

## Expenses of candidate - who pays? (cont'd)

exceed the set limit of £740 plus an additional 6p for every entry in the ward/parish register of electors. Your local Electoral Registration Officer will be able to give you the number of electors in the ward.

There are specific spending limits for joint candidates. You are a joint candidate if you stand in the same ward and (i) have the same election agent; or (ii) use the same campaign rooms; or publish joint material.

Joint candidates have lower spending limits, as they are sharing some of the costs. You should calculate the spending limit as explained above, and then reduce it by (i) 25% - a quarter - if there are two joint candidates; or (ii) 33% - a third - if there are three or more joint candidates.

Councillors play a vital role in shaping and directing the effectiveness of local services for the benefit of local people. Councillors work with the Police, Health and other public bodies and with the private sector in order to achieve these aims. The position of the Councillor is vital in the local community as the voice of the community and the champion of the users of local services playing a vital role in the overall effectiveness of local government. You do not need to pay a deposit to stand in local government elections.

## Will I receive any payment for this role?

All District Councillors receive a basic allowance, and those who hold a position of responsibility, such as being the Chairman of a committee or a Portfolio Holder, receive a special responsibility allowance. In addition, councillors can claim for travel and subsistence and carers allowances. Full details of the Councillors Allowances Scheme can be found within the Council's Constitution.

## Will I receive any training?

You do not need any previous experience or qualifications to become a District Councillor, just a dedication to the community and a willingness to learn. There will be a programme of induction and training sessions for you following your election and throughout your term in office.

The officers working at the Council are there to assist you in any way they can, such as advice about Council procedures or problems within your ward.

## Contacts for further information?

If you are interested in becoming a District Councillor please contact the Electoral Services Team at South Holland District Council for further details.

tel: 01775 761161 and ask for Electoral Services  
www.sholland.gov.uk/council/elections/becomeacouncillor  
email: elections@sholland.gov.uk.

Updated March 2015

# Would you like to become a District Councillor?



## Background

At the most local level, electors are represented by District and Parish Councillors. District Councillors represent Wards which are normally made up of a number of parishes.

## Would you like to be a District Councillor?

Councillors come from all walks of life. It is important for the district that its councillors represent the population as a whole, and are drawn from as wide a group of people as possible. Therefore, different backgrounds and experiences are encouraged.

## Why would I want to be a District Councillor?

People stand for election for many reasons:

- To speak on behalf of the local community and help local people
- To pursue their political beliefs
- To contribute business or professional skills
- To shape the future of the local community.

## What is involved in being a District Councillor?

Becoming a District Councillor means that you can help people to get the services they deserve, and influence the running of the district for the benefit of everyone who lives and works here.

In addition to attending meetings of the full Council you may be asked to serve on one or more of the various committees/panels eg: in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny function: Policy Development Panel and Performance Monitoring Panel; the Regulatory functions: Licensing Committee, Planning Committee and Standards; the Governance and Audit function; and the Cabinet function.

## What is involved in being a District Councillor? cont'd

You will need to spend time reading reports and becoming familiar with issues the Council regularly deals with so that you can make informed decisions. You may be able to take on additional responsibilities further details of which can be found within the individual councillor role profiles, available from the Democratic Services Team.

You are responsible for representing the electors of your ward. The extent to which a councillor is proactive in performing this function is entirely a matter for you as an individual, but you have a duty to represent the interests of all electors, regardless of whether or not they voted for you.

There are certain statutory responsibilities imposed on councillors. These include, for example, that you must be scrupulous in observing the rules on expenses and allowances, and that you are legally bound to declare any pecuniary interests.

## Am I able to be a District Councillor and how do I stand for election?

**In order to stand as a candidate at a District Council Election you must:**

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

Some people become councillors as a result of joining a political party at a District Council level. However, many people stand for election as independents (candidates who do not belong to any political party).

If you are considering standing as a candidate for a particular political party then you will need to be a member of that party's local organisation.

For further information in standing for a political party visit the following websites:

- **The Electoral Commission:** [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/)
- **Politically Independent Candidate:** [www.picx.co.uk/main.html](http://www.picx.co.uk/main.html)

## How long would I be a District Councillor?

District Councillors are elected to serve for a four year term of office. Of course, councillors will cease to hold their position in the instance of resignation, disqualification or death, and in such circumstances a by-election may be held.

## Who cannot be a District Councillor?

**You are not allowed to become a councillor if at the time of your nomination and on the day of the election:**

- You are employed by the local authority or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Note that you may be 'employed by the local authority', for example, if you work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services. This list is not exhaustive.
- You hold a politically restricted post.
- You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions 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 polling day; or
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations) or under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

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 Wales).

## Do I need an Election Agent?

At elections for the District Council you can take on this role yourself but it is helpful to appoint an agent. If you are a candidate for a political party it may be that one person takes on the role of agent for several candidates. It is the agent's responsibility to ensure that forms are sent in at the correct times and to ensure that a clear and accurate record of financial expenditure is submitted after the election.

## Expenses of candidate - who pays?

If you decide to become a candidate and subsequently spend money on your campaign, it is important to note that you will have to pay for your own publicity material and items used during the campaign.

Furthermore, although expenses of candidates are not reimbursed by the local authority, you must keep all receipts as these form part of the statement of election expenses which has to be submitted after the election. The expenditure return is required to ensure that the money spent during the election campaign does not