

# Presteigne and Norton Town Council



## Information for Candidates applying for Co-option

**Tracey Price, PSLCC, CiLCA (Wales)  
Town Clerk  
Garn Farm  
Chapel Lawn  
Bucknell  
Shropshire  
SY7 0BT**

**01547 528575**

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**Introduction**

Occasionally the Town Council may have a vacancy arising from a Member resignation, retirement or failure to attend for 6 consecutive months. This vacancy will be advertised as a statutory requirement to allow a resident of the particular ward to obtain 10 signatures to call a formal election. If this does not happen the Council may then proceed to co-opt to fill the vacancy.

This document is designed to give an outline of Presteigne and Norton Town Council and its activities so that candidates can decide if they wish to be considered for co-option.

### **1. Standing for Co-Option**

Applications will be invited for co-option and will be voted on via ballot at the next Full Council meeting following the closing date. Applicants should provide a short statement (no more than 300 words) on their reasons for standing, their experience and what they can bring to the Council.

Co-option notices will be publicised on the Town Council website, social media, on noticeboards and through the press.

To be able to stand for election you must meet criteria which are listed below. You must complete a form to declare formally that you are eligible.

- Being registered as a local government elector for the area of the community.
- Having during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day or those days occupied as owner or tenant the following land or other premises in the community.
- Your principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in that community.
- During the whole of the last 12 months you have resided in the community area or within 4.8 kilometres of it.

You will also need to declare that to the best of your knowledge and belief you are not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in, or decision made under, section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 78A or 79 of the Local Government Act. A special form is produced for the purpose of confirming your eligibility.

If you wish to gain more information in advance about the Town Council you can contact the Town Clerk who can help or speak to an existing Councillor.

The successful candidate will then be contacted with the offer of co-option and following acceptance will receive an information pack and be offered an Induction Session with the Town Clerk.

### **2. The Town Council**

Presteigne and Norton Town Council is divided into an area of 2 wards – Presteigne Town Ward and Norton Ward.

### **3. Responsibilities**

The Town Council is responsible for many areas of activity including the following:

- a) Went's Meadow Inc. the Community Barn

- b) Wilson Terrace Toilets
- c) 2 public toilets (Wilson Terrace is TC owned; Hereford Street still run on licence)
- d) 36 small allotment plots
- e) Went's Meadow Inc. skateboard area and outdoor gym.
- f) Eddie's Meadow.
- g) Former Reservoir Land.
- h) Tennis Court and MUGA and Wilson Terrace Field.
- i) Scout Hut (land only) leased to Scouts.
- j) Defibrillators and cabinets.
- k) Part fund PCC Library Service.
- l) Provide Grants/donations of around £9000 per year.
- m) Comment on planning applications and related matters such as the production of the LDP.
- n) Liaise with PCC on issues in our area - highways, footpaths, street lighting, car parking
- o) Respond to Consultations (Welsh Government, PCC and others)
- p) Dog Bag Dispensers sited around Presteigne.
- q) War Memorial – Assists with Refurbishment & maintenance.
- r) Christmas Lighting.
- s) Website – Town Council Pages at [www.presteigne.org.uk](http://www.presteigne.org.uk)

#### **What isn't the TC!**

- highways
- pavements
- street cleaning
- rights of way
- refuse
- Wilson Terrace Play Area (although we do work to get new equipment on site)
- Street lighting
- grass cutting of verges
- car parking (on and off street)
- Housing
- Environmental Health (noise, food hygiene, licensing etc)

#### **4. Authority**

The only person or bodies which can make decisions on Council matters are:

1. The Full Council
2. A Committee with authority given to it by the Full Council
3. The Town Clerk (within the Law and the agreed delegated limits)

No individual Councillor has any authority to make a decision on their own nor may any individual Councillor commit the Council to any expenditure.

## **5. Councillors**

The Council has 13 Councillors as follows:

Presteigne Town Ward	9
Norton Ward	4

## **6. Council Meetings**

The Full Council Meeting has an agenda which is set by the Town Clerk. Any Member may ask for an item to be considered for adding to the agenda providing sufficient notice is given (at least one week before a meeting).

All Councillors are summoned to attend meetings under the Local Government Act 1972 and permitted to vote at Full Council meetings. Full Council meetings are held once a month.

## **7. Committee Meetings**

The Council has a number of Standing Committees which deal with Council matters and they are:

1. Sites and Buildings Committee
2. Staffing Committee

The Council also has a number of Working Groups set up to research projects and report back to Full Council.

Councillors will be elected to all standing committees at the Annual Meeting held in May of each year. The appointment to a Committee is for 12 months.

## **8. Committee responsibilities and authority**

The Town Council Standing Committees have remits as set out in the Committee Terms of Reference (available on request.)

## **9. Training for Councillors**

There is training available for Councillors and from May 2022 it will be necessary for the Council to draw up training plans for its Members. There are free brief training modules available via the One Voice Wales website and some paid training is available during the year. A budget is set annually for members training.

## **10. Voting**

Only those Members present at a meeting may cast a vote.

## **11. Policies and Procedures**

The Council works to approved policies and procedures which have been adopted and are reviewed regularly. Please contact the Clerk if you wish to receive copies of these before applying for co-option or visit the Town Council pages of the Town website.

## **12. How does the Council run?**

The Council is a statutory body and has to adhere to the various statutes. On a more local basis it has a set of Standing Orders, financial regulations and policies under which it operates.

In the Standing Orders matters which are compulsory are in bold type.

The Agenda must reach Members three clear days before a meeting (excluding weekends and bank holidays). This is to allow you to raise questions, request more information, speak to residents etc as necessary. In practice this means your agenda goes out on a Thursday for our Weds meetings. Standing Orders tell you what items are considered able to be added once the agenda has gone out. These are minor in nature - small payments for example. Otherwise a matter must wait for the following meeting or in urgent matters an additional meeting can be called. The Agenda is determined by me as Clerk but please let me know if you would like an item added (at the latest a week before the meeting please).

Committees and Sub-Committees may have representative from outside the TC but in general these representatives cannot vote. Meetings will have a formal agenda; Minutes will be produced and the public may attend. Can be delegated to make decisions but all TC are advisory only.

Working Groups: Informal. No formal agenda or Minutes although notes will often be written. Cannot make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Chairman runs the meetings and in the event of a tie in voting has a casting vote which he/she can (but is not obliged to) use.

A meeting must be quorate to take decisions. This is three or one third whichever is fewer so for PNTC it is five.

## **13. Money Matters!**

The Council must set a budget each year by law. This is done in January for the following financial year (April-March).

Following the budget setting a 'precept' demand is sent to PCC and the money is collected as part of Council Tax Bills. It is paid to the TC in 3 instalments - 30th April, 30th Sept and 31st December.

New Project ideas can be put forward at any time during the year but are formally asked for at the December meeting. An estimate of costs is very helpful at this point. A decision will be taken together with the remainder of the budget at the January meeting.

Reserves - Audit guidelines are for the equivalent of 3-12 months annual budget to be held as general reserves.

Allocated reserves are held separately to this amount and cover - periodic inspections of the xmas light fixings, long term projects such as the toilets.

#### **14. Meeting schedule**

The general meeting schedule of the Council is as follows:

Full Council meetings are held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. In August only essential matters are dealt with and the meeting is followed by an annual town walk.

Most meetings are held in the Assembly Rooms and commence at 7.30pm. The May meeting is held in the Judge's Lodgings. Following changes to legislation in May, 2021 meetings can also be held through video conferencing either alone or combined with a face to face meeting. Face to face meetings alone are no longer permitted by law.

#### **15. Outside bodies**

The Town Council also appoints Councillors each year to outside bodies such as the Primary School and various community groups.

#### **16. Induction**

The Town Clerk will arrange for a full pack of papers to be given to you if you are successful in being co-opted. You will also be given the option to meet with the Clerk to get a brief overview of the Council and ask any questions you may have. A new Member will need to sign the Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct Declarations.

#### **17. Annual Council Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Council is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of May each year at this meeting the new Chair (Mayor) and Vice Chair (Deputy Mayor) will be elected

## **18. Publicity**

The general official voice of the Council to the media is the Chair of the Council, aided by the Town Clerk. They may only express views in the press which have been so expressed by the Council and are in line with Council approved policy.

## **19. Website/Social Media**

The Town Council operates specific pages within the town website – [www.presteigne.org.uk](http://www.presteigne.org.uk) which is updated regularly. It also runs a facebook page administered and monitored by the Clerk. Members are asked to be mindful of their position when using their own social media accounts and to refer to the Council's Social Media policy for further information.

## **20. Updates**

The Councillors receive regular emails and updates from the Clerk. Please note this is not an opportunity to open an email debate on the subject matter but please do ask questions or request further information from the Clerk if necessary.

Councillors are also welcome to contact the Town Clerk for updates on ongoing matters or to discuss any ideas they would like to take forward.

## **21. Summary**

There is an expected commitment from all members to

- attend regular meetings
- participate fully
- represent the Town Council at meetings and events
- assist with the day to day running of the Town Council, its services and properties

**Please take some time to read this document to understand the role of a Town Councillor and consider what you can offer to this important role.**