

What is a Parish Council?

A Parish Council is the first level of local government. It provide communities with a democratic voice and a structure for taking community action. The services delivered by Parish Councils can include planning, highways, traffic, community safety, housing, street lighting, playing fields, community centres, litter, war memorials, seats and shelters and rights of way. And as part of the localism agenda, Parish Councils are encouraged to play an even greater role in their communities.

In 2017 Bomere Heath Parish Council carried out a Community Led Plan (CLP), this was our way of interacting with the community by working with a steering group with the primary aim of getting a greater understanding of the key issues in our Parish.

What is a Parish Councillor?

We, your Parish Councillors, are both volunteers and elected representatives from within (or just outside) of this Parish. Individuals may also be co-opted at the discretion of the council if there is a vacancy. We meet once a month (Except in August... everyone deserves a break!) in either Bomere Heath Village Hall or Fitz Village Hall to discuss matters that have been raised or are required to be addressed that month.

The chair encourages Councillors to get involved in bigger splinter activities that may take several months, (eg the 2019 Parish Fete) that overlap the meetings and feedback periodically.

The benefits of being a Parish Councillor

Parish Councillors give their time freely to work on behalf of local residents. By becoming a Parish Councillor you can see your community change for the better as a result of decisions you have helped make. This gives a real sense of achievement. You have the ability to become a voice for your community, somebody who parishioners may look to for help, guidance and support. You will be involved in local decision making and strategic planning for the benefit of the people you serve.

How to apply to become a Parish Councillor?

It is very easy to become a Parish Councillor, and there are a few ways that you can take it further. We invite you to attend a meeting to see what goes on and see the sort of thing discussed and meet your councillors. Please email the clerk should this be of interest.

Once you have attended and if it is something that you wish to take further, please complete the application form (APP-001) and send it to clerk@bomereheath.co.uk.

If however, you are ready and willing to join apply, you can miss out the initial visit if you wish and apply directly by completing and submitting the form. Guidance notes and Application form are on the website. www.bomereheath.co.uk

We advise that you check the Eligibility Criteria below to be certain that you are able to apply.

If we have a full consignment and there are new members wishing to join, there would be a nomination and election process. However, this hasn't happened in Bomere Heath for more than 10 years. The nomination and election process is outlined below.

As part of the formal election process, you would be required to separately disclose any assets or interests that could be deemed to be of financial benefit associated with the Parish Council and its operation or organisation. If you are unsure, please seek clarification with the clerk.

Application process

The application form (APP-001) to stand as a candidate are available from the website. To apply for a form please telephone or email the clerk at clerk@bomereheath.co.uk

There is no charge to stand as a candidate for election. However, any costs incurred by a candidate in standing for election will have to be paid by the candidate. Details of expenses will be supplied with the application form.

Please don't take our word for it. Often the best way to find out what it's like to be a parish councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now. Come along to a parish council meeting, speak to one of the councillors and find out what they think of the role.

Eligibility Criteria.

The main quality from a Parish Councillor is to be willing to positively participate in the meetings. However, each candidate must be eligible to stand for election. The Local Government Act 1972, Section 79, sets out the qualifications for standing as a candidate and the grounds for disqualification of a candidate.

On the day of nomination and the day of poll, you must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union, and

Must meet at least **one** of the following four qualifications:

- Your name must appear on the register of local government electors for the parish/community at the time of your nomination and throughout your term of office should you be elected.
- You have occupied any land or other premises as owner or tenant in the parish/community during 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/community area. You do not have to have paid employment to qualify, as long as your main or only place of work is in the parish/community area. For example, Councillors who's main or only job is being a councillor would be able to use this qualification, if their council office is within the parish/community.
- You have lived in the parish/community area or within three miles of it during 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
- You may be disqualified as a candidate if:
 - You are employed by the parish/community council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees).
 - You have been declared bankrupt in the last five years and has not repaid your debts.
 - You have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to at least three months imprisonment (including any suspended sentence) within the previous five years.

- You are disqualified due to corrupt practices under the Representation of the People Act 1983 or the Audit Commission Act.
- Reference too separately declare for public record, any beneficial land interest within the Parish or other financial interest with the council.

Other useful literature

Background information on Shropshire Parishes and understanding the formal process of elections.

Parish and town councils within Shropshire vary in size. Their elections are held every four years and voters will have the same number of votes as there are vacancies to be filled. The candidates with the most votes are elected. In Bomere Heath we haven't fulfilled our maximum criteria for a long time and therefore a public ballot has not been required. As long as the candidates fulfil the eligibility criteria to stand they are automatically appointed if approved by the majority of the sitting parish council.

View a complete list of Parish Councils in Shropshire <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?bcr=1>

For more comprehensive information regarding parish elections, please visit <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england>

Bomere Heath and District Parish Council have a Privacy Statement associated with the holding of and use of personal data. If you have any queries as to how we will use and hold data submitted in the application process, please see the [privacy statement](#) on our website.

FAQ's – Frequently Asked Questions

How much time does being a councillor take?

As with anything, what you get out of being a Parish Councillor will depend on what you are able to put in. How much time you are able to commit is largely down to the individual and what level of involvement you are hoping for. As a minimum, you would be expected to attend the monthly Parish Council meetings held one evening per month. In addition you may need to be free to attend occasional meetings of any working groups that you join such as Planning, Highways, Finance & Recreation. These are never frequent, but in many cases the standard PC meeting just isn't long enough. To make this a little less painful, the Albrighton Hall or Red Lion Bar Lounge is a pleasant change of scenery.

How long does a Parish Councillor serve for?

Once elected, Parish Councillors can sit on the Parish Council for a maximum of 4 years. If after that time, you wish to stay in post then you will need to stand for re-election. However, we recommend that you give it 6 months and hopefully you are inspired to stay. But there is no minimum term once elected.

What skills will I need to be a Parish Councillor?

A Parish Council benefits from diversity and we welcome interest from people of different ages, backgrounds, experiences and abilities. Good communication skills, problem solving, analytical thinking and being a team player are all advantageous attributes but not essential. The main request is that you are willing and want to get stuck in.

Guidance notes

A successful candidate would be expected to follow the [Councillors Code of Conduct](#).

www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/set-up-a-town-or-parish-council

www.nalc.gov.uk/about-local-councils

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media/2645

shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?bcr=1

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.136%20A%20Councillor%27s%20Workbook%20on%20town%20and%20parish%20councils.pdf