

BENEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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LOCAL ELECTIONS 6th MAY 2021

Parish and town councils normally have ordinary elections every four years. In fact, in Northamptonshire polls have been delayed by not one, but two years, with the first delay due to LGR (Local Government Organisation) and the second due to Coronavirus.

In Northamptonshire this year there will be three elections: for Unitary Council, for Parish and Town Councils, and for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Parish and town councils are democratic public bodies. As a councillor representing your community you will help keep it a great place to live and work. You will be supported in your role and may be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team.

Benefield Parish Council currently meets on a Monday evening usually every 6 weeks, with the exception of August when there is no meeting. If you care about your community and would like to help make a real difference then why not consider becoming a Parish Councillor.

Election Process and Timetable

The key date is **4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021**. That's the deadline by which nomination papers must be delivered. 4:01pm is too late; your nomination will not be accepted, even if there was a traffic jam or the bus was late! The parish and town elections are administered by the relevant principal council, so that's where the nomination papers must be delivered to. This year, the election will be called near the end of March by the borough and district councils, but nomination papers will be delivered to the new unitary councils. In practice, papers will be delivered to the same location and the same officers as if there had been no change in council. **Further instructions for delivering nomination papers will be issued in due course. Nomination papers must be delivered in a very narrow window; from the date the election is called (29 March 2021, tbc) and the close of nominations at 4pm on 8 April 2021. Not only is this a very narrow window anyway, but it is also the Easter holidays, with 2 April 2021 being Good Friday and 5 April 2021 being Easter Monday. Therefore, candidates will only have 5 days to hand their nomination papers in. It is each candidate's responsibility to ensure safe delivery of a valid nomination.**

The Boroughs and District Councils will issue nomination papers, sending them out to the Clerks. However, interested candidates or existing councillors who may wish to get a copy of papers sooner than that can download them directly from the Electoral Commission website:

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<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england> where there is also lots of information and resources for candidates at parish and town council elections.

Detailed information about the role of a parish councillor and guidance on standing for election can also be found on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) website.

Once nominations close the process is driven by the unitary councils. The day after the close of nominations North Northamptonshire Council will publish either a Notice of Uncontested Election (where there is no contest) or a Statement of Persons Nominated (where there is a contested election). The poll (i.e. vote) for a contested election is on Thursday 6 May 2021.

When the polling stations close (10pm on 6 May 2021) the ballot papers will be counted. It is yet to be finally confirmed, but our understanding is that the count for the parish and town council elections is likely to take place on Saturday 8 May 2021. **Monday 10 May 2021 is the day on which the newly elected councillors legally take office, being four days from the day of the poll.**

29 th March 2021 Tbc	Notice of election published and emailed out to Parish Clerks. This will be published on the website, noticeboards and Facebook. The Clerk will also email existing councillors or those showing interest in becoming a councillor.
30 th March 2021	Nominations are accepted from Monday 30th March and close at 4pm on 8th April 2021. Nominations will be accepted between 10am and 4pm. Forms <u>must</u> be delivered by hand to the relevant Returning Officer by the candidate or a trusted person but best done in person. Usually, candidates can make an appointment if they wish for an informal checking process prior to submission. If there are any errors, they would have to go back to resubmit. Due to Coronavirus, the elections officers might be able to offer to check nomination papers remotely (candidates send the papers in advance by email attachment), however, we are waiting for confirmation of this. Proposers need to live in Weldon District. Can be anyone, even a relative.

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	<p>If you wish to withdraw your nomination, you have to do this before last day of nominations 8th April.</p> <p>NOMINATION FORM: Template forms will be emailed to Clerks. Candidates can use all 4 qualifications if they apply. Form needs to be witnessed, doesn't have to be seconder.</p>
8th April 2021	Nominations close
	<p>WHO CAN STAND FOR ELECTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to be at least 18 years old • Be a British citizen or an eligible Commonwealth citizen • Registered local government electors • Those whose main or only place of work is in the parish area for the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election • Owners or tenants who occupy any land or other premises in the parish area for the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election • Living in the parish area or within three miles of it
	<p>WHO CANNOT STAND FOR ELECTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid employees or officers of the parish council • Those subject to bankruptcy restrictions or debt relief restrictions order (or interim orders) • Those sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including suspended sentences) without the option of a fine, with a period of five years before polling day (7 May 2015) • Those disqualified under the Representations of the People Act 1983, covering corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations.
9 th April 2021	Statement of Persons Nominated or Notice of Uncontested Election. This is sent to the Clerk of the Parish Council who will notify the candidates, put the information on the website and Facebook page.
19th April 2021	Deadline for receiving applications for registration
20th April 2021	Deadline for receiving new postal vote and postal proxy applications, and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes
27 th April 2021	Deadline for receiving new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy or emergency proxies)
27th April 2021	Notice of Poll published

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	<p>IF THE ELECTION IS UNCONTESTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement of Persons Nominated published• No election is held• Casual vacancies advertised for remaining councillors <p>IF THE ELECTION IS CONTESTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement of Persons Nominated published• Election held on polling day• Votes counted on 6 May 2021• Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed at or before first meeting after date of poll.
6 May 2021	Polling day and verification of ballot papers. Polls open at 7.00am and close at 22.00pm
8th May 2021 tbc	Town and parish election count
10th May 2021	The day on which the newly elected councillors legally take office.