

Be a Councillor

Stand for what you believe in



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Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ambitious, effective and proud to serve

Introduction

This guide explains how to become a councillor and what this important role is really about.

We hope it will encourage you and people from all walks of life to take an interest in local democracy and to think about putting yourself forward for election.

More detailed and specific information can be obtained from the Democratic Services department at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and from the various contacts listed at the back of this publication.

What do Councils do?

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council provides local services to people living, working or visiting our area. The Borough is made up of smaller areas known as 'wards'.

There are different types of council: unitary, metropolitan and London boroughs, which are responsible for all local services; and county councils and district councils –where responsibilities are shared between them. In general terms, elected councillors make the decisions that guide the council and paid council staff carry these out, according to laws and guidelines.

Councils work in partnership with other local organisations such as health, fire and rescue and police authorities. Councillors make sure that these organisations work together to meet the needs of local people.

Some areas also have parish and town councils, with delegated responsibility for some local services. They are often involved in managing parks and playing fields, planning, promoting tourism, licensing or providing community halls and the management of town and village centres.

What do Councillors do?

People are elected as councillors to represent everyone in their area – not just those who voted for them – and to serve the council as a whole. There is often more than one councillor for each council ward. Councillors represent their wards by meeting people who live or work there and work to resolve local issues, problems and concerns.

This is often achieved by working with council staff or people from other organisations who may have expertise or knowledge concerning the matter in hand.

Councillors serve the council as a whole by taking an overview and making decisions on wider issues and opportunities affecting the area covered by the council and sometimes the wider regional area.

Some councillors take on responsibility for leading local policy on such things as planning, education, waste collection and so on.

Bob Cook

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grandfather | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enjoys going to the cinema |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Boro season ticket holder | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Councillor |

Being a school governor and on the management committee of a local law centre, I was always interested in working in the community. I decided to try and get elected onto the Council so I could help ensure services required by the residents of the Borough were delivered. I am very proud to be a local Councillor and the best part of the role is being able to help people in the community.

Since 2011, I have had the privilege of being the Leader of the Council.

It is a very demanding role with tough decisions to be made and like all Councillors and I am determined to continue working to bring positive changes to the Borough in spite of the current financial challenges.

Last year I also took on responsibility for being the Council's 'Armed Forces Champion'. This involves ensuring we fulfil our commitments to the armed forces community, recognising their service and sacrifice, and working to resolve key issues affecting them.

I would advise anyone considering becoming a Councillor to think carefully about the commitment involved. If you want to make a difference and are prepared to work hard to make it happen, then I would say definitely go for it!



Gillian Corr

School Governor

Walks with my dog

Enjoys listening to music

Local Councillor

I first got involved in local politics to try and make my community the best place it can be for everyone living there, including working hard to get vital local amenities and infrastructure progressed.

Before becoming a Ward Councillor, I served as a Town Councillor for eight years, (two as chair), which helped prepare me for the role. I am also a school governor and find it thoroughly rewarding to play a part in helping to ensure our children can thrive as they grow up.

I am passionate about where I live and felt that becoming a Councillor was a great way to speak up on behalf of our community. I sit on many committees making sure the residents I represent get heard.

Being a Councillor can sometimes involve long hours, so you need to be flexible to maintain your work-life balance. Having said that, it is a very rewarding role which makes you feel proud about helping your community.

If you want to help your community and are willing to be their voice, then find out more about becoming a Councillor.



Paul Rowling

Sports fan

Loves long walks with his dog

Enjoys travel

Local Councillor

Having the chance to represent your local area makes being a Councillor incredibly rewarding. As well as speaking up for your Ward, you are also making decisions for Borough as a whole and I have found it a fantastic opportunity to work with so many dedicated people to try and make a difference.

During my time as a Councillor I've sat on a number of committees and this has helped me understand how much hard work goes into delivering Council services. As one of the younger Councillors, it's no surprise that I've taken a particular interest in issues that affect young people. My highlight has been supporting our brilliant looked-after children, whose incredible achievements are an inspiration to us all.

Away from Council duties, I love to watch sport (I'm a Boro season ticket holder), travel and take my dog, Sparky, on long walks.

In the years before being a Councillor I had so many opinions on local issues that I decided to put my name forward to be a candidate and I'd encourage anybody who wants to make a positive difference to seriously consider getting involved. It's a fantastic opportunity to give something back and help local people.



Norma Stephenson (OBE)

Grandmother

Enjoys keeping fit

Trade Unionist

Local Councillor

As a mother, grandmother and active trade unionist I have always been interested in improving people's lives and being a Councillor helps me to play a meaningful role in achieving that goal.

I have been a Councillor since 2011 and have had the privilege of representing the residents of my Ward both on the Council and 'outside bodies' such as The Police and Crime Panel and Tees Valley Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee.

I have achieved many goals since being elected, however there is still so much left to be done. The work of a Councillor takes up a lot of time and commitment but the positive results of the many hours of hard work can be really satisfying.

If like me, you care passionately about your area and community and are willing to commit the time and effort, then I would encourage you to discover more about becoming a Councillor.



Lisa Grainge

Passionate about travel

Working mum

Boro season ticket holder

Local Councillor

I had always cared about helping others in my community. Before I became a Councillor I was a school governor, involved in charity work, and helping others as a trade union representative (whilst working in the local Tesco). These roles gave me an ideal insight into how I could try to help others and influence change for local residents.

I was inspired and encouraged by others to stand for election in 2015 and am proud to be a local Councillor helping people in the area I was brought up in.

Juggling the demanding role of a Councillor with being a single mother and working full time can be very challenging. I believe I've been able to help improve the quality of life for residents in the Borough making all the hard work and effort worthwhile.

I am delighted to be part of a successful Council; we've been a Council of the Year finalist several times, including most recently in 2017/18, and like most Councils we face some big challenges and difficult decisions, but our successful track record provides great confidence for the future! So if you are up for a challenge, you should consider becoming a Councillor.



Jim Beall

(Great) Grandfather

Boro season ticket holder

Enjoys live music and comedy

Local Councillor



People from all walks of life can become a Councillor. My route followed more than 30 years working in local government, mostly in social care - from a care assistant to social worker and eventually quite senior management. I'm Stockton born and bred and have brought up a family here - but many other people come here and make it their home.

Becoming a Councillor in 2007 seemed a natural progression to use that knowledge and experience in the governance of the Council. I care about people and have always spoken up for those who have been disadvantaged by their circumstances. Being a Councillor gives me the opportunity to continue to advocate for, and protect, disadvantaged people especially in the context of funding reductions. I'm still as passionate about public service and helping people as I was when I first started working.

I am also privileged to have the additional responsibilities as the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Leader of the Council, which allow me to further influence what we do as a Council to help our most vulnerable residents.

All Councillors play a vital frontline role contributing to the lives of those they represent. The one thing we all have in common is a passionate desire to make our communities better through dedication and hard work. Although there can be frustrations, making those positive changes motivates and rewards us all. I can recommend it to those who are willing to make the commitment.

Lauriane Povey

Student

Children's Author

Enjoys swimming and music

Local Councillor

In May 2015, I became one of the Borough's youngest ever Councillors when I was elected to represent Billingham North Ward. I enjoy my role as a Councillor, talking to local people and helping them with their issues is very rewarding. You can be very busy at times, but the work is varied so no day is the same.

The role can be challenging, having to make difficult decisions about the Council's budget whilst maintaining quality frontline services. It is also fantastic to be part of developing Borough-wide plans to provide a better place for everyone to live now, and in the future.

In 2017 I was appointed to the roles of Assistant Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Vice-Chair for Adult Social Care and Health scrutiny committee. I am continuing to improve my knowledge in these areas, and have also worked on other important issues such as problem gambling and work to reduce deaths from cardiac arrest in public places.

I believe that younger people have a lot to offer the community and the Council. That's why I would encourage young people, aged over 18 and interested in making a difference, to find out more about becoming a Councillor.



Stefan Houghton

Loves family trips out

Home improvements

Enjoys various sports

Local Councillor

I became engaged in local politics when a controversial building project was suggested for my local area. By helping to form a pressure group, which gained support from local people, I believe the community rallied together to contribute towards a successful outcome.

Through the group's activities I met many great people and gained a valuable understanding about achieving meaningful results through diligence and working well with others. This experience was an important step in my journey to being elected.

Since becoming a Councillor, I've been able to help residents more effectively and promote causes with greater effect. The role is not easy as the ward is large, casework can build up, there are meetings to attend and there is a never ending 'to do' list.

Nevertheless, being a Councillor is a huge privilege and I am proud to represent my community. If you are willing to commit the time and effort to make your area better, being a Councillor is a great and highly rewarding way of doing it.



Can I be a Councillor?

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a councillor. You can be a councillor for more than one council – such as your district or borough council and your parish/town council.

You are able to be a councillor if you:

- are 18 years of age or over
- are British, or if you are a citizen of a member country of the European Union or the Commonwealth
- and are either registered to vote with your local council

or

- have either lived (or worked) in the council's area for one year
- have been an owner or tenant in the council's area for one year.

What do I do now?

The majority of people that become councillors do so through a political party that they may feel a natural affinity with; however, some people choose to be independent of any formal political group.

We have listed the main contacts below to help you find out more.

- Conservative Councillors' Association, www.conservativecouncillors.com
- Association of Labour Councillors, www.labour.org.uk
- Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors, www.bealibdemcouncillor.org.uk
- LGA Independent Group Office, www.lgaindependent.local.gov.uk
- General information about becoming a councillor, www.beacouncillor.org

Contact details for Democratic Services at Stockton Borough Council



Democratic Services, P.O. Box 11, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD.



01642 526185



democraticservices@stockton.gov.uk



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