

Elections to Town and Parish Councils within Teignbridge will take place on

Thursday 2 May 2019

If you're interested in standing for election within your local community this is some basic information about standing at a Town or Parish Council election in England. The qualifications for election and holding office as a member of a Town or Parish Council are listed in Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Eligibility

The basic requirements for a person to qualify to stand as a candidate are:

- they are a British or Commonwealth citizen, citizen of the Republic of Ireland or citizen of the European Union; and
- they are aged 18 years or over on the day of nomination.

A candidate must also satisfy a connection with the town or parish, as follows:

- they are registered as a local government elector for the town or parish in which they wish to stand; or
- during the whole of the 12 months preceding the date of nomination they have occupied land, or other premises within the town or parish, as owner or tenant; or
- their principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been within the town or parish; or
- during the whole of those 12 months they have resided within the town or parish, or within 4.8 kilometres of it.

Please note that the qualification to be a registered elector is ongoing for the duration of the term of office, should a candidate be successful. It is therefore strongly recommended that a candidate marks all of the qualifications they satisfy when completing the nomination paper. This can avoid issues arising if they are elected and their circumstances subsequently change.

Certain people are disqualified from becoming a candidate. These include employees of the Town or Parish Council where the election is sought, employees of connected organisations, and subjects of bankruptcy restriction orders or interim orders in England and Wales. People, who, within the last five years, have served a prison sentence of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without the option of a fine, may not stand as candidates. The disqualifications for election and holding office as a member of a Town or Parish Council can be found in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Nominations

If a prospective candidate meets the qualification requirements, and is not disqualified, the next thing they must do is find 2 registered local government electors, from within the town or parish in which they wish to stand, to support their nomination. If the town or parish is warded the electors must be registered in the appropriate ward.

A prospective candidate must complete a nomination paper, which is available from the Returning Officer (the person responsible for running the election). Each nomination paper has to be signed (subscribed) by a *Proposer* and a *Secunder*, who must both be entitled to vote for the candidate they are supporting. If the town or parish is warded a candidate may only stand for election within one ward. Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the Returning Officer about a month before polling day. **This is non-negotiable** – the Returning Officer will advise you of the relevant dates when the nomination papers are requested.

Candidates who are representing a registered political party may use the party name or one of 12 registered descriptions, and a party emblem, on the ballot paper. This must be authorised by the registered party's Nominating Officer, or by someone else with written authorisation to act on their behalf. Candidates not standing on behalf of a party may use a description of their choice which does not exceed 6 words, but they can't use an emblem. The only other restriction is that the chosen description is not political, confusing or offensive. Examples of descriptions used are 'Farmer', 'Baker in High Street', 'Member of Village Action Team' or 'Independent'. Candidates do not have to use a description, in which case they should leave this part of the form blank.

Nomination papers can be rejected if details don't meet the legal requirements, or if the nomination paper is incorrectly subscribed (e.g. a person subscribing the paper isn't registered to vote). It's a serious offence to include false information on nomination or consent papers, and a person found guilty of such an offence may face a year's imprisonment, or a fine, or both.

Consent

Within one month before the deadline for delivery of nominations, candidates must submit a signed declaration consenting to their being nominated. However, in practice, the consent form is normally delivered with the nomination paper. The form of consent must be in writing, witnessed, and show the grounds on which the candidate is qualified to stand. It must also include a declaration stating that the candidate is not disqualified from standing. Candidates are advised to indicate all qualifications that apply, and to ensure that they aren't disqualified before signing the consent to nomination.

Agents

There is no provision to appoint an election agent at Town or Parish Council elections.

Deposits

Deposits are not required at Town or Parish Council elections.

Campaign literature

Under electoral law campaign publicity material is subject to a number of restrictions, as well as being subject to the general civil and criminal law relating to published material. All election publicity (e.g. posters, placards and bills) must carry an imprint with details of the full name and full postal address of the printer and promoter of the material. This applies to all printed material distributed for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate.