



ROSS-ON-WYE TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Election Special

ISSUE 17

Local government elections - 4th May 2023

Voter ID at polling stations

Herefordshire's next scheduled elections will take place on Thursday 4 May 2023, where all 53 district wards and 133 parish/town councils will hold elections for new members.

These elections will be the first time that voter ID will be required to be shown by all voters at a polling station. This has been introduced under the Elections Act 2022.

The deadline to register to vote is midnight on 17 April. Voters can apply online at gov.uk/register-to-vote. It takes just five minutes.

Voters have a range of options – they can vote in person, by post or by appointing someone they trust to vote in their place, known as a proxy vote. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on 18 April. The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is a week later, 5pm on 25 April.

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station from May 2023.

This will apply at:

- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- Local government elections in England

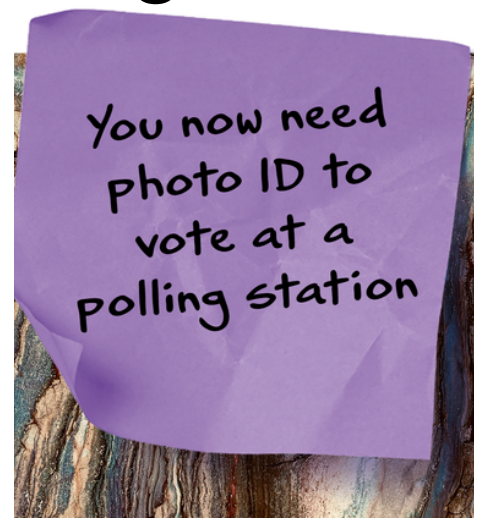
This will affect all voters across Herefordshire who vote in person or by proxy, at the next local government elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

What you need to bring with you on Thursday 4 May 2023

Voters must bring an acceptable form of photo ID to their polling station. Some of the most commonly used ID include:

- Passport – must be issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country
- Photo driver's licence (including provisional) – must be issued by the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- European Economic Area (EEA) photographic ID Card
- UK Biometric Residence Permit
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (PASS card)
- Defence identity card (Ministry of Defence Form 90)
- Blue Badge
- Oyster 60+ Card
- A concessionary travel pass funded by HM Government or local authority. For example, Herefordshire Council Bus Pass, Disabled Person's Bus Pass

If you have a form of acceptable photo ID but it is out of date, you can still use it to vote at a polling station if it still looks like you.



You will only need to show **ONE** form of photo ID, but it has to look like you and be the original version and not a photocopy.

See the full list of acceptable ID here:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id

If you don't have any acceptable form of photo ID

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or you're not sure whether your photo ID still looks like you, you can apply for a free **Voter Authority Certificate**.

If you need any help with applying for a Voter Authority Certificate or want to request a paper application form, email canvass@herefordshire.gov.uk

Voters who do not produce a Voter Authority Certificate, or a form of acceptable photo ID will not be allowed to vote on polling day.

Become a parish councillor

To stand for election to become a parish councillor you must be:

- At least 18 years old on the day of your nomination, and
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union

You must also meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards
- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area
- You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Further information about the role of a parish councillor and guidance on standing for election can be found on the Herefordshire Council website:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/parish-councils-1/parish-councils/4

More details can also be found on page 2 of this newsletter



Why you should become a Councillor

WHAT ARE LOCAL COUNCILS?

Local council is a universal term for community, village, neighbourhood, parish and town councils. They are the first tier of local government and are statutory bodies. They serve communities and are elected by residents. They can raise their own precept (a form of council tax). There are 10,000 local councils in England and 120,000 councillors who serve on these local councils.

WHAT DO LOCAL COUNCILS DO?

Your local council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of your local community. Their work falls into three main categories:

Delivery of services including:

- allotments
- leisure facilities
- bus shelters
- litter bins
- car parks
- local illuminations
- community centres
- parks and open spaces
- public toilets
- street lighting
- festivals and celebrations



Improve quality of life through:

- Local housing and infrastructure through neighbourhood plans
- Promoting dementia friendly communities
- Tackling loneliness
- Acting as community hubs
- Funding community projects and vital services that have been cut

Give communities a voice through representing:

- To the local police and health services
- On planning matters with principal authorities and developers
- To parliamentarians and government



COULD I BECOME A LOCAL COUNCILLOR?

As a local councillor you can become a voice for your community and make a real change. Local councillors are community leaders and should represent the interests of the communities they serve. Local councillors have to be residents of the area their local council serves, making them the most local part of the democratic system and closest to the community.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

The National Association of Local Councils' local councillor census survey said that councillors spend on average about three hours a week on council work. Obviously there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a local councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

DO LOCAL COUNCILLORS GET PAID?

Working as a local councillor is a completely voluntary role. However, local councils do have the power to pay allowances to councillors, subject to approval from the local council.

HOW DO I CONTACT MY LOCAL COUNCILLOR?

To find out who your local councillors for Ross-on-Wye Town Council visit: www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk

I'M INTERESTED, WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Most people are qualified to stand for their local council but there are a few rules. You have to be:

- A British citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth, or the European Union
- 18 years of age or older
- Live in an area that is served by a local council

You cannot stand for election if you:

- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order
- Have within five years before the day of the election, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a prison sentence (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine
- Work for the council you want to become a councillor for.

There are specific rules around candidacy. The full range of disqualifications for candidates is quite complex and some exceptions may apply. You should refer to the website of the Electoral Commission for full details: www.electoralcommission.org.uk

What do local Councillors do?

Local councillors have three main areas of work:

- **Decision-making:** through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors 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:** as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available. The day-to-day work of a councillor may include:
 - going to meetings of local organisations and community groups
 - going to meetings of bodies that affect the wider community, such as the police, the Highways Authority, schools and colleges
 - Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public, such as making representations to the principal authority
 - running a surgery for residents to bring up issues
 - meeting with individual residents in their own homes

Information via the National Association of Local Councils. For more information on becoming a local councillor visit: www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/800-all-about-local-councils/file

About Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Ross-on-Wye Town Council was established in 1974 following the introduction of the Local Government Act 1972, it underwent further changes in 2015 after a boundary review resulted in its amalgamation with Ross Rural Parish Council.

It is comprised of eighteen councillors representing the town's three wards: North, East and West. Town Councillors are supported by officers based at the Corn Exchange, High Street, Ross-on-Wye.

Ross-on-Wye Town Council provides and maintains a number of local services.

Tourism and Community Engagement are important to the Town Council. It is proactive in promoting and encouraging tourism to the town and provides and allocates grants to local people for the benefit of the town.

The Town Council runs the town's regular Thursday and Saturday markets which take place under the Market House and on the Market Apron.

Find out more about Ross-on-Wye Town Council by visiting www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk