



Elections for seats on Burton Latimer Town Council take place every four years. The next election will be in May 2015.

It's time to think about who you want to represent your views and work on your behalf for the benefit of our community.

Ideally, a councillor needs to be:

*Patient, persistent,
practical, committed,
collaborative, analytical
and...*

THICK-SKINNED!

If this sounds like **YOU**, then read on to find out more...

Are you interested in making Burton Latimer a better place to live and work?

Do you want to represent local people's views?

Are you passionate about the services provided in our community?

Could you use your skills and influence to make a difference?

About Burton Latimer Town Council

Burton Latimer Town Council is one of 9,000 local councils across England that form the lowest tier of government. The council's chief aim is to make the lives of the people in our town better, and our councillors' task is to give the local community a voice and the means to achieve this.

The 12 councillors on our town council share an overall responsibility for the well-being of our local neighbourhood. Their work falls into three main categories:

- **Representing** the local community
- **Influencing** the delivery of effective services to meet local needs
- **Striving** to improve the quality of life in the local area

Our town council is Burton Latimer's best chance of having a local voice and being able to express it to those who have influence over our lives – including Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council.

The full council holds evening meetings in public once a month. At other times, residents can make contact with councillors over individual issues by phone or email, or face-to-face (for instance at Burton Latimer's monthly farmers market).

Key areas of interest:

Housing	The local environment	Business & employment
Traffic & transport	Safety & crime prevention	Engaging young people
Education	Leisure & recreation	Amenities & services

What does a Burton Latimer town councillor do?

Our local councillors represent the electors in Burton Latimer Ward. They give their time freely as volunteers, and have three main areas of work:

- **Decision-making:** Councillors set an annual budget, and then – by attending meetings and committees with other elected members – decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
- **Monitoring:** Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
- **Getting involved locally:** Councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. Each councillor's contribution depends on their area of interest, their experience and expertise, what they want to achieve, and how much time they can realistically offer.

As well as meeting together every month, our town councillors also serve on committees and working groups, and they can also represent the council on various local organisations. Some councillors are able to fit in more of this work than others.

For most meetings, there will be papers to read beforehand – but otherwise, much of the council work is done by 'phone or email.

10 often-heard reasons for NOT joining a town council

I'm not a member of a political party

That's OK – you can sit as an independent member of the council if you prefer.

I'm not interested in politics

That's OK too! What matters more is that you are bothered about where you live or work, and have the best interests of local people at heart.

I don't think the council is very effective

Well maybe you could do a better job! A few new faces on the council could make a big difference – but that will only happen if enough people put themselves forward. Otherwise, it's highly likely that any existing councillors who wish to continue (whether you think they are effective or not) will be re-appointed automatically.

I'm too busy, and couldn't commit to attending every single meeting

That's an understandable concern – but it's important to know what's involved before you dismiss the idea. Time spent on town council-related work varies, but two hours a week (on average) over the year is probably the minimum you need to be able to offer. Missing the occasional meeting is acceptable, as long as it doesn't happen too often!

I can't afford it

Being a councillor should cost you very little. Authorised expenses incurred on council business are reimbursed.

I haven't lived here very long and don't know the area well

That's ideal! As a new resident you will see the town through clear eyes and bring to the council fresh enthusiasm and new ideas to enhance our community.

I don't know anything about the council or how it works

Join the club! Newly-elected councillors rarely have much knowledge of council work – but this will come in time, along with experience and confidence. Help, advice and training are also available – but a care for your community and a willingness to learn are the main things you need.

I'll look a fool because I won't know what's going on

Don't worry – you will be eased in gently! The clerk is the officer of the council, and he will be able to explain the rules.

I'm worried that I won't get many votes, and look silly

There may not even be a vote! If there are fewer candidates than vacancies, then you will be appointed automatically. But even if you fail to get in this time, you may have an opportunity to be co-opted to the council if a vacancy occurs in the future.

I prefer to leave this political stuff to others

Fair enough – but if you're content to sit on the sidelines, is it fair to criticize the efforts of those who step up to the plate on your behalf?

Practicalities

Eligibility

Any person over the age of 18 who is a citizen of the United Kingdom, The European Community, or the Commonwealth can be a Burton Latimer councillor – as long as they are an elector in, work in, or live in (or within three miles of) the town.

Anyone can stand for election providing they are eligible. If you are interested in standing as a candidate for a political party, you should first get in touch with the local organisation of that party. Many national parties have websites which provide information.

If you wish to stand for election as an independent candidate, you will need to follow the procedure outlined in the nomination pack available at each election.

Nominations

Nomination packs are available from Kettering Borough Council's Electoral Services Office at the start of the formal election period.

To be nominated, you will need a 'proposer' to put your name forward as a candidate, and a 'seconder' to back up the proposer. Both of these people must be registered electors of the Burton Latimer Ward.

You must also complete a 'consent to nomination' form – which needs to reach Kettering Borough Council by no later than 4pm on Thursday 9th April 2015.

What next?

If you are thinking of becoming a candidate for the town council election in May 2015, the Electoral Services Manager at Kettering Borough Council has information on what you need to do to be nominated, along with guidance on election procedures.

Where to find out more

Speak to any of the town's councillors

You can find their contact details on the Burton Latimer website:
www.burtonlatimer.org

Speak to the clerk to the Town Council

Phone George Sneddon on 07732 331946, or email: georgesneddon@talktalk.net

Speak to Kettering Borough Council's Electoral Services Manager

Phone Ian White on 01536 534200, or email ianwhite@kettering.gov.uk

Visit the Kettering Borough Council website

More information about how local councils work, the councillor's role and local council elections can be found on KBC's website: www.kettering.gov.uk