) and the county authority (Norfolk County Council). See leaflet: https://www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2019/04/SKM_C224e19043010400.pdf

Why become a Parish/Town Councillor?

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

What is expected of a Town Councillor?

- ◆ Representing the views of residents within your parish.
- ◆ As part of the council you will have responsibility for running local services which in Watton include: open spaces, play areas, Wayland Hall, public toilets and the Cemetery. Watton Town Council also chooses to do other things such as running events in the town, of which the Festive Market is an example, and providing the Christmas lights
- ◆ Deciding on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver your council's services.
- ◆ Commenting on planning applications in the parish.
- ◆ Improving the quality of life and the environment in the 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 long does a parish councillor serve for?

Once elected, parish councillors sit on the council for four years.

If they then want to stay in the post they can stand 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.



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 the nomination, and
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, and

You must also meet at least one of the following 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 the nominations 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 or within 4.8 kms of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of nomination and the day of election.

You can't be a councillor if you:

- Are employed by the parish council
- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order, or
- 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
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People's Act 1983

