

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL



TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS

6th MAY 2021

Candidate Information

Introduction

Every four years, Town and Parish Councils are required to hold an election for membership of the Council and by standing for election it is one of the best ways of ensuring that your views are represented.

Elections for local councils in Shropshire next take place on 6th May 2021 and Ellesmere Town Council will have vacancies for 12 Councillors.

By becoming a Town Councillor, you will be able to make a difference and help shape the Town of Ellesmere to ensure that it is able to provide the sort of services and facilities that are wanted and needed by the local community.

This document is intended to provide prospective candidates with an idea of what is involved in standing for election.

Town Councils

Town and Parish Councils represent the third tier of local government, the tier closest to the community.

There are around 9,000 local councils in England, and they are growing in number, especially as councils in urban areas are established. Most local councils were set up in 1894 by an Act of Parliament. This created the civil parish, separating it from the church after its long history of delivering local services such as care for the poor, maintenance of roads and collecting taxes.

Town and Parish Councils can raise revenue to help meet their spending requirements by issuing a 'Precept'. This is the total amount to be raised through the Council Tax from all the dwellings within the Parish area. The 'Precept' is converted into an amount per Council Tax Band that is added onto the Council Tax bill. The precept is set annually usually in January.

Ellesmere Town Council

Ellesmere Town Council was formed on the 1st April 1974 upon the abolition of Urban District, Rural District and Borough Councils. Its function is to serve residents who live in Ellesmere Urban.

The Council is made up of 12 Councillors who work as a corporate body to make decisions for the benefit of the local community. There is 1 Shropshire Council ward that covers the whole of the town. If fewer than 12 candidates stand for election, they will automatically gain a seat on the council; this is called an un-contested election, and any remaining seat(s) will then be filled by Co-option.

The population of Ellesmere is 4700 (Midyear Population Estimates, ONS, 2015).

What does Ellesmere Town Council actually do?

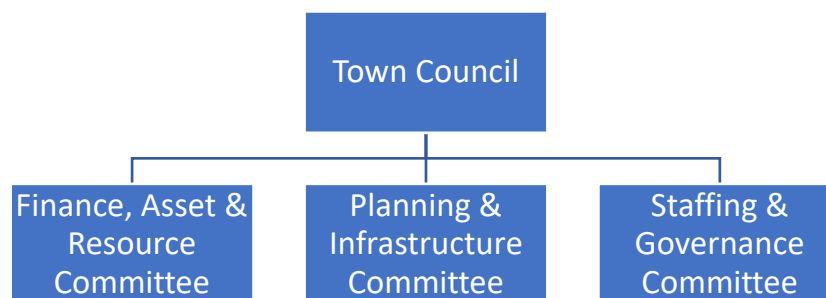
The Town Council is the most local part of the democratic system and acts as a voice that can make a difference to the quality of life within its local community.

The Council's work falls into three main categories:

- Representing the local community
- Delivering services to meet local needs.
- Striving to improve the quality of life in Ellesmere.

The Council holds monthly meetings usually on the first Monday of every month (except for bank holidays when the date depends on the availability of the Town Hall). In addition to the full Town Council meetings there are a number of committee meetings held throughout the year.

Ellesmere Town Council has the following Committee Structure:



All Full council meetings and committee meetings are open to the press and public. Members of the public are most welcome to attend and speak to Councillors about any issues during the public session of a Council meeting, or just sit and listen. If you are interested in standing for election it may be useful to attend a meeting prior to the election so that you can familiarise yourself with how meetings are run. Copies of meeting agendas can be found on the Town Council website www.ellesmere-tc.gov.uk or on the Town Council noticeboard (located outside the Town Hall).

Services and Facilities run by the Town Council.

Ellesmere Town Council is responsible for the management of a number of facilities in the town. Currently the Town Council manages the following facilities, however in 2021 it is anticipated that these will increase when more services are passed down to Town Councils from Shropshire Council.

Ellesmere Town Council is responsible for the following assets and services:

- War Memorial
- Cross Street Toilets
- Bus Shelters
- CCTV Cameras/84 Street Lights
- Street Furniture
- Floral Planters and Flower Beds
- Flag Poles
- Christmas Festoons

The Town Council also owns and manages the following sites:

- Ellesmere Town Hall
- Beech Grove - Playing Fields & Play Area
- Birch Road Recreation Ground
- Berwyn View Recreation Ground
- Kingfisher Walk Playground
- Crane and New Wharf Square
- Boathouse & Mere Cottage – jointly owned with Shropshire Council
- Ellesmere Cemetery – jointly owned with Ellesmere Rural Parish Council

The Council as an Employer

The Town Council has 9 employees:

Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Deputy Clerk & Deputy RFO

Administration Assistant for Ellesmere Town Hall and provides support to the Clerk

Cemetery Co-ordinator for Ellesmere Cemetery

2 Caretakers and 2 Caretaking Assistants for Ellesmere Town Hall and Cross Street Toilets

The Clerk is employed by the Council and answers to the Council as a whole. The Clerk manages any other staff that may be employed by the Council.

The Civic Role

Ellesmere Town Council has an elected Mayor who acts as chairman of the Council and is elected on an annual basis at the Annual Meeting of the Council held in May.

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to a number of events, functions and engagements. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor may be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:

- Acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council.
- Attending functions and engagements within Ellesmere, and on occasions outside the town, as a ceremonial representative of the Council.
- Undertaking official openings or presentations on behalf of the Council.
- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities.
- Representing the Council during royal, celebrity or VIP visits to the town.
- Chairing meetings of the Town Council.

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and consort will usually wear the official Chains of Office. The Chains of Office are worn at all official functions within Ellesmere and they can usually be worn at functions outside of the town when invited in an official capacity.

Being a Local Councillor

Town Councillors are community leaders who represent the aspirations of residents who live in their parish and endeavour to achieve them. Town Councillors also have close links with local community groups, schools, and churches within the parish.

- A Councillor's normal term of office is 4 years.
- Is the holder of a public office and not a volunteer.
- The main job of a Councillor is to participate in the collective decision-making processes of the Council.
- He/she has no authority to make decisions about Council business on his/her own.
- A Councillor's financial and certain other interests in Council business must be transparent.
- He/she is subject to obligations set out in the Code of Conduct adopted by the council.
- Ellesmere Town Councillors do not receive any remuneration other than travel expenses although an allowance is made to the Mayor.

Who is eligible to stand for election?

The law specifies that you can become a Town Councillor if on the day of submitting your nomination form and on the day of election you are:

- at least 18 years old
- a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, and
- at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - a) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish/community in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
 - b) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish/community area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
 - c) 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/community area.
 - d) You have lived in the parish/community 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.

There are certain people who are disqualified from being elected to a parish or community council in England and Wales. You cannot be a candidate if at the time of your nomination and on polling day:

- a) You are **employed by the parish/community** or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees).
- b) You are the subject of a **bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order**.
- c) 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.

d) You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations). The disqualification for an illegal practice begins from the date the person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for three years. The disqualification for a corrupt practice begins from the date a person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for five years.

A person may also be disqualified from election if they have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority following a decision of the First-tier Tribunal (formerly the Adjudication Panel for England) or the Adjudication Panel for Wales. For more information on eligibility please visit

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/141798/Part-1-Can-youstand-for-election-P-and-C.pdf

How do I stand for election?

If you are interested in standing for election as an Ellesmere Town Councillor, you will need to complete a nomination paper and submit it in person to Shropshire Council before the statutory deadline. This year, the nomination packs will also be made available by Shropshire Council electronically. The nomination pack will include the nomination form, the consent form, a request for the Electoral Register (only to be used for election purposes) and an expenses form.

You can download forms here:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/voting-and-elections/town-and-parish-elections-6-may-2021/>

or request an election pack by emailing elections@shropshire.gov.uk or telephoning 03456789015

The Town Council will receive the 'Notice of Election' on Monday 15 March and will be displayed it on the noticeboards and on the website. The Notice will contain all the dates, times, and venues for the delivery of Nomination Papers. Once the Notice has been posted by Shropshire Council the Council is officially in 'Purdah' and Councillors need to be careful about the decisions made at Council meetings.

Election timetable

Item	Date
Notice of Election	Monday 15 th March 2021
Deadline for delivery of nomination papers	4:00 pm Thursday 8 April 2021
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Not later than 4pm on Friday 9 April 2021

Completing the Nomination and Consent forms

You will need to fill in your surname, other forenames in full, a commonly used surname (if any), commonly used forenames (if any), a Description (which is usually used for political affiliation) and your home address in full, together with your title, email address and telephone number.

You will need to have two people who are on the town's electoral register to propose and second you. These people can contact the Town Clerk for their Electoral Number or you are entitled to ask for an Electoral Register for the purpose (but for no other reason). Please note that if you are found to have used it for any other purpose you can be prosecuted.

You will also need to complete a 'Consent to Nomination form' (the consent form is necessary as there have been people who have been nominated without their consent). This form requires your name, address, electoral number and for you to complete a declaration. This form needs to be witnessed, but not necessarily by anyone in the town. A word of warning about proposers and seconders. These people may not sign (subscribe) more papers than there are seats in the Parish, so it is a good idea to get different people to do it otherwise the nomination may be invalid.

Once you have completed the forms

Nomination papers must be hand-delivered to the Elections Team at the Shirehall, or at other locations on allocated days. The Notice of Election will be published on Monday 15 March and will contain all the dates, times, and venues for the delivery of Nomination Papers. Shropshire Council is not able to accept nomination papers through the post or via email, including via registered post. Nomination papers may be hand-delivered by the candidate, or by someone that they trust. Given this election is taking place during a coronavirus pandemic, candidates will be encouraged to book an appointment slot for when and where they will deliver nomination papers; for those who turn up without an appointment, they will be seen as soon as possible but may have to wait as those with an appointment will take priority.

The Elections Team will be issuing further guidance on nominations closer to the commencement of the election period and this information will be added to our website <https://ellesmere-tc.gov.uk/2021-elections/>

What Does a Councillor actually do once elected?

- Attend Council meetings including committee meetings.
- Read papers and reports in preparation for each meeting.
- Raise matters that the Council can consider and formally decide to action at meetings.
- Make informed contributions which influence the debate on the business that needs to be decided at those meetings.
- Participate in the Council's decision-making process, which is subject to strict rules and guidelines.
- Represent the Council externally and may be asked to represent the Town Council on committees of other groups in the Town.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a Town and Parish Councillor please see there is information on the following website www.nalc.gov.uk

Election Materials and Guides

Shropshire Association of Local Councils Website <http://www.alcshropshire.co.uk/elections>

NALC Elections Website <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections>

Be a Councillor" website <http://beacouncillor.co.uk/>

Become a Councillor' website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/become-a-councillor>

Electoral Commission "Candidates and agents at parish and community council elections in England and Wales

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-communitycouncil-elections-in-england-and-wales>

More Information

If you have any further questions about the work of the Town Council, please do not hesitate to contact the Town Clerk Joanne Butterworth on 01691 622689 or email

jo.butterworth@ellesmere-tc.gov.uk

For specific information about elections and key dates please contact Shropshire Council elections team on elections@shropshire.gov.uk or telephoning 03456789015.