

## **Local Elections May 2019 / Why become a Stokesley Town Councillor?**

Hambleton District Council has formally published the Notice of Election for the election of District and Parish Councillors. A copy of the notice is attached below.

The number of District Councillors to be elected for the Stokesley Ward will be TWO, one fewer than previously.

The number of Town Councillors to be elected for Stokesley Town Council is ELEVEN, the same as at present.

Nomination packs for the Stokesley Town Council Elections can be obtained from the Town Clerk, Mrs J McLuckie, Town Hall, Stokesley, Middlesbrough TS9 5DN.

Completed Nomination papers must be delivered to the Returning Officer at the offices of Hambleton District Council, Civic Centre, Stone Cross, Northallerton, DL6 2UU no later than 4pm on Wednesday 3 April 2019.

If any election is contested the poll will take place on Thursday 2 May 2019 between the hours of 7am and 10pm in the Town Hall.

Applications, amendments or cancellations of postal votes and amendments or cancellations of proxy votes must reach the Electoral Registration Officer Hambleton District Council, Civic Centre, Stone Cross, Northallerton, DL6 2UU by 5pm on Monday 15 April 2019 if they are to be effective for this election.

New applications to vote by proxy at this election must reach the Electoral Registration Officer at the address below by 5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2019.

The deadline for new applications to be received by the Electoral Registration Officer to vote by proxy on grounds of occupation, service or employment or a medical condition, illness or disability arising after 5pm on Tuesday 24 April 2019 is not later than 5pm on Thursday 2 May 2019.

### **Why become a Stokesley Town Councillor?**

By becoming a Town Councillor, you will be someone your community will look to for help, guidance and support; a community leader with the power to influence decisions for the benefit of the people you serve. Seeing your community change for the better, as a result of decisions you have helped make, can provide you with a sense of achievement and pride.

#### **Main purpose**

- To represent the views of all residents within the town.

#### **Secondary purpose**

- As a member of the town council, to have responsibility for running local services including open spaces, play areas, public conveniences, grass cutting, allotments and potentially much more.
- To decide on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver the town council's services.
- To influence and shape the long-term development policy for the town, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the town.
- To improve the quality of life and the environment in the local area.

- To identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent.
- To bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

### Am I eligible to be a Town Councillor?

To stand for election on a town or parish council, you must:

- be a UK or commonwealth citizen, or;
- be a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or;
- be a citizen of another Member state of the European Union;
- be a least 18 years old.

To be eligible to stand for an election for a particular town / parish, you must:

- be an elector of the town / parish, or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the town / parish, or;
- during the previous 12 months have worked in the town / parish (as your principal or only place of work), or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months lived in the town / parish or within three miles of the town / parish boundary.

You do not have to be connected to a political party.

If you do become a town / parish councillor, you will have to sign up to the Code of Conduct.

### Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Over 21 and on the electoral register	Y	
A resident of the town / parish for which you are standing (although there are certain exceptions)	Y	
Able to attend regular evening meetings	Y	
Interest in local issues and things which affect people.	Y	
Keen to improve the local environment and quality of life.		Y
An understanding and willingness to represent the views of the whole community.	Y	
An interest in learning and developing your role in the community		Y

### How long does a town / parish councillor serve for?

Once elected, town / parish councillors sit on the council for a maximum of four years. If they then want to stay in the post, they can stand for re-election.

## **What decisions do Town / Parish Councils make? / What powers do Town / Parish Councils have?**

Town / parish councils make decisions on a range of issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that town / parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

Whilst town / parish councils may have limited powers to make decisions on their own, they do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence, those other organisations that do make the final decisions (such as the district and county councils, health authorities, police etc).

In this respect town / parish councils are quite powerful. The organisations that make the final decisions know that a town / parish council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something, and its views will be taken seriously.

As town / parish councils are the authority closest to the people, they are often the first place people will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason, they are a vital part of the community. Residents can bring to the attention of the town / parish council anything that concerns them, either directly or through the clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the clerk can bring them to the attention of the correct authority.

The powers that town / parish councils have are essentially related to local matters, such as open spaces, play areas, public conveniences, grass cutting and allotments. Town / parish councils also have the power to raise money through taxation, the precept. The precept is the town / parish council's share of the council tax. The precept demand goes to the billing authority, the district council, which collects the tax for the town / parish council.

## **What is Stokesley Town Council?**

Stokesley Town Council is the local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the town of Stokesley. It is the level of government closest to the community, with the district authority (Hambleton District Council) and the county authority (North Yorkshire County Council) above it in the hierarchy.

## **How much time does it take up?**

Stokesley Town Council has 11 councillors and meets once a month for the council meeting. All meetings are advertised on the council notice boards. These meetings consider planning applications and any other matters referred to it by local residents, Hambleton District Council and North Yorkshire County Council and by central government. All meetings are open to the public and there is a forum before the start of the meeting at which members of the public can raise concerns and ask questions. Meetings typically last two to three hours, depending on the agenda set for the meeting to discuss.

There is also an annual meeting which all parishioners are invited to attend.

Additionally, the Town Council has several committees, smaller groups of councillors, to deal with specific subjects, such as planning, employment and open spaces which meet on an adhoc basis.

Stokesley Town Councillors are also trustees for the Stokesley Town Hall Trust and Stokesley Manorial Lands Trust, which are both registered charities.

## **Support and training**

Training and advice for town / parish councillors is provided by the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA).