



Ecton Parish Council

Thinking of becoming a Parish Councillor but want more information, hopefully, the information below will answer your questions.

What do Parish Councils do?

Parish Councils - also called town councils, neighbourhood councils or community councils in some areas – are responsible for delivering local services.

What do Parish Councillors do?

Parish Councillors make decisions about policies and services, keep an eye on how well things are working and represent local residents.

How do I become a Parish Councillor?

There are three main routes to fill a seat:

- **Standing for election:** Submit nomination papers to the local returning officer during local election cycles.
- **Co-option:** Be chosen directly by the parish council to fill a seat left vacant after an election.
- **Casual vacancy:** Fill a seat that opened mid-term due to a resignation, disqualification, or death.

What's in it for me and my community?

You should consider becoming a parish or town councillor if:

- You want to do something positive for your community
- You want to spend your time productively
- You can think, listen and act locally

What Parish Councils do

There are over 10,000 parish councils (some of which are called town, community or neighbourhood councils) representing around 16 million people across England. They form the most local level of government and cover many rural and urban areas. Northamptonshire has 213 parishes with councils, plus 51 parish meetings (which do not hold elections). Together they cover almost all of the county, with the exception of unparished areas in Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby and the centre of Northampton.

Your parish council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of your local neighbourhood. Their work falls into three main categories:

- representing your local community
- delivering services to meet local needs
- striving to improve quality of life in the parish

Your parish council might provide, maintain or contribute to the following services:

- | | |
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| ○ allotments | ○ litter bins |
| ○ bus shelters | ○ local illuminations |
| ○ car parks | ○ local youth projects |
| ○ community centres | ○ parks and open spaces |
| ○ community safety schemes | ○ planning |
| ○ community transport schemes | ○ public lavatories |
| ○ crime reduction measures | ○ street cleaning |
| ○ cycle paths | ○ street lighting |
| ○ festivals and celebrations | ○ tourism activities |
| ○ leisure facilities | ○ traffic calming measures |

They will often work with larger councils (district, borough or county) in your area called 'principal authorities' and cooperate to ensure the effective delivery of services to the local community.

What councillors do

Parish councillors are elected to represent a geographical area known as a ward or – mainly in smaller councils – the parish, town, community or neighbourhood council area as a whole. They are elected by people who live in the area.

If the parish council is divided into wards an election is held in each ward, the same way elections are held in district or borough wards. If the council doesn't have wards there is just a single parish council election.

Most parish council elections are on the same cycle as the principal authorities, with elections in 2020, 2025, then 2029 and every four years thereafter.

Councillors have three main areas of work:

- 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
- Monitoring: councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working
- 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 parish 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

Why should I become a councillor?

As a councillor you can become a voice for your community and affect real change. Councillors are community leaders and represent the aspirations of the public that they serve. Parish, town, community and neighbourhood councillors are the most local part of our democratic system and are closest to the public. By standing for your parish council you could make a real difference to your local neighbourhood.

Can I become a parish councillor?

Am I eligible to stand?

To be able to stand as a candidate at a parish or town council election you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.
- **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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

You are not eligible to stand 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 you want to become a councillor for

Which parish council can I stand for?

You can become a parish councillor for any parish in which you are in the list of electors or during the whole of the preceding twelve months you

- occupied land as owner or tenant in it, or
- had a principal place of work there, or
- resided in or within three miles of it

How much time will I need to spend?

It is possible to spend a lot of time on council work - but most people have jobs, families and hobbies that also demand a lot of time. However, as with most things, the more you put in, the more you (and your community) will get out.

Generally speaking, the larger your community the larger your workload will be. The times of the meetings vary, as do the venues. Parish councils normally meet in the evening. It is important to establish the pattern of meetings and venues to make sure they can accommodate your domestic and/or business arrangements. Most councils meet once a month and many also have committees, in which case you would probably be invited to sit on a committee. These usually meet in between the meetings of the full parish council.

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.

At Ecton Parish Council it is anticipated you would spend a few hours over a 2 month period.

If you are over 18 and interested in joining the council, please contact the Clerk Shirley Wong for more information at:

clerk@ectonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Please note the Parish Council currently meets bi-monthly every 4th Tuesday of every other month in the evening from 7.30pm

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