

## **Be a champion for your community**

The clock is ticking down on the deadline for candidates to come forward if they want to stand for election in Somerset in May.

There are around nine weeks to go before nominations close for those interested in standing as one of Somerset's community champions at county or local level.

These are crucial elections for Somerset with the creation of a new, unitary council in April 2023 – the first major change to the way the county is governed in almost 50 years. New councillors will build a new and very different kind of local government, that will shape the county for decades.

New councillors will have more power to drive the changes people want, whether standing for their county, or more locally in city, town, and parish council elections.

Councillors are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. They can make sure that decisions being made meet the needs of the people of Somerset. They will be the voice of their community helping to shape and direct local services. People from all walks of life can bring something special to their council, whether it's at a county level or hyper-local.

City, town, and parish councils will – if they wish – play a bigger part in making sure that Somerset's services are the best they can be. More powers will be devolved, and grass roots councils will be given the chance to take on greater responsibilities.

Nominations can be submitted to the appropriate District Council office from 22 March and close at 4pm on 5 April for the elections taking place on 5 May at county, city, town, and parish council levels. For the county, 110 councillors will be elected who will serve a five-year term.

For their first year, the councillors will take responsibility for all current County Council services and oversee the local government reorganisation to establish a single unitary council on 1 April 2023.

District councils will remain until 31 March 2023 and the councillors serving on them will continue in their roles until that date.

From 1 April 2023, the 110 councillors of the unitary council will be responsible for services that are currently delivered by the county and four district councils, ranging from adults and children's social care to highways and housing, and from libraries to planning and licensing.

City, town, and parish council elections also take place on 5 May, offering the chance for people to stand up for their community right at the grass roots. They too will serve a five-year term.

If you are interested in standing for election, at county or city, town, and parish level you can find out more here:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/elections/>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor>

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections>

**ENDS**

**Note to editors**

Elections for Somerset County Council had been scheduled for May 2021 but were postponed for a year by the Government while consultations took place on unitary authority proposals.

Key dates:

- Notice of election published – 21 March 2022
- Nominations accepted from – 22 March
- Deadline for candidates' nominations – 5 April 2022
- Statement of persons nominated published – 6 April 2022
- Deadline to register to vote – 14 April
- Close of postal vote applications – 19 April 2022
- Polling Day – Thursday 5 May 2022
- Count of votes and declarations of results for 110 councillors – 6 May 2022