



Serving the community

Blaby Parish Council

Manager: Mrs V Jepson

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Filling a Casual Vacancy for a Parish Councillor

Both Parish and District Council elections are held on the first Thursday in May every four years.

If a seat becomes vacant mid-term, the council will need to fill the vacancy either, through a by-election (if the required number of electors demands a poll) or in the absence of that demand, through co-option of a suitable, duly nominated candidate.

If you think you would like to be considered to fill a Casual Vacancy the following information may be helpful in making your decision.

What is a Parish Councillor & what do they do?

Councillors are elected/co-opted to represent an individual geographical unit on the council known as a ward. This parish council comprises 16 members representing two wards: **North Ward** (7 members) and **South Ward** (9 members).

Councillors have three main components to their work:

(a) *Decision Making* – through meeting and attending working groups with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, what services should be delivered and which policies should be implemented.

(b) *Monitoring* – councillors make sure their decisions lead to effective and efficient services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

(c) *Getting Involved* – as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These often depend on what the individual wants to achieve and how much time and effort he/she has available to give. Duties may include attending meetings of local organisations or other bodies affecting the wider community, taking up issues on behalf of members of the public, attending a Members' Surgery prior to a Parish Council meeting or meeting individual residents.

How much time will it take & will I get paid?

On average, less than a couple of hours a week. Obviously there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a parish councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work. Council meetings are mainly held in the evening – as are most meetings of the other groups which councillors attend on the Council's behalf.

Talking and listening to your fellow parishioners can be done at any time but you must be able to spend a couple of hours once a month on a Tuesday evening attending the Council meeting.

Parish Councillors do not receive a salary, however, they are entitled to receive payment for any approved expenses incurred whilst on official council business; for example, travel expenses to attend a meeting outside of the parish. No-one is excluded from being a Councillor due to financial loss.

What training & support is available?

Blaby Parish Council is committed to developing both its Members and staff in order to assist in achieving its aims and priorities. All Members are expected to attend training sessions as new councillors and on-going sessions to continue their development. Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils holds regular training courses and conferences. Further information at www.lralc.org.uk

Am I qualified?

For most people the answer is -YES, however there are a few rules:-

- You must be a British subject, or a Citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union, and
- On the relevant date (i.e. the date on which you are nominated or if there is a poll, the day on which the election is held) you must be 18 years old or over

Additionally:-

- On the relevant day you must be a local government elector for the council area in which you want to stand; or
- During the whole of the 12 months preceding that day have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the council area; or
- During the whole of the 12 months preceding that day have had your principal or only place of work in the council area: or
- During the whole of the 12 months preceding that day have resided in the council area or within three miles of it

You cannot stand for election or co-option if you:-

- Are subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order
- Have, within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom for any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine
- You work for the council for which you want to become a member (you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area)

What next?

It is helpful to make a written representation to the Manager for inclusion on the next Parish Council Agenda. You should tell members about yourself, your interest in the parish and your reasons for wishing to fill the current casual vacancy.

You will also be required to sign a declaration confirming your eligibility to become a Parish Councillor.

It is very helpful if you can then attend the following meeting. The Manager will place your letter on the agenda and members will have received a copy with their papers a week prior to the meeting. The Chairman may invite you to speak to members to expand on your letter. Members will then decide whether to nominate, second and co-opt you.

Should you then be co-opted, on signing of your Declaration of Acceptance of Office, you will be invited to take your seat for the meeting.

After Co-option

The Manager will provide you with a copy of the current policy and procedure documents pertaining to this parish.

Within 28 days of your acceptance of office, which includes signing up to the council's Code of Conduct, you must by law submit your Register of Members' Interest Form which will be scanned onto our website and that of Blaby District Council.

Register to Vote

Before you can become a councillor you must be registered to vote and entered on the Electoral Register or Register of Electors for your area. This is a requirement for all UK elections and referendums, including Parish, District, County, General and European elections. You are NOT automatically entered onto the register, even if you pay Council Tax. You can obtain a form to register to from:

The Electoral Registration Officer at Blaby District Council or download a copy from www.blaby.gov.uk or www.aboutmyvot.co.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION

For the Parish Council contact:

Mrs Vicki Jepson, Manager to Blaby Parish Council
Blaby Civic Centre
22-24 Leicester Road
Blaby
Leicester
LE8 4GQ

Tel: 0116 2784728

Email: manager@blabyparishcouncil.org

To Register to Vote in Blaby District contact:

The Electoral Registration Officer
Blaby District Council
Council Offices
Desford Road
Narborough
Leicestershire
LE19 2EP

Tel: 0116 2750555

Website for Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils:

www.leicestershireandrutlandalc.gov.uk

Website for Blaby District Council: www.blaby.gov.uk

Website for Leicestershire County Council: www.leics.gov.uk