

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

General Information for Candidates

Q1. <i>When is the next Local Government election?</i>	A	Election Day is Saturday 11 October 2025 . The elections are by <u>postal vote</u> and voting closes at midday on that day. Voting papers delivered from Tuesday 9 to Monday 22 September. The voting period starts from 9 September.
Q2. <i>Who is running the election for Ashburton District Council?</i>	A	electionz.com 3/3 Pukaki Road, Yaldhurst, Christchurch 8042 P +64 3 377 3530
Q3. <i>What is the name of the Electoral Officer / Deputy Electoral Officer for the Ashburton District Council</i>	A	Anthony Morton (Electoral Officer) P +64 3 377 3530 M 021 326 021 E amorton@electionz.com W www.electionz.com Phillipa Clark (Deputy Electoral Officer) P +64 3 307 7774 M 027 418 0410 E Phillipa.Clark@adc.govt.nz
Q4. <i>When do nominations open?</i>	A	Nominations for people who wish to stand in these elections open on Friday 4 July 2025 and close at 12 noon on Friday 1 August 2025.
Q5. <i>Where do I get a nomination form from?</i>	A	Nomination forms are available from Council's electoral officer or deputy electoral officer from mid June 2025 until Friday 1 August 2025 at midday. Forms can be downloaded from Council's web site, or obtained from Customer Services at the Council office, Te Whare Whakatare.

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Your nominators must fill the form in. You must agree to being nominated and will also need to sign the form.

Nominations must be lodged with the electoral officer or deputy electoral officer / electoral official at the Council **no later than noon on Friday 1 August**.

Do not leave lodgement until the last day because if there are any problems with the details provided there might be insufficient time to resolve them and you could miss out.

Q6. When is the campaign period?

A Election campaigning can start at any time and continue up to 12 noon on election day.

For Council elections, signs may not be displayed before Friday 11 July (3 months before election day) and must be removed by midnight on Sunday 12 October.

Q7. How do I balance having a public presence with personal safety during my campaign?

A This can be challenging. Being a candidate in local government elections means stepping into the public eye and with that comes increased scrutiny – it may also raise the risk of abuse or harassment. Some proactive steps candidates can take include –

- Use campaign-specific social media accounts
- Set up a dedicated campaign email address or phone number
- Be aware of your surroundings when attending public events
- Consider your responses in difficult situations

The Candidate Handbook has links to useful resources – page 21.

Q8. 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.

Q9. 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.

Q10. 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). Evidence of online transactions must be provided at the time nomination documents are submitted – i.e. a printout of the receipt.

Should an online banking transaction be dishonoured or declined, the nomination becomes invalid. If this occurs after the close of nominations, then the nomination is invalid and the candidate will be withdrawn.

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

Q11. How many people do I need to nominate me?

A You need two people to nominate you.

Q12. 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 or community trust). Use the link to the ward boundary maps (*refer Q14*) to check the two electors nominating you are in the area you are standing for.

Q13. 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.

Q14. Where can I see my ward boundary?

A On Council's web site, click on the [Ashburton District ward boundary maps](#) for the Ashburton District Council, Methven Community Board and Braided Rivers Community Trust elections. 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.

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Q15. 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.
- 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.

Q16. 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.

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Q17. 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 Māori 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.

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.

Q18. 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;

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- Co-ordinate and form partnerships with other spheres of government and other agencies;
- Represent the district at functions as required;
- Participate in the appointment and performance review of the Chief Executive Officer;
- Act on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework.

Q19. How long is the term of an elected member?

A Three years.

Q20. Is the role I want to stand for full-time or part-time?

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

Q21. Do elected members 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 links to see the [Local Government Members Determination 2024-25](#) which sets out the remuneration for all councils, effective from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, and the [Elected Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy](#).

Q22. How do I know whether I am enrolled?

A You can check your enrolment status on www.vote.nz. or phone the Electoral Commission on 0800 36 76 56

The Electoral Commission undertake a roll update campaign for the Parliamentary Electoral Roll which forms the basis of our roll for the local authority election.

Q23. I am a student and spend my time in different places. Where should I enrol?

A You should enrol where you spend the greater part of your time.

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Q24. 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).

A number of local authorities established Māori wards or constituencies for at least the 2022 and 2025 elections. Ashburton District Council has not resolved to introduce a Māori Ward for the 2025 triennial election.

If you are a Māori and enrolling for the first time, you choose whether to be on the Māori roll or the general roll. You can choose to change the roll you're on for this year's local elections until midnight 10 July.

Q25. 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

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Q26. 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'.

Q27. 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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Q28. 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.

Q29. 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).

Q30. 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 (appendix 3).

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Q31. 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.

Q32. Are there any rules about using social media?

A Yes. Council has guidelines for web and social media use related to campaigning. This information is set out in detail on page 26 of the ADC Candidate Handbook.

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

Q33. Are there other sites where I can promote my campaign?

A Yes, as part of the 'Vote 25' campaign, **Policy.nz** is partnering with Local Government NZ with the aim of being a comprehensive source of information where voters can learn about and compare candidates in their local election.

Participation is free and optional. To find out more, email candidates@policy.nz

Candidate videos – for this election Ashburton District Council is providing Council candidates with the opportunity to be filmed answering a small range of election-related questions. All Council candidates will be contacted after nominations close, offered the opportunity to participate, and provided with the questions to be asked. The videos will be made available from Council's website along with the candidate's profile statement and photo (if they have been provided).

To learn more, refer to page 22 of the Candidate Handbook.

Q34. What does 'authorisation of advertising' mean?

A Election advertising, using any media, including social media, must identify either you or your agent. This means that for posters, adverts, signs, billboards, flyers, vehicle signage, websites, Facebook pages etc, each advertising item must include a statement that it is authorised by the candidate (or

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agent), i.e. "Authorised by Joe Citizen, 20 Main St, Tinseltown."
This authorisation must be clearly visible on any campaigning material including signs and billboards.

The Local Electoral Act was amended in 2022 to allow the **address** requirements of an advertisement authorisation statement to be met by providing –

- a) a residential or business address; or*
- b) An email address; or*
- c) A post office box number; or*
- d) A phone number; or*
- e) A link to a page on an internet site, if the page contains 1 or more of a) to e) above.*

This applies during your entire campaign.

Q35. Where and when can I put up election signs?

A For Council elections, signs may not be displayed for more than 3 months prior to election day (i.e. Friday 11 July 2025). The Electoral Officer will make a candidate aware of any campaign material that doesn't have appropriate authorisation.

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.

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

NB Election signs are not permitted on Council reserves, streets or other Council administered property sites available for the siting of signs. This includes land owned by Council but leased to other organisations.

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Q36. 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 on page 27 of the Candidate Handbook.

Q37. 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 Friday 4 July 2025 to noon on Friday 1 August 2025

- Te Whare Whakare / Ashburton District Council (Customer Services and Library) – 2 Baring Sq East, Ashburton
- Café Mayfield, 1992 Arundel Rakaia Gorge Rd, Mayfield
- Methven i-Hub, 160 Main Street, Methven
- Rakaia Mobil – 50 Bridge Street, Rakaia

Q38. Where will people send their completed voting papers?

A

The elections are by postal vote and voting closes at midday on Friday 4 August.

Completed voting papers can be mailed back to the Returning Officer in the postage paid return envelope provided with voting documents.

Completed voting papers can also be dropped into the orange ballot bins that will be specially provided for this election.

The ballot bins will be placed at the following locations from Tuesday 9 September until noon on Friday 4 August:

- Te Whare Whakare / Ashburton District Council (Customer Services and Library) – 2 Baring Sq East, Ashburton
- EA Networks Centre – 20 River Terrace, Ashburton
- FreshChoice Tinwald – 124 McMurdo Street, Tinwald
- Methven Four Square – 33/37 McMillan Street, Methven
- Rakaia Mobil – 50 Bridge Street, Rakaia

Voting papers will be delivered from Tuesday 9 to Monday 22 September. The voting period starts from 9 September.

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Q39. 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.

Q40. When will election results be known?

A **Voting closes at midday on Saturday 11 October.** Progress and preliminary results will be announced as soon as possible after 12 noon on Saturday 11 October 2025.

The official results will be announced when the final count is complete and special votes have been checked which will be approximately 16 – 19 October 2025.

All results will be posted on Council's website.

Q41. 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 11 October 2025.

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Q42. <i>What do I need to do if I want to challenge the results of the election?</i>	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
Q43. <i>When do elected members take up their roles?</i>	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.
Q44. <i>Who are elected members responsible to?</i>	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.
Q45. <i>Would being an elected member take up much time?</i>	A	<p>The time commitment varies depending on the role and the size of the local authority/community you are representing.</p> <p>Ashburton District Council meetings are generally on the first and third Wednesday's each month, typically starting at 1pm and lasting 3-4 hours. In addition to the council meetings there are a range of committee meetings and workshops that councillors would be expected to attend.</p> <p>Methven Community Board meetings are held on Mondays, generally on a six weekly basis, at the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall. Meetings typically start at 9am and last around 1.5 – 2 hours.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Click here to see Council's 2025 meeting calendar</p>

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Q46. 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.

For further information, please contact

Phillipa Clark (Deputy Electoral Officer)

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