

Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Standing for Council in the Local Government Elections

General Information for Candidates

Q1. When is the next Local Government election?	A	Election Day is Saturday 8 October 2022. The elections are by postal vote and voting closes at midday on that day. The voting period starts on Friday 16 September 2022.
Q2. When do nominations open?	A	Nominations for people who wish to stand for Council open on Friday 15 July 2022 and close at 12 noon on Friday 12 August 2022.
Q3. Where do I get a nomination form from?	A	<p>Nomination forms are available from Council's electoral officer or deputy electoral officer from 15 July 2022 until Friday 12 August 2022 at midday. Forms can be downloaded from Council's web site, or from the Council offices and Ashburton Public Library.</p> <p>Your nominators must fill the form in. You must agree to being nominated and will also need to sign the form.</p> <p>Nominations must be lodged with the electoral officer or deputy electoral officer / electoral official at the Council.</p> <p>Do not leave lodgement until the last day because if there any problems with the details provided there might be insufficient time to resolve them and you could miss out.</p>
Q4. When is the campaign period?	A	Election campaigning can start at any time and continue up to and including election day. Election signage must be removed by midnight on Sunday 9 October (day after election day).
Q5. What qualifications and experience do I need to be a candidate?	A	You must be a New Zealand citizen and be a parliamentary elector anywhere in New Zealand.

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You don't need any formal qualifications. Elected members come from all walks of life and generally have a desire to serve their community.

Other requirements:

- You are nominated by two electors in the area you are standing for.
- You or your spouse/partner must not have concerns or interests in contracts over \$25,000 with the Council.
- If you are an employee of the Council you must resign before taking up your position as an elected member. The rules of some councils may require you to take leave for campaigning prior to the election.

Q6. Do I need to be resident in the city, district or region I am standing for?

A No. You don't need to reside in the district, ward or community board area that you are standing for but you must be on the Parliamentary electoral roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and provide proof that you are a New Zealand citizen.

Q7. What is the role of a councillor?

A Councillors in Ashburton will:

- Participate in strategic and long-term planning for the whole district;
- Participate in setting a budget and rates;
- Develop policy across a wide range of activities and services;
- Review and develop bylaws for the district
- Advocate on a wide range of issues;
- Co-ordinate and form partnerships with other spheres of government and other agencies;
- Represent the district at functions as required;

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- Participate in the appointment and performance review of the Chief Executive Officer;
- Act on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework.

Q8. How much will it cost me to stand?

A You will need to pay a nomination deposit of \$200 GST inclusive for each election you stand for.

The funds must be deposited with the electoral officer at the same time your nomination is submitted. It is recommended you pay the nomination deposit by online/internet banking (or EFTPOS or cash) noting that cheques are no longer accepted. Evidence of online transactions must be provided at the time nomination documents are submitted – i.e. a printout of the receipt.

For Ashburton District Council if you poll greater than 25% of the lowest polling successful candidate you will receive your nomination deposit back.

Q9. How many people do I need to nominate me?

A You need two people to nominate you.

Q10. Who is able to nominate me?

A A nominator must be on the electoral roll for the area for which you are standing (i.e. district, ward, community board). Use the link to the ward boundary maps (*refer Q11*) to check the two electors nominating you are in the area you are standing for.

Q11. Where can I see my ward boundary?

A Click on the [Ashburton District ward boundary maps](#) for the Ashburton District Council, Methven Community Board and Braided Rivers Community Trust elections.

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Using the online maps you can zoom in and out on the boundaries. Alternatively, to check which ward you are in, simply enter your property address. The ward, and (if applicable) community board and community trust areas in which your property is located will be displayed.

Q12. *When I stand for election, can I be affiliated with an organisation or group?*

A Yes, if you belong to a political party or other group, you may want to identify with them. However, you don't have to have any affiliations. If this is your situation, you can identify as 'independent' or leave the space blank when you fill out your nomination form.

If you do have a specific affiliation, the electoral officer may require a letter of consent from the party, organisation or group giving its consent for you to use the affiliation.

Q13. *What is a candidate profile statement?*

A You are asked to provide a candidate profile statement when you lodge your nomination along with a recent passport size colour photograph.

The candidate profile is a statement of up to 150 words containing information about yourself and your policies and intentions if elected to office. The profile statement will be included in the voting packs that all electors receive.

If your candidate statement is submitted in Maori and English, the information contained in each language must be substantially consistent with the information contained in the other language. Each language has to be within a 150 word limit.

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Your profile statement must be true and accurate.

The Electoral Officer is not required to verify or investigate any information included in your statement.

In addition, your candidate profile statement must state whether or not your principal place of residence is in the area you are seeking election (this is not part of the 150 word limit).

See section 61 of the [Local Electoral Act 2001](#) for more information.

Q14. How long is the term of an elected member?

A Three years.

Q15. Is the role I want to stand for full-time or part-time?

A For Ashburton District Council the role is part-time.

Q16. How much will I get paid?

A Pay and allowances are determined by the Government's Remuneration Authority. The pay rates for elected members vary according to population size and other factors.

Click on the link to the [Local Government Members \(2022/23\) Determination](#) which sets out the remuneration for all councils, effective from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Q17. What local government positions am I able to run for?

A You can choose to stand for election for any position in a city council, district council or regional council. In Ashburton you are able to run for mayor, councillor, or community board member.

If you choose to stand for more than one position there are some restrictions and rules:

- You cannot stand for both the district council and a regional council.
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- Where a council has both an 'at large' and wards system of representation, you cannot stand as a councillor for both positions. In Ashburton the Mayor is elected by the district at large, and councillors are elected to each of three wards.
- You cannot stand as a councillor for more than one ward or constituency in a council.

But

- You can stand for councillor and also for a member of the community board (but if elected to both positions, you must choose one).
- You can stand for both mayor and councillor.

Q18. Do I need to be on the Māori electoral roll or of Māori descent if I am standing for election in a Māori Ward or Constituency?

A No. To be eligible you must be a New Zealand citizen and your name must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand).
Currently, there are no Māori wards or constituencies in Ashburton.

Q19. Can I withdraw my nomination as a candidate?

A Only if it is withdrawn before the close of nominations. If you decide to opt out after the close of nominations, your name will still appear on the voting document.
If you become incapacitated with serious illness or injury and unlikely to be able to perform the functions or duties if elected to office, you can apply to withdraw on those grounds. You will need verification from a doctor and lawyer about your situation. See your electoral officer if you need more information about this process.

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- Q20. Does a criminal record affect a person standing as a council candidate?** **A** No, not at all for city, district, and regional council elections. For more information contact the Electoral Officer, Anthony Morton
P +64 3 377 3530 | **F** +64 3 377 1474 | **M** 021 326 021
E amorton@electionz.com | **W** www.electionz.com
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- Q21. What does 'at large', 'ward' and 'constituency' mean?** **A** If you are standing 'at large', then you are standing for the whole council area rather than from its wards. Ashburton District Council has three wards, so candidates putting themselves forward for councillor are standing for one of those wards.
If you plan to stand for a regional council, the term 'constituency' is used rather than 'ward'.
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- Q22. How many offices can I stand for?** **A** In the Ashburton district you can stand for mayor, ward councillor and community board member. However, if elected to more than one position, you will take up the highest ranked position.
You cannot stand for both a regional council and one of its constituent district or city councils or a community board.
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- Q23. I am a serving police officer. Can I stand for council and continue to work as a police officer?** **A** Yes. There are no longer any restrictions on police officers standing for local authority elections, apart from the normal eligibility criteria.
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- Q24. Can I raise campaign funds from donations to offset electoral expenses?** **A** Yes, you can raise funds from donations to offset your campaign expenses. There is very specific legislation about donations and expenses which you need to abide by.
Further information is provided in the Ashburton District Council Candidate Handbook.
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Q25. How much can I spend on my campaign?

A If you stand for more than one position, the amount you can spend is the highest amount for one position. You cannot add positions together to allow you to spend more than the limit.

Candidate expenditure limits for Ashburton District Council are:

Mayor	\$20,000 (incl GST)
Ashburton Ward	\$20,000 (incl GST)
Eastern Ward	\$ 7,000 (incl GST)
Western Ward	\$ 7,000 (incl GST)
Methven Community Board	\$3,500 (incl GST)

All candidates are required to lodge an electoral donations and expenses return within 55 days after the day on which the successful candidates are declared to be elected (public notice of final results). If a candidate is outside NZ on this day, the return must be filed within 76 days after election result day. If this is not done, the non-return will be advised to the NZ Police. This return needs to be made before a candidate nomination deposit is refunded (if applicable).

Q26. Can people already elected onto council use council resources to campaign?

A No. Current council members are not permitted to use council resources for their campaigns as this is considered an advantage at ratepayers' expense.

Q27. Are there any rules about using social media?

A Yes. Councils have policies or guidelines for web and social media use related to campaigning. They do not permit social media pages to be used by anyone (candidates or members of the public) for electioneering or campaigning in the three months before election day.

Council officers will monitor ADC's website and take down any campaign related posts.

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Q28. What does 'authorisation of advertising' mean?

A Election advertising, using any media, must identify either you or your agent. The publication of any advertisements (in any newspaper, periodical, notice, poster, pamphlet, handbill, billboard or card, or broadcast over radio or television) for candidates requires the written authorisation of you or your agent.

The advertisement must contain a statement setting out you or your agent's true name, or at whose discretion, it is published and the street address (not a PO box) of their residence or business. This applies during your entire campaign

Note: *The **Local Electoral (Advertising) Amendment Bill**, currently before the Justice Committee, would amend the Local Electoral Act to address concerns around candidate safety by loosening the requirement that candidates attach either their residential or business address to electoral advertising, allowing email addresses, PO box or phone numbers, or links to an internet page to be used instead. Candidate information will be updated when the outcome of this Bill is known.*

Q29. Where and when can I put up election signs?

A Election signs are permitted on private property (with the owner's consent) at any time. The sign must be erected in a stable fashion, not be a hazard to the public or to traffic safety, and must comply with the council's district plan and bylaws.

For State Highways, signs must meet Waka Kotahi/NZTA for any signage.

In the Ashburton District, election signs are not permitted on council property or road reserves.

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Q30. Can I view the electoral roll?

- A** Yes, the electoral roll for the Ashburton District will be open for public inspection at the following locations from 15 July 2022 to 12 August 2022
- Ashburton District Council offices
 - Ashburton Public Library
 - Methven i-Hub (Mt Hutt Memorial Hall)
 - Rakaia Mobil
 - Hinds Store
 - Mayfield

Q31. Can I help people vote or collect their voting documents to send in?

- A** No. Candidates or their assistants should not collect voting documents from electors. Each elector should post their own voting document, or deliver it to the Deputy Electoral Officer at the Council office. Ballot boxes will be available at the Council office and the Ashburton Public Library during the voting period.
- It is an offence (carrying a fine of up to \$5,000 if convicted) to interfere in any way with an elector with the intention of influencing or advising the elector as to how he or she should vote. Candidates and their assistants should be mindful of this, particularly if campaigning occurs in facilities such as rest homes or hospitals.

Q32. When will election results be known?

- A** Voting closes at midday on Saturday 8 October. Progress and preliminary results will be announced as soon as possible after 12 noon on Saturday 8 October 2022.
- The official results will be announced when the final count is complete and special votes have been checked which will be between 13 October 2022 –19 October 2022.
- All results will be posted on Council's website.

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Q33. How will I find out?

Candidates

A Will be advised as soon as possible after progress and preliminary results are known. This may be by email or phone.

The Voters

A Progress and preliminary results will be released to the media and placed on Council's website as soon as possible after noon on Saturday 8 October 2022.

Q34. What do I need to do if I want to challenge the results of the election?

A Contact the Electoral Officer, Anthony Morton
P +64 3 377 3530 | **F** +64 3 377 1474 | **M** 021 326 021
E amorton@electionz.com | **W** www.electionz.com

Q35. When do elected members take up their roles?

A Elected members take up office the day after the official result has been declared by public notice. However, they cannot act until they have sworn the oath of office which is usually at the first meeting of council. This first meeting is usually held as soon as practicable after the final election results are known.

Q36. Who are elected members responsible to?

A Ultimately the elected members' final responsibility is to the local community. The Minister of Local Government and the Auditor-General do have a role in ensuring that councils follow the law.

Q37. Do elected members get paid and if so how much?

A This is set by the Remuneration Authority. Some expenses are also reimbursed.

Click on the links to see the [Local Government Members \(2022/23\) Determination 2022](#) and Council's [Elected Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy](#)

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Q38. *Would being an elected member take up much time?*

A The time commitment varies depending on the role and the size of the local authority/community you are representing. Ashburton District Council meetings are generally on the first and third Wednesday's each month, typically starting at 1pm and lasting 4-5 hours. In addition to the council meetings there are a range of committee meetings and workshops that councillors would be expected to attend. Methven Community Board meetings are held on Mondays, generally on a six weekly basis, at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall. Meetings typically start at 10.30am and last around two hours. All meeting agendas are distributed at least 2-3 working days before the meeting and elected members are expected to have read and made necessary investigative work to understand all agenda items ahead of the meeting. Depending on the complexity of the agenda items, that can be a time-consuming task. Click on the link to see Council's current [meeting calendar](#)

Q39. *How many elected members are there?*

A Ashburton District Council has 10 elected members, including the Mayor. The Methven Community Board has 5 elected members. The Board elects its Chair and Deputy Chair at the first meeting.

Q40. *I have a complaint about electoral signage? e.g. signs don't have the required authorisation on them, have been pulled over, are bigger than they should be, what locations can signs be erected, when can they be erected and when must they be pulled down?*

A Contact Council's Customer Services Team who will refer questions to the Deputy Electoral Officer or Electoral Official. Further information about Council's rules on election signs can be found in the Candidate Handbook.