

Dumfries and Galloway

Community Council

Elections!

Candidates Information Pack and Nomination Form 2019

Further information is available as follows:

Dumfries and Galloway Council website:
www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils

Email: Community.Councils@dumgal.gov.uk

Telephone: 030 33 33 3000

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in standing as a Community Councillor in the forthcoming Community Council Elections across Dumfries and Galloway.

This Information Pack has been designed to provide you with some useful information about what a Community Council is, the role of a Community Councillor as well as the necessary nomination form and guidance to allow you to submit your nomination.

Community Councils are voluntary organisations set up by statute and are run by local people to represent their communities. As the most local tier of elected representation in Scotland, Community Councils play a key role in local decision-making by advising, influencing and advocating on behalf of their local communities.

Community Councils should encourage and facilitate consultation with their local community to listen to and act on the views of local people and should aim to establish effective working relationships with the Public Authorities and wider organisations.

As well as representing the views of their communities to the local authority and other public sector organisations, Community Councils facilitate a wide range of activities which promote the interests and wellbeing of their local area by bringing together local people to make things happen.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to ensuring that our local people and communities are at the heart of our decision-making and we are keen to work closely with Community Councils to make our communities better places to live.

As you will see training and support is available to assist all Community Councillors and it is not usually a huge time commitment. This is a real opportunity for you to make a contribution to your local community.

Therefore, we would encourage you to submit your nomination form and become more involved in your local community council.

Kirsty Peden

Community Engagement Manager



Dumfries and Galloway

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Community Council Role Description

Community Council Purpose

The statutory purpose of a Community Council is set out in Section 51 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

"In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to be expedient and practicable".

What does a Community Council do?

Community Councils act as a voice for their local area. This will involve them articulating the views and concerns of local people in their area on a wide range of public issues including planning and licencing applications and making representations to their local authority, other public sector bodies and private agencies.

It is important that the views expressed are representative of the community. Accordingly, the Community Council will have in place recognised consultative mechanisms and aim to secure greater involvement by all sectors of their community. It is for this reason that the Community Councils are also non-political in nature.

All Community Council meetings are open to the public and the media and residents are encouraged to attend the meetings.

Essential Requirements

A Community Councillor must:

- be at least 16 years old
- live within the Community Council area
- be registered to vote in that area
- not be elected as a member of Dumfries and Galloway Council or the Scottish, UK or European Parliaments

In carrying out their activities, Community Councils must at all times adhere to the law, the terms of the Amended Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and agree to follow the Community Councillors' Code of Conduct.



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Role of a Community Councillor

A Community Councillor is someone who:

- Regularly attends meetings of the Community Council to debate community issues, set priorities and collectively agrees or votes on actions that are in the interests of the community
- Is committed to and involved in their community and is aware of the issues that are important in their community
- Participates in Community Engagement to determine the views of the local community and puts forward those views - not their own or other specific groups
- Wants to make their community a better place to live, learn and work.

Skills

Although no specific skills are required to be a Community Councillor, it is recognised that a wide range of skills and expertise exists across all Community Councils such as being a good listener, having a keen interest in local issues and the commitment to effectively engaging with and representing the views of the local community.

Induction training will be made available to all Community Councillors to enable them to fulfil their role.

The three Office Bearer roles required within the Community Council - Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer - may require additional skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Specific training and support is available, if required, for individuals who may want to undertake these roles.

Time Commitment

Community Councils meet on a regular basis, usually monthly or bi-monthly. The minimum number of meetings required is six per year and this includes an Annual General Meeting. Meetings usually take place on a week day, during the evening time and usually follow a set agenda.

Meetings can last from two hours onwards as sometimes a guest speaker/local public sector representative may be present to discuss in more detail a topic relevant to Community Council business.

There may also be additional time required to carry out community engagement events and also to progress community issues or specific projects.

Expenses

There is no payment for being a Community Councillor but out of pocket expenses incurred while carrying out the duties are available. This would be subject to prior approval of the Community Council.

Further Information

To learn more about Community Councils or becoming a Community Councillor further information is available at:

Dumfries and Galloway website - www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils

Scottish Government website - www.communitycouncils.scot



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