

## **Frequently Asked Questions about being a local Councillor.**

On Thursday, May 4, elections will take place to appoint thousands of local councillors across the country and, in Windermere & Bowness, all 20 seats on Windermere & Bowness Town Council become vacant - something which only happens once every four years.

Windermere & Bowness Town Council is encouraging people to consider standing as a local Councillor. Are you passionate about our community and wish to get involved in local initiatives. Perhaps you still have questions about the role. Below are some frequently asked questions and their answers.

### **How old do I need to be?**

The minimum age is 18. Younger people are very much under-represented on councils across the country, so the parish council would encourage people of any age to consider standing for election.

### **Do I need any qualifications?**

No. All you need is an interest in what is going on in your local area. Common sense, enthusiasm and a reasonable knowledge of the area would prove useful, however.

You do need to be a British citizen or a citizen of the Commonwealth, or the European Union. Also to work within the boundary of Windermere & Bowness Town Council and live in within 4.8km of the boundary.

### **I work full time, can I still stand?**

Yes. Many councillors successfully undertake their duties alongside a full-time job. Full council meetings are always on a Wednesday evening (one each month).

### **Do I have to be linked to a political party?**

No. Windermere & Bowness Town Council is not political. You stand in your own right as an individual and there is no need to have any political views or affiliation whatsoever.

### **Will I get paid?**

No. The role as a parish or town councillor is unpaid.

### **How much time would it take up?**

Being a councillor will take up some of your spare time. You will need to attend some meetings of the council and find time to read the associated paperwork. There is one full council meeting each month at 7pm on a Wednesday which usually last for about 2 hours. You can choose for yourself what other aspects of the council's work you wish to become involved in and how much time you spend overall. You will need to find time to speak with the people you represent when they have an issue they wish to discuss, and there will also be emails to read.

### **Would I need to attend any meetings?**

Yes. Councillors are required by law to attend meetings unless they have a valid reason for not being there (illness, work commitments, holidays etc). On average you will need to attend one evening meetings each month.

### **Do I need to wear a suit to meetings?**

No, our councillors dress informally for meetings.

### **What training and support is there?**

Councillors can receive free training and support via CALC (the Cumbria Association of Local Councils). The clerk is available by phone, email or in person to support councillors and the other council members are a friendly and helpful group, keen to make new members feel welcome.

### **How do I become a councillor?**

You need to contact the clerk, Sally Parkyn, by email or phone to arrange to collect an election pack. Tel 07476967581 or email [clerk@windermere-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@windermere-tc.gov.uk). She is happy to advise on filling in the forms, is available to check them for accuracy and will even hand deliver them Kendal Town Hall provided they are returned to her by 4pm Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Please note the final deadline for completed nomination papers to be returned by hand to The Returning Officer, Kendal Town Hall is 4pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### **Do I need to carry out an election campaign?**

Probably not. At the moment, our council has twenty seats of which eight are vacant. Unless we have more than twenty nominations the elections will be uncontested and the nominees will be elected automatically.

### **Who do I ask if my question isn't answered here?**

Please contact the clerk, Sally Parkyn, by email or phone for more information. Tel 07476967581 or email [clerk@windermere-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@windermere-tc.gov.uk)