



Eligibility Paper for High Sheriffs

1. With the aim of complying with legislation and reducing anomalies, the Privy Council Office keeps under review eligibility to serve as High Sheriff. The Privy Council Office has reviewed recently the categories of person **ineligible** to be nominated as High Sheriff. These are:
 - 1.1. Members of the House of Lords;
 - 1.2. Members of the House of Commons, European Parliament or Welsh Assembly;
 - 1.3. Full-time members of the Judiciary, including Tribunal judges; and
 - 1.4. Officers of the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force on full pay.
2. The Privy Council Office emphasises, in compliance with the Sheriffs Act 1887, that
 - 2.1. anyone who is nominated must own property within the County, or at least have a beneficial interest in property in the County (eg being a substantial shareholder in a landowning company), coupled with a strong connection with the County (Section 4);
 - 2.2. the same person should not be chosen twice in three years (Section 5); and
 - 2.3. Justices of the Peace should not serve in that capacity during their year in office as High Sheriff for that County (Section 17).
3. The Privy Council Office further advises that:
 - 3.1. persons nominated should be of unblemished public reputation and should remain so up to and including the time their names may be pricked by Her Majesty; the Privy Council Office consults Lord-Lieutenants about the continuing suitability of candidates at a later stage in the process, so it is prudent and customary to consult the Lord-Lieutenant about the names of proposed candidates before such candidates are approached and before submitting those names.
 - 3.2. people should not be nominated without their consent being obtained first;
 - 3.3. persons nominated should have played a prominent part in the life of the County, e.g. in voluntary and charitable activities; people who are virtually unknown in the County, or who spend very little time there, should not be nominated;
 - 3.4. the High Sheriff should be seen to represent a County as a whole, and nominations should be made from a broad social and geographic range;
 - 3.5. persons whose interests within the County may conflict with their obligation to represent the whole County and to support the Judiciary impartially should not be put forward. This particularly applies to any person who may be involved in controversial matters within the County in the run up to appointment or during the year of office.



- 3.6. the nomination of solicitors and barristers should be carefully considered. Those who would still be in practice carrying out work in or affecting their county during their term of office or during the few years leading up to such term are only likely to be acceptable if such work is non-contentious and there is clearly no conflict of interest with the High Sheriff's position relating to the work. In cases of uncertainty the Privy Council Office or the High Sheriffs' Association should be consulted for guidance.
- 3.7. there is no statutory bar to a High Sheriff taking an active role in local or national politics. Clearly however this could detract from his or her role as representing the county as a whole. It is therefore expected that anyone nominated who is so active should agree to stand down from local or national politics for at least six months to one year leading up to and during their term of appointment as High Sheriff.
- 3.8. previous perceived ineligibility or exemption from serving as High Sheriffs by nominees over the age of 70 years or by ordained clergy no longer pertains, although clergy so invited should consult their Bishop or other superior before accepting nomination;
- 3.9. members of the fee paid (or part time) judiciary including those on Tribunals should not sit in judicial office during their year in office; it is also expected that anyone who sits as a 'non legal member' on any Tribunal which is part of HM Courts and Tribunal Service should either relinquish that duty while serving as High Sheriff or confine their adjudication to areas outside their shrievalty.
- 3.10. if a person's name has been previously struck off the Roll, that name should not be re-submitted unless it is certain that the circumstances which led to its removal have changed.