

Becoming a Parish Councillor

In order to qualify to be a Parish Councillor you must be:

- A British citizen, a citizen of the Irish Republic or a citizen of any member state of the European Union.
- Over 18 on the day that you are nominated as a candidate.
- A registered local government elector.
- Resident in the parish, or within 3 miles of the parish, or working full time in the parish for at least 12 months prior to the nomination or election day.

You will be disqualified from holding office as a Parish Councillor if:

- You hold any paid office or employment in the Council.
- You have been declared bankrupt in the past five years and have not repaid your debts.
- You have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to more than 3 years imprisonment within the last five years.
- You incur illegal expenditure (when acting as a Councillor) of over £2,000, or are found guilty of using corrupt or illegal practices.

Role of a Parish Councillor

Great Chesterford Parish Council consists of 9 councillors and as a member of the council you would normally be elected to serve a term of four years. You can hold any political or religious persuasion, although your personal views should not extend into your council work as you are elected to represent the interests of the local community as a whole.

How can I be elected?

Elections are held every four years, with the next election due in May 2011. Uttlesford District Council administers the election, and in order to stand you need to complete, and return before the deadline date, papers supplied by them.

What happens if a vacancy occurs during the term of a Council?

Uttlesford District Council will post notices inviting electors to request an election. If 10 or more electors ask for an election one will take place, although only if there are more candidates than places will an actual poll take place.

What happens if no election is called or insufficient people stand for election?

In this situation the Council can co-opt members to fill any vacancies. A co-opted member has exactly the same standing in the Council as an elected member.

Residents are invited to put their names forward. If more candidates than places come forward, the Council will take a vote and the candidate with the overall majority is elected. If no one has an overall majority the person with the least votes is eliminated and another vote is taken. This continues until someone has an overall majority.