



NEW COUNCILLOR ELECTION GUIDE

TOWCESTER TOWN COUNCIL



A Beginner's Guide to Being a Councillor

Becoming a councillor is a rewarding way to serve our community, influence local decisions, and help shape the future of Towcester. It is a Town Councillor's responsibility to represent the interests of the residents in their area, working alongside fellow councillors to improve the quality of life in Towcester.

No prior experience is required to become a councillor, just a passion for the local community and a willingness to engage with residents. Upon their election, meetings, training and support are provided to help new councillors fully understand their role and responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities

- **Attend Full Council Meetings**
- **Attend Committee Meetings**
- **Represent your Ward**
- **Vote on local issues**
- **Engage with the community**



Skills

There are no formal qualifications required to become a councillor, but having a strong understanding of, and passion for Towcester is invaluable. Given the responsibilities of Towcester Town Council and the nature of its meetings, the following skills and qualities would be beneficial for anyone considering the role:

Essential Qualities

- ***Confident public speaker***
- ***Basic email & IT experience***
- ***Clear communicator***
- ***Adaptable & willing to learn***
- ***Collaborative team player***



Elizabeth Cox
TOWN CLERK

Desirable Qualities

- ***Financial & budgeting experience***
- ***Planning & development knowledge***
- ***Legal & regulatory awareness***
- ***Cursory understanding of Local Government***
- ***Community-focused & approachable***

Time Commitments

Town Councillors have a meaningful effect on the direction and future of Towcester and are expected to attend all Full Council meetings and sit on at least one other Committee. There are no meetings held in August (recess).

Full Council *The Full Council meeting covers a broad range of local issues and takes place on the second Monday of the month at Towcester Town Hall.*

Committees *There are four main committees:*

- **Resources & Planning ***
- **Recreation & Leisure ****
- **Cemetery & Allotments ****
- **Premises ****

In addition, there are ad hoc committees, such as Personnel; and working groups which deal with specific projects from time to time.

An ideal candidate will also have plenty of free time to participate in events, communicate with fellow councillors, engage with residents, and develop key skills to improve their effectiveness as a councillor.

** meets twice per month*

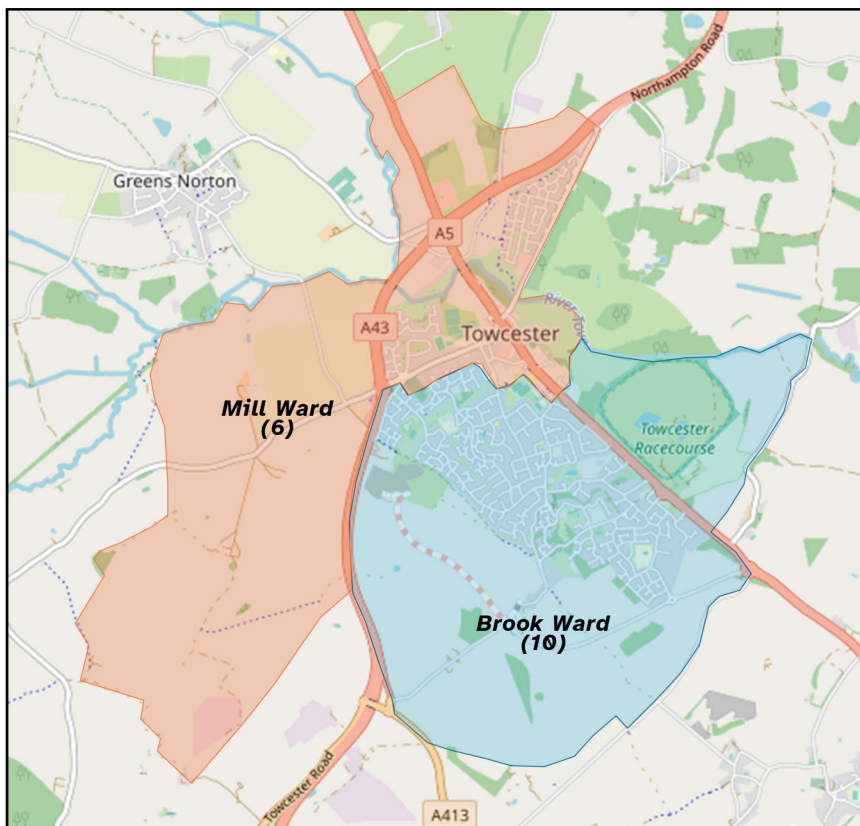
*** meets every other month*



Wards

Towcester is divided into two wards: Mill Ward (six councillors) and Brook Ward (ten councillors), with all 16 councillors as members of the Full Council. As a councillor, your role is to represent the views of the community within your ward.

You do not need to live within the ward's boundaries to stand as a councillor and represent it. However, certain eligibility requirements apply, which can be found on the Qualifications and Disqualifications descriptions in this guide.



Qualifications

To be able to stand as a candidate at a 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:***
 1. *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;*
 2. *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 the election;*
 3. *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;*
 4. *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.*



Disqualifications

Apart from meeting the qualifications for standing for election, you must also not be disqualified. It is a criminal offence to make a false statement on your nomination papers as to your qualification for being elected, so if you are in any doubt you should contact your employer, consult the legislation or, if necessary, take your own independent legal advice.

You cannot be a candidate if at the time of your nomination and on the day of election:

- you are employed by the town council or hold a paid office under the town council (including joint boards or committees);*
- you are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order;*
- 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 the day of election;*
- you have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices);*
- you are subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003;*
- you have been convicted of an intimidatory criminal offence motivated by hostility towards a candidate, future candidate, or campaigner or holder of a relevant elective office.*



How to stand as a candidate

To stand as a councillor you must complete a set of nomination papers, available from the Towcester Town Council office at the Town Hall or from the 'Be A Councillor' page on our website. The nomination papers require some basic personal details and must be supported by signatures from two Towcester residents.

Please note that the completed nomination papers must be physically signed in ink (wet signed). You must also declare which ward you will be standing for - usually where you reside.

Once complete, your papers must be delivered in person to a designated West Northamptonshire Council office, the nearest being at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD, by either yourself or one of the individuals that signed your documents.

*Completed papers can be delivered from Monday 17 March at 10am. **The deadline is 4pm on Wednesday 2 April.** As this is a short window, we recommend completing and submitting your paperwork as soon as possible to ensure your candidacy for Towcester Town Council.*

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Town Clerk at Towcester Town Council on 01327 350995 or email towncouncil@towcester-tc.gov.uk

