

## **Dorset Council Area To become a councillor .....**

Even those who have stood as councillors before may forget what the process was like 4 years ago. Whilst relatively easy, it is strict and if not followed exactly, will result in disappointment and rejection for the wrong reasons! The rules are there to ensure that only those who are eligible to stand for election in your community are considered and that those put forward have agreed to stand for election. Parish Councillors are elected by the public and normally serve 4 year terms in office. However, due to the formation of the new Dorset Council for the 2019 and 2024 elections the term will be 5 years to bring them in line with national county and unitary elections, they will then revert to the usual 4 year term.

### **If you wish to stand as a councillor you must satisfy these requirements:**

- You need to be over 18 years of age
- A British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union
- Plus at least one of the following qualifications: they are registered as a local government elector for the parish or town council area in which they wish to stand; or they have, during the whole of the previous 12 month period, occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the parish or town council area; or their main or only place of work during the whole of the previous 12 month period has been in the parish or town council area; or they have, during the whole of the previous 12 month period, lived in the parish or town council area (or within 4.8 km of it)

### **You cannot stand for election if you:**

A person cannot be a candidate if at the time of their nomination or their election:

- they are employed by the parish or town council or hold a paid office under that council; or
- they are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order in England or Wales; or
- they have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without the option of a fine, during the five years before election day (i.e. since 1 May 2014); or
- a person may also be disqualified from election if they have been convicted or reported guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court, or if they have been disqualified from standing for election to a local authority

### **A few terms that you will encounter explained:**

- **Returning Officer** – person empowered to run an election.
- **Standing** - Putting your name forward for election.
- **Electoral Register** – Names and addresses, together with election identification numbers of all people within a community who are registered to vote.
- **Election Timetable** – dates when specific forms must be publicised or submitted.

- **Warded** – Areas are split up into what is called ‘wards’ so that councillors are elected by a specific smaller number of people and will be aware of their local concerns rather than having to represent all people within a whole parish.
- **Expenses** – If you do produce your own leaflets/pamphlets you need to declare how much you have spent on this.

## 1. Publication of the Notice of Election.

The Returning Officer (normally the Chief Executive of the Council) has the duty to call an election. Notice of Election will be given on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Notices will be available on the Council website and distributed to Parish and Town clerks for them to display.

## 2. Getting the nomination forms

Nomination forms will be available to download from the Dorset for You website for clerks and candidates.

## 3. Completing the nomination forms

You will need to fill in all your personal details and those of the people nominating you. You and those nominating will be asked to fill in your Electoral Register number. This is the district code on the front of the Electoral Register e.g. A Village might be ‘SX’ then this is followed by the number that appears next to your name, or next to the name of the person nominating you. The entry in this box will therefore read something like ‘SX 413’.

## 4. Returning nomination forms

It is imperative that you submit your forms in accordance with the election timetable and can ONLY be delivered by hand and by appointment. Failure to do so will render your application null and void!

### Checklist:

- Do not forget to get **everyone** mentioned to sign the forms
- Ensure that all addresses are in **full** with no abbreviations
- Include the whole Electoral Register reference **letters and numbers**
- **Be careful not to miss important dates** (see insert 12 ‘Election Timetable’ enclosed)