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# GET INVOLVED IN YOUR PARISH COUNCIL STAND, NOMINATE, VOTE

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## Why parish elections matter

Parish council elections are an important part of local democracy and give residents the opportunity to help shape decisions that directly affect their community. Parish councillors make decisions on a wide range of local matters such as community facilities, open spaces, planning consultations and local projects.

Elections are your opportunity to choose who represents you—or to stand for election yourself. Parish council elections are usually held every four years. Voting takes place by secret ballot, and residents can vote in person at a polling station or by post if they are registered for a postal vote.

To vote, you must be registered on the electoral register. Registration can be completed online through Maidstone Borough Council.

## Who can stand as a parish councillor?

To stand as a candidate in a parish council election, you must be at least 18 years old and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a qualifying EU citizen
- you must meet at least one of the following criteria: you are registered as a local government elector in the parish; you have lived in or near the parish; you have worked in the parish; or you have occupied land or property in the parish for at least the past 12 months.

No formal qualifications are required, and Lenham parish councillors are independent of political parties. The most important requirement is an interest in your local community and a willingness to get involved.

## How to nominate a candidate

If you wish to stand for election, nomination forms are available from Maidstone Borough Council's Electoral Services team. Completed nomination papers must be submitted by the published deadline before the election.

In most cases, nomination forms will require basic details about the candidate and need to be supported by a proposer and seconder.

## Why your vote matters

Local elections often have lower turnout than national elections, but parish councils make decisions that directly affect everyday life in the community. Every vote helps ensure that elected councillors reflect the views and needs of local residents.

By voting, you are helping to shape the future of your area and ensure that local services and projects reflect community priorities.

## Get involved in your community

Whether you choose to stand as a candidate or take part by voting, your involvement in parish council elections is an important way to contribute to local democracy. Strong participation helps ensure that the council remains representative, accountable, and connected to the community it serves.

For more information about elections, please contact Maidstone Borough Council.

