

Being a Community Councillor

Being a community councillor means you have shared responsibility for the success of the Community Council, even if you are not an office bearer. You must commit to the role and uphold the standards and values of the Community Council. All members should contribute to discussions and decisions concerning the work of the Community Council.

What are the roles in a Community Council?

There are various ways in which you can play your part in your Community Council. Each community council must have a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. In Shetland, unlike some other areas of Scotland, a Community Council Clerk undertakes secretarial and financial administration. All members of the community council are equally responsible for the Community Council's decision and actions, governance and finance ensuring that everything is done according to the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils. All members are responsible for representing their community objectively and conscientiously.

Some specific roles within a Community Council are described below, followed by an outline of other potential roles that may be useful from time to time.

Chairperson

The chairperson can make a massive difference to the success of a community council. Meetings are key to the Community Council making decisions on what its priorities are and what work it has to do. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that discussions are productive and run on-time, and that clear action points are set.

Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson steps up to the Chairperson role when the Chairperson is unavailable.

Community Council Clerk

The Clerk is a paid role, which provides a range of support, administrative and financial services to the Community Council (from contract for Yell CC, 2014). This includes preparing agendas and minutes for meetings; ensuring correspondence is read/acted upon; maintaining records; preparing monthly and annual accounts; preparing payments and grants; liaising with the public, organisations and agencies as directed by the Community Council and ensuring effective communication between Community Council members.

Members

All members contribute to the success of a Community Council, through participating in decision making and undertaking extra work for the Community Council from time to time. Members must be over 18.

Co-opted Members

As above for Members.

Additional Co-opted Members

Additional Co-opted Members do not have voting rights, but make valuable contributions to discussion, enabling the Community Council to make informed decisions. They can be co-opted to provide advice on a specific topic or challenge. Minimum recommended age is 12 years.

Ex Officio Members

Ex Officio Members are the Local Authority Elected Members for the Community council area. They do not have voting rights but may contribute to discussion and may be tasked with furthering items relating to the local authority.

Other roles

Community councils might want to consider if there is a need to create a specific role in response to an area/project that needs a lot of attention. E.g. The community council may wish to create the post of Engagement Officer where there is a need to reach out to a specific group that is under-represented (e.g. young people, ethnic minorities or disabled people).

Examples of other roles that could be created to support the work of community councils are:

Publicity Officer

Fundraising Officer

Assets Management Officer

Communications Officer

Events Officer

Your involvement

You do not have to take on a specific role to be involved in your community council. All members play an important part by thinking creatively about what they can do together to improve the lives of local citizens. If you do take on a role, then you do not need to feel restricted to only doing this – the main role of the group is to support each other and work together to make things happen for the benefit of the Community.