



Thinking of becoming a Herefordshire councillor?



Here's what you need to know...

LOCAL ELECTIONS 2024

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FIRST, THE BASICS

WHO CAN BECOME A COUNCILLOR?

You can become a councillor, provided you are 21 years of age or over* on the day of nomination, have property in or work connections with the area and are either a British citizen, Commonwealth citizen, citizen of the Irish Republic or a citizen of the European Union.

You do not need any previous experience: however, a general understanding of how a council works would be of great benefit.

If you are elected, you will be expected to take part in an initial induction programme. Further training will be provided to meet any future needs you may have as a councillor.

*The government is currently consulting on lowering the age to 18.

WHAT ABOUT PARTY POLITICS?

If you wish, you may stand as a representative of a political party, in which case you will need to contact your preferred political party's local office. You can also stand as an independent, i.e., by yourself. If you decide to do this, you should be aware that currently, Herefordshire independent councillors have chosen to form a political group. The relevant groups' contact addresses are listed near the back of this booklet.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR?

Herefordshire Council is split into 40 wards and each ward has one, two or three councillors representing it. There are 58 councillors in total on the council and the number of representatives for each ward was decided by the Electoral Commission appointed by central government.

As a councillor you will have many challenging roles, from undertaking work on behalf of the people of your ward to being a member of full council. As the councillor for a particular ward, you will be asked by the electorate to help with any issues in your ward and be responsible for promoting and representing your ward.

All 58 councillors make up the full council, which normally meets five times a year. The council is responsible for setting the budget, council tax and main policies. Cabinet is responsible for delivering the day-to-day services.

The cabinet

The cabinet has recently approved changes to the constitution, which allows the leader of the council to appoint a cabinet of between three and nine members. At present the cabinet is made up of the leader of the council, the deputy leader and seven councillors.

The leader is responsible for identifying the area for which each cabinet member is responsible and it is usually for one of the council's main service areas. The leader covers corporate strategy and finance and the deputy leader looks after children and young people's services.

The other seven currently cover: community services, corporate and customer services and human resources; environment; highways and transportation; rural regeneration and strategy; resources; and social care adults and health.

Scrutiny committees

The council has established a strategic monitoring committee and five scrutiny committees to ensure accountability and transparency of the council's decision-making process. The five scrutiny committees cover: adult social care and strategic housing; children's services; community services; environment; and health. The principal roles of these committees are to: help in developing council policy; investigate areas of concern; review performance of the council and conduct Best Value Reviews. They have the statutory power to 'call-in decisions', which means they can delay a decision being implemented and investigate it further. The strategic monitoring committee co-ordinates the work of the other scrutiny committees.

Community forums

There are six community forums, which meet at different venues around the county about every three months. The role of the community forums is to build strong links with local communities, to consider the impact of council services on those communities and to make proposals to meet local needs. They have been set up to give members of the public an opportunity to discuss with local

councillors and other interested parties, issues affecting the local area. Details are advertised in local papers and on the website about two weeks before each meeting.

The council is currently working with the police to look at other ways of consulting with the public.

Traditional committees

There are four traditional style committees: audit and corporate governance; planning; regulatory and the standards committee. There are also three area planning sub-committees that deal with the majority of planning applications. Each councillor sits on the relevant area planning sub-committee, which covers their ward.

Standards committee

To ensure that the council maintains high standards, the council has appointed a standards committee with an independent chairperson. This is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the councillors and co-opted members of the council as well as town and parish councillors. The council has a code of conduct, which you will be required to adhere and sign up to.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN OFFICER?

The council employs staff to support and advise you as a councillor and help you make the right decisions. They are also employed to implement the council's policies, putting your decisions into practice and are responsible for ensuring that services run smoothly, efficiently and effectively.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED IN COUNCIL WORK?

It is for you to decide the level of commitment you are able to give to being a councillor. Some have more time to give than others, but if you are elected chairman of a committee or member of the cabinet, the role can be very demanding. If you are appointed as a member of a council body, you will be expected to attend its meetings. There will also be seminars and smaller working group meetings to attend with officers or other councillors.

Your representative role will involve making yourself available to the people of your ward and you may choose to hold ward surgeries. Also, the people of your ward will expect you to lead local projects to enhance your ward and be in regular contact with your local parish councils.

IS THERE A SALARY?

There is no salary for being a councillor as it is regarded as a voluntary public service. However, councillors are paid allowances, which are designed to re-imburse them for expenses incurred whilst engaged on council business.

Every councillor is entitled to a basic allowance, currently £6,348 a year, paid into bank accounts in monthly instalments. Some councillors are also given an allowance to cover any special responsibilities they are asked to undertake, such as chairman of a committee, cabinet member etc. There is also a childcare and dependant carers' allowance.

In addition, travel allowance is payable for attendance at approved council meetings, but not for ward work. If you are away from home for a certain number of hours on council business a subsistence allowance can be claimed. You will need to provide a VAT receipt.

ON TO HEREFORDSHIRE...

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Herefordshire Council began its life as a unitary authority on 1 April 1998, having been part of a major reorganisation of local government. The reorganisation involved the amalgamation of Hereford City Council, a substantial part of Leominster District Council, South Herefordshire District Council, part of Malvern Hills District Council and part of Hereford and Worcester County Council

In January 1999 Herefordshire Council became one of the first authorities in the country to respond to government plans to modernise local government by adopting a Cabinet-style structure. This was formalised by the Local Government Act 2000 and the introduction of a new constitution on 1 July 2001.

THE COUNCIL'S SERVICES

Herefordshire Council is a unitary authority, which means it is responsible for a number of services including the following:

Car parking, collection of council tax and non domestic rates, economic development, education, environmental health, highways (including footpaths and street lighting), housing, libraries, public conveniences, recreation, arts and museums, social services, strategic planning and all planning applications, trading standards and waste collection and disposal.

Councillors also represent Herefordshire Council on both the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority and the West Mercia Police Authority.

THE COUNCIL'S STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

The council has five main directorates, which provide services direct to the public: adult and community services; children and young people; corporate and customer services; environment; and resources.

Over recent years, the council has been recognised at both national and regional level, in particular, for securing funding for special projects, such as South Wye Regeneration and the new Whitecross School.

HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN / PARTNERSHIP

The establishment of the Herefordshire Partnership (consisting of over 100 partners including Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police, Local Learning Skills Council, Chamber of Commerce, Primary Care Trust and many voluntary organisations) has led to the development of the Herefordshire Plan (following a major review this is now called the Herefordshire Community Strategy).

The Herefordshire Community Strategy provides a coherent and shared vision for the future of Herefordshire and consists of a vision, a set of guiding principles and four themes - each with a number of outcomes. The Herefordshire Community Strategy leads the Herefordshire Local Area Agreement, and is a tool for future resource and service planning and for levering in external funding to Herefordshire. The Herefordshire Partnership is the way in which these organisations work together to achieve the vision in the Herefordshire Community Strategy.

THE COUNCIL'S MAIN OFFICES

The main council offices are listed as follows:

BROCKINGTON: PO Box 240, 35 Hafod Road, HEREFORD. HR1 1ZT

PLOUGH LANE: PO Box 4, Plough Lane, HEREFORD. HR4 0XH

BATH STREET: PO Box 233, HEREFORD. HR1 2HQ

GARRICK HOUSE: PO Box 245, Widemarsh Street, HEREFORD. HR4 9ZB

TOWN HALL: PO Box 230, St. Owens Street, HEREFORD. HR1 2PJ

SWAN HOUSE: PO Box 66, Edde Cross Street, ROSS-ON-WYE. HR9 7BZ

INFORMATION OFFICES

Info In Herefordshire – One-Stop Shops

Info in Herefordshire offers one stop shops and INFO points around the market towns of the county and in

the city, where members of the community and visitors to the county can get information advice and guidance on all council services and partner organisations. The Info Service can be contacted either by personal visit, telephone, email, letter, fax or via the Herefordshire Council website.



The Bromyard Centre is the most recent One Stop Shop to open and offers a number of facilities all under one roof including, Info in Herefordshire, library, leisure centre, tourist information centre and youth centre. Visitors to the centre can also enjoy a relaxation area and free Internet access.

By the end of 2006 a new Info Shop and library will open in Kington and at the beginning of 2007 the Info Shop in Hereford city, at Garrick House, will have undergone a major refurbishment. This will mean citizens will have access to a wider range of services. There will be more customer booths, more private interview rooms and computer facilities as well as improved access for disabled people.

Contact Details Tel: 01432 260 050 email: info@herefordshire.gov.uk

One Stop Shops

Info In Herefordshire, Swan House, Edde Cross Street,
Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7BZ

Info In Herefordshire, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, HR6 8YP

The Bromyard Centre, Cruxwell Street, Bromyard, HR7 4EB

INFO POINTS

Info In Herefordshire, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford
HR4 9EU

Info In Herefordshire, 2 Mill Street, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3BQ

Info In Herefordshire, St Katherine's, High Street, Ledbury,
Herefordshire HR8 1EA

WHO SUPPORTS HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS?

ALL THE COUNCIL'S OFFICERS

In all the work you will do as a councillor, there will be help and support from all the council's officers. Guidance will mainly come from the chief executive, the head of legal and democratic services, the five directors and other senior managers. They are available to you at any time, irrespective of whether you are part of a particular political group, chairman of one of the council's bodies, or simply acting in your ward role.

One of the ways in which the council is changing is in the emphasis it places on ensuring that other officers, not just senior managers, support councillors. A key officer contacts list will be provided to help you contact the relevant officer who can help you with your problem or query.

MEMBERS' SUPPORT

The members' support team provides full-time dedicated support to meet the needs of councillors. Services offered include a confidential secretarial service, photocopying, information gathering/problem solving, organising meetings, message taking, provision of stationery and general assistance with ward work.

There is also a corporate communication centre where regular information is produced for councillors and advice is available on how to deal with the press and the media.

You will have access to a fully equipped members' room based at Brockington which has meeting facilities for both formal and informal use, telephones, fax, computers and printer and refreshments. There is also a members' room at the Shirehall, Hereford for use by Herefordshire Councillors.

The council encourages all councillors to use electronic communication and to this end you will be provided with a computer and appropriate training. As far as possible, day-to-day communication with members will be by e-mail and each member will be given an e-mail address. This has proved to be a fast and reliable method of communication between councillors, staff and the electorate.

ABOUT THE ELECTION PROCESS

If you are interested in standing for election as a councillor, you will need to complete a nomination paper which must be verified by ten signatories (a proposer, a seconder and eight assentors) from the ward in which you wish to stand. You will also need to have lived, or worked, or owned property or land or be registered as an elector within the county of Herefordshire for the preceding twelve months before election day. This does not necessarily have to be in the ward in which you are thinking of standing.

Information and a guide on the nomination and election process is available from the electoral registration services manager, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8LR, telephone (01432) 260110.

KEY DATES

The key dates you may like to note are as follows:

By not later than the following date:

27th March 2007	Publication of notice of election
4th April 2007 (noon)	Last day for nominations to be received
10th April 2007 (noon)	Publication of statement of persons nominated
11th April 2007 (noon)	Delivery of notice of withdrawal of candidate
25th April 2007	Publication of notice of poll
3rd May 2007	Polling day

Polling hours are from 7.00am until 10.00pm

IF YOU ARE ELECTED, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Being elected is when the real challenge begins and you will be eager to know what happens next.

Before you can act as a councillor you will be required to complete certain formalities and sort out some simple administration. This will include signing a declaration of acceptance of office as well as agreement to be bound by the Herefordshire Council code of conduct. If you stand for election you will be given further information regarding this before the election.

You will also be offered some basic training (induction), which will give you information on how the council operates, including the running of each of its services. Further information on your role as a councillor will also be available.

You will also want to know how you get appointed to the council's committees. Appointment to these committees is handled through the leaders of the political groups. The chief executive will give advice on the process directly to any councillor who is not a member of a political group.

WHO TO CONTACT

If you do have any queries or require further information regarding this booklet, please feel free to contact any of the following Officers, who will be pleased to assist:

Neil Pringle, chief executive
(01432) 260044

Alan McLaughlin
Head of legal and democratic
services (01432) 260200

If you have any queries or require further information on political groups, please contact your local political party constituency office, or contact the council's political group leaders at the addresses below:

Conservative group

Councillor Roger Phillips, leader of the Conservative group, PO Box 240, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. HR1 1ZT.
Telephone: (01432) 260494

Liberal Democrat group

Councillor Terry James, leader of the Liberal Democrat group, PO Box 240, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. HR1 1ZT.
Telephone: (01544) 230746

Independent councillor's group

Councillor Bob Matthews, leader of the Independent group, PO Box 240, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. HR1 1ZT.
Telephone: (01432) 760498

Labour group

Councillor Chris Chappell, leader of the Labour group, PO Box 240, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. HR1 1ZT.
Telephone: (01432) 268227

Finally, it may be helpful to speak to a councillor currently serving on Herefordshire Council, to get an insight into what it is really like!

Good luck and we look forward to working with you!

A FEW WORDS FROM A NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLOR

On election day I felt overwhelmed that most people had voted for me but very honoured and therefore determined to do my best. It was all a steep learning curve for me but extremely rewarding.

It has added a new dimension to my life, as I have always been interested in what was going on in Hereford and it has given me the opportunity to be much more involved in what is happening. I was already IT literate and had a good home office system, which, I believe, is vital.

Attending a few council meetings beforehand helped me to know what to expect at my first council and planning meetings.

Members' support has been invaluable, as I can ask simple questions without being embarrassed. As I was elected at a by-election an individual induction programme was arranged for me. The most helpful session was when I was invited to a management meeting with the heads of department within a directorate. Before they had their meeting each one gave a brief presentation of their own field of work and I was able to ask a few questions. It was much easier to put names to faces and remember what each one did! I also had a tour of some of the facilities within the community services department, which gave me insight into how things were being developed.

The members' guide was useful in helping me unravel the many different strands of the Council!

Having a mentor and others in the group, who were very supportive, was key to gaining experience in protocol at meetings and in ward work.

The members' development working group has given me the opportunity to get to know others from different parties, as it is small and not as impersonal as the bigger meetings. I didn't say much at first but gradually gained confidence as I got to know people. It has offered excellent training opportunities and I would recommend it for all councillors - old and new!

Although I have learnt a great deal, it feels like it is only the tip of the iceberg!

FACTS & FIGURES OF HEREFORDSHIRE

Population		2005 Mid-year estimate			178,800	
Age group	ALL number	%	FEMALE number	%	MALE number	%
0-14	30,300	16.9	14,700	16.1	15,600	17.9
15-24	18,900	10.6	9,200	10.1	9,700	11.1
25-44	43,500	24.3	22,100	24.2	21,400	24.5
45-59	38,500	21.5	19,400	21.2	19,100	21.9
60+	47,600	26.6	26,000	28.4	21,500	24.6
Total	178,800		91,500		87,300	

(Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)) NB. Figures may not sum due to rounding

Population forecasts (2004-based)

Age Group	2006	2008	2011
0-14	29,630	28,470	27,000
15-59	100,440	99,310	97,800
60+	48,890	52,080	56,010
Total	178,960	179,870	180,800

(Source: Hfuds Council Research Team & ONS)

Population density, 2004

Area (hectares)	217,973
Area (km squared)	2,180
Area (square miles)	842
Population density (2004, persons per ha)	0.82

Relative size and population

Herefordshire is the 26th largest non-metropolitan unitary authority in England, in terms of population, out of 46.

In terms of area Herefordshire is the 2nd largest non-metropolitan unitary authority in England

Market town populations, 2004

Town	Population
Bromyard	4,240
Hereford City	55,940
Kington	2,660
Ledbury	9,240
Leominster	11,220
Ross-on-Wye	10,180

(Source: Hfuds Council Research Team & ONS)

Unemployment

April 2006	
Number of claimants:	1,714
Unemployment rate:	1.7%
No. Unemployed for over 6 Months:	380
As % of Total	
Unemployed:	22.4%

(Source: NOMIS, ONS)

Employment Structure

Non-Agricultural Employment 2004

Industry	Number
Construction/utilities/quarrying	4,361
Manufacturing industries	11,685
Service industries	48,769

n.b. does not include the self employed

(Source: Annual Business Inquiry, ONS)

Agricultural census 2004

Industry	Number
Agriculture	9,919

n.b. does not include the self employed

FACTS & FIGURES OF HEREFORDSHIRE

Household characteristics

Number of households	74,282
% of households which are:	
Owner occupied	71.6%
Rented from the social sector	15.2%
Other rented	13.2%

2001 Census

Number of residents	174,860
% of residents who are:	
White	99.1
Mixed	0.4%
Asian or Asian British	0.2%
Black or Black British	0.1%
Other	0.2%

% of Households which have:

No car	18.2%
No central heating	8.9%

% of residents who:

Have a limiting long term illness	18.0%
Provide unpaid care	10.1%

% of residents aged 16-74 who are:

Large employers & higher managerial / higher professional occupations	7.0%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	17.7%
Intermediate occupations / small employers & own account workers	19.2%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	7.6%
Semi-routine / routine occupations	22.3%
Never worked / long term unemployed	2.4%
Full-time students	4.7%
Non-classifiable	19.1%

% of residents who are:

Economically active	68.0%
Economically inactive	32.0%

% of Households which are:

Pensioner households	27.5%
Lone parent	8.2%

County administration

Parliamentary constituencies

Hereford Leominster (part of)

Wards

There are 40 electoral wards in Herefordshire

Parishes

There are 238 parishes in Herefordshire

Health authorities

Herefordshire Primary Care Trust

This factsheet is available from www.herefordshire.gov.uk For further information please email researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk or call 01432 260498

Herefordshire Council research team. Census 2001 Data: Crown copyright 2003

European constituencies

West Midlands Region

Electorate 2006

There are 133,679 people registered to vote (qualifying date 15th October 2005)

Parish councils

There are 134 parish councils in Herefordshire

Police authorities

West Mercia Constabulary

