



NEW COUNCILLOR APPLICATION 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 taking a seat on the council, meetings, training and support are provided to help new councillors fully understand their role and responsibilities.

Reviewing the council's website and attending council meetings to understand the roles and responsibilities of the council is highly recommended prior to submitting your application.

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***

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 free time to participate in events, communicate with fellow councillors, engage with residents, and develop key skills to improve their effectiveness as a councillor.

* usually meets twice per month

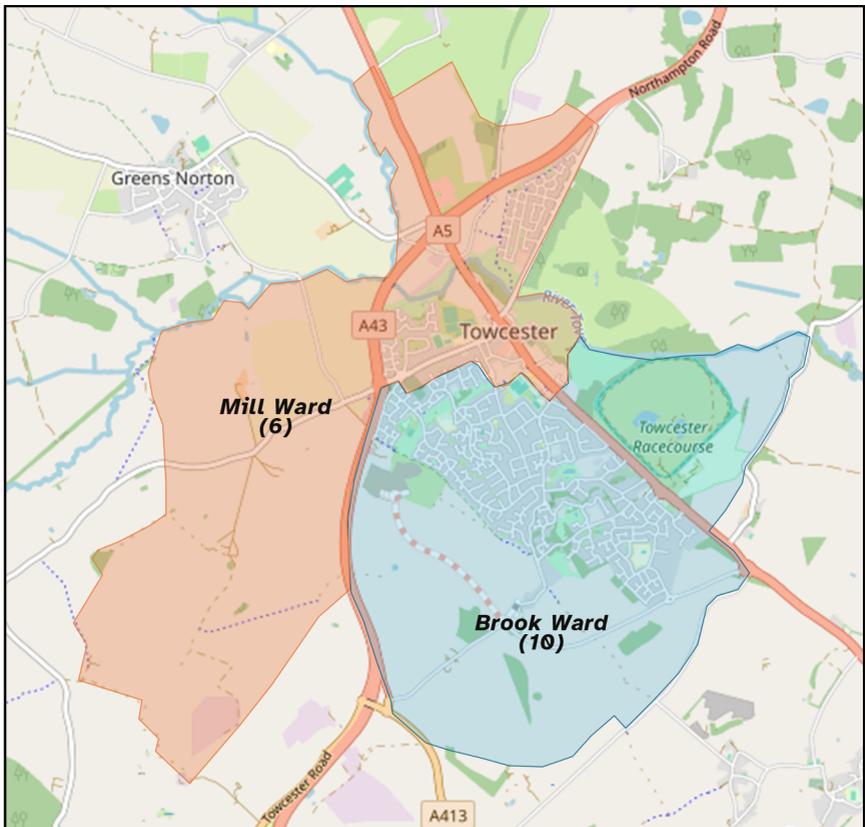
** meets every other month on average



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 Towcester Town Councillor 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 in Towcester;*
 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 joining the council;*
 3. *Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of joining the council has been in Towcester;*
 4. *You have lived in Towcester, or within three miles of it, during the whole of the 12 months before the day of joining the council.*



Disqualifications

Apart from meeting the qualifications for being a councillor, you must also not be disqualified. It is a criminal offence to make a false statement on your application 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 councillor if at the time of your application:

- you are (or have been in the previous 12 months) 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 apply as a Town Councillor

To become a councillor you must submit your application in writing to Towcester Town Council via the Town Clerk's Office at the Town Hall, or by email to towncouncil@towcester-tc.gov.uk or via the 'Be A Councillor' page on our website; stating your reasons and qualifications for wanting to become a councillor.

Once submitted, the council will consider and vote on your application at the next full council meeting. You may attend the meeting or be notified of the decision the following day.

If the council vote in favour to co-opt, you will be required to complete a number of statutory and non-statutory forms before attending your first meeting as a councillor:*

- Declaration of Acceptance of Office*
- Register of Interests*
- GDPR Security Compliance Checklist
- Electronic Service of Summons Consent
- Committee selection

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

For further guidance about what it's like to be a councillor, visit <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/campaigns/becoming-a-councillor.html>

