



Who stands for
the council?

It's people like you...



Shetland
Islands
Council

**It could be your
neighbour, the
person who
serves you in
your local shop,
or it could be
you.**

Contents

The politics of change	4
About us	5
How we work	6
Our vision	7
Our values	7
Customer First	7
The role of a councillor	8
Main tasks	9
Standing for election	10
FAQs	12
Will there be any training?	13
What other support is there to help me?	13
Will it take up a lot of time?	13
Can I be a councillor and have a job?	14
How much will I get paid?	15
How long would I be a councillor for?	15
Are there rules on standards and ethics?	15
How can I find out more?	16
Useful links	17

The politics of change



What a time to be involved in politics! We said that in our last handbook for the 2017 election, and the same stands true today.

At the end of last year, a new US President was elected and, earlier this year, we had the Scottish Parliamentary Election, again returning a minority SNP government. All of this happened in the context of a major worldwide challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic. Now in the midst of the current [energy and cost of living crisis](#), the UK is also still dealing with its exit from the European Union and a new UK Prime Minister has just been appointed.

Three years ago, in 2018, the Islands Bill received Royal Assent, becoming an Act of the Scottish Parliament. It was hailed as a landmark achievement for the councils in Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles and was described as “enabling legislation” that paves the way for measures that allow a further devolution of powers for island communities, enables ‘island proofing’ of existing as well as future policies and legislation, ensuring these take into account the special circumstances of island communities.

Those island proofing measures came into force in December 2020 and mean that an Island Communities Impact Assessment must be carried out as an early part of the development of any new strategy, policy or service development, as well as the review of any existing one.

You may also wish to take a look at the [National Islands Plan](#), introduced by the Scottish Government in 2019, along with the [annual report 2020](#), the first of the reports that reviews progress on delivering the outcomes set out in the plan.

Becoming a councillor means you can make a real difference to Shetland and drive change for everyone in our community.

About us

Shetland Islands Council is responsible for providing a wide range of public services, including education, social care, roads, housing, rubbish collection and planning. As a councillor, you would have a key role to play in making important decisions that affect all of us in Shetland in one way or another.

How we work

This council is made up of 23 elected members from [seven wards](#) – three four-member wards, three three-member wards and one two-member ward.

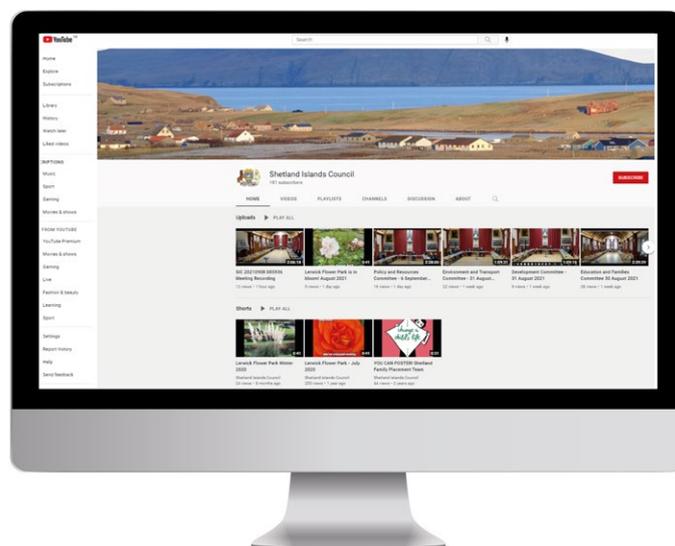
There is currently no ruling political party in our council so we're classed as independent.

Our business is conducted through a number of committees. We have [recorded](#) our council and some of our main committee meetings so they can be watched again. Meetings of the principal committees of the Council are [webcast live](#), allowing the public to watch the debate on any desktop or mobile device.

[Shetland Health and Social Care Partnership](#) is a statutory body, which joins together certain health and social care services managed by the council and NHS Shetland. The partnership is governed by the Integration Joint Board and the council appoints three voting members to the Board, and three voting members are also appointed by the Board of NHS Shetland.

The council also appoints members to the Shetland Transport Partnership ([ZetTrans](#)), the statutory body responsible for the provision and maintenance of public transport services in Shetland.

Shetland also has a community planning partnership, [the Shetland Partnership](#), and this gives public organisations like ourselves, NHS Shetland, the emergency services and the voluntary sector the opportunity to work together to plan and deliver better services across the islands.



Our vision

We have a corporate plan, [Our Ambition](#), which was agreed at the end of 2020.

Our vision statement is:

‘Our Ambition 2021-26’ is based on a vision of working together to create a POSITIVE, CONFIDENT and SUSTAINABLE future for Shetland. A Shetland where the community’s OPPORTUNITIES attract people of all ages to live, work, study and invest in our islands.



Our values

All our staff had the opportunity to shape [our values statement](#) when it was agreed in 2017.

Excellent service is at the heart of everything we do. We provide excellent service by taking personal responsibility and working well together.



Excellent Service
Taking Personal Responsibility
Working Well Together

Customer First

In 2018, the council agreed its Customer First [strategy and charter](#), which set out the standards that staff will deliver when coming into contact with people who use our services.

The role of a councillor

As a councillor you will participate as a strategic policy maker, an executive decision taker and a scrutineer of the council in achieving its desired outcomes and delivering services.

As well as serving the citizens of Shetland, local government also represents the citizens of Shetland and in that role you represent your constituents, lead your community, build community engagement and secure access to the council and other public agencies.

You will also take part in making or administering rules or decisions that affect the rights and obligations of citizens, and will need to consider and weigh evidence, consider issues on their merits and act fairly and within the law.

Main tasks

1. Regular attendance at meetings of the council, and of any committee, sub-committee or other group that you are appointed to. Appointments take place after the election and you don't have to agree to sit on a committee if nominated.
2. Dealing with issues raised by constituents and setting up ways in which they can get in touch with you including things like surgeries.
3. Actively being aware of issues, inside and outside the council, which affect either your ward or the wider community.
4. Working in partnership with other local organisations to identify and pursue local needs and aspirations and encouraging community action, which is fundamental to the role of community leader.
5. As a local community leader, you will also be invited by local organisations to participate in local forums and events that collectively provide a focus for community activity and development.
6. Representing the council on other organisations or agencies, an ambassadorial role where you will articulate the council's policies and views, as well as project the good image of the council and Shetland.

**Standing
for election**

Now for the inevitable legal bit!

To be able to stand as a candidate at a local council election in Scotland, you must be at least 18 years old on the day of your nomination, and either a British citizen, an Irish citizen, an eligible [Commonwealth citizen, or a qualifying foreign national](#), and meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

1. You are registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand on the day of your nomination
2. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination
3. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination has been in the local authority area
4. You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination

You must also make sure you're officially nominated, by completing and signing a nomination form. We'll place an election notice in The Shetland Times, on our website and the Shetland News website nearer the time, with information on where forms can be picked up from and what to do with them when completed.

Your form needs to be completed by you as the candidate and witnessed by one other person. You can describe yourself as an 'Independent' candidate or have no description. If you're using a political party title, this needs to be a registered party.

You can get more detailed information about the election rules on the [Electoral Commission website](#), including guidance for candidates and agents in six parts:

- [Part 1 - can you stand for election?](#) (includes qualifications for standing for election as well as disqualifications from standing)
- [Part 2a - standing as an independent candidate](#) (includes completing and submitting your nomination papers, what happens after the close of nominations and appointing your election agent)
- [Part 2b - standing as a party candidate](#)
- [Part 3 - spending and donations](#) (including how much you can spend, the activities covered by rules and which donations you can accept)
- [Part 4 - the campaign](#) (includes campaigning do's and don'ts and polling day do's and don'ts)
- [Part 5 - your right to attend key electoral events](#) (including attending the opening of postal votes, polling stations and the count)
- [Part 6 - after the declaration of results](#) (including making the declaration of acceptance of office)

FAQs

Will there be any training?

Like most new jobs, you will take part in an induction, which covers some key things you need to know right from the start.

Making sure councillors have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles is a key priority for us and we're committed to working with all elected members to understand your personal development needs and interests, and then highlighting learning opportunities and resources to meet those. This will include any specialist training, along with sessions like media interview skills, how to chair a meeting, local government finance and building better business cases.

The Improvement Service is the national improvement service for local government in Scotland. It provides some handy training notebooks that you can access – take a look at the 'Useful Links' section at the end of this handbook.

What other support is there to help me?

One of the things we know worries some people thinking about standing for election is the fact that they will suddenly be in the public eye and may have to speak to the local media. Don't worry – we have staff who will support you, if needed.

You'll also get invaluable administrative support from our Members' Support Team, who are based in the front office of the Town Hall. They can help you with your day-to-day councillor duties by providing reception facilities, clerical support (including looking after your diary), arranging all your travel and processing your expense claims.

It's also worth noting that you'll have access to council officers who can provide objective expert advice and information, and this can take many forms including briefings on various topics that can help you make decisions.

Will it take up a lot of time?

Unlike a normal job where your contract sets out how many hours you're expected to work, when it comes to being a councillor, it's definitely true that 'you get out exactly what you put in'.

The number of hours you need to spend will be determined by: a) the position you assume when you join the council – whether you take on the role of chair or vice-chair of a committee, the Convener or Leader, or you decide that being an ordinary councillor is fine while you find your feet, and b) the number of committees you're appointed to. Please remember you do have a choice and you don't have to agree to join every committee you're asked to. Information about the appointments and positions available will be provided to you before the first meeting of the new council, giving you time to discuss these with other councillors.

We've also included an example of a weekly diary over the page – from one of the busier times in a committee business programme. Your attendance at meetings depends on which committee you're appointed to.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Shetland Islands Area Licensing Board Licensing Committee Planning Committee	2 Audit Committee	3	4	5
8 Employees Joint Consultative Committee	9	10 Harbour Board	11 Zetland Transport Partnership (ZetTrans)	12
15 Education and Families Committee	16 Development Committee Environment and Transport Committee	17 Pension Fund Committee	18 Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board	19
22 Policy and Resources Committee	23	24 Shetland Islands Council	25 IJB Audit Committee Community Safety and Resilience Board	26
29	30			

Committees also publish their business programmes, which outlines the range of business scheduled over the coming year. These programmes are continually updated to incorporate new items throughout the year.

Please also note that there will be community council meetings and other events to be scheduled into your diary. For more information, please visit <http://coins.shetland.gov.uk/calendar.asp>.

Every year, we try to keep the end of July and beginning of August free of meetings, as well as the spring and October school holidays, but some may take place depending on council business.

Can I be a councillor and have a job?

If you work for the council, you should read the Special Leave Policy, which gives you information about what the council may permit during campaigning, but also explains the rules about resigning from your job if you get elected.

Councillors past and present do have another job (or other commitments) and the key to making this work is flexibility. In your current employment, would it be possible to move hours or shifts around, and is your employer and other colleagues able to adapt to accommodate you?

If you're an employer reading this and you have a member of staff you think would make a great councillor, could you make some changes to help them fit in both roles?

How much will I get paid?

Your pay is set by Scottish Ministers and not by the council.

The current basic remuneration is £19,571. As you would expect, certain councillors receive more because of their position and additional responsibilities. More information can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1707/part-g1-remuneration-and-approved-duties-updated-12-04-2022-.

You'll be reimbursed for all travel and subsistence expenses you incur on council business (although COVID has changed the amount of travel required outwith Shetland to attend meetings etc).

As a councillor, you are also eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

How long would I be a councillor for?

This current term is five years. So, you will be a councillor from the date your sign your acceptance of office until the next election in May 2027.

Are there rules on standards and ethics?

Yes – the Councillors' Code of Conduct, approved by the Scottish Parliament, applies to every councillor in Scotland. According to the [Standards Commission for Scotland](#), "the Councillors' Code of Conduct continues to play a vital role in setting out, openly and clearly, the standards councillors must apply when undertaking their council duties. It is vital that the Code continues to give assurance to the public that their elected members are acting in accordance with high ethical standards."

How can I find out more?

Our committee meetings are generally open to the public. Since August 2020, we have recorded some of our meetings and these have been available for members of the public to watch on the council's [YouTube channel](#). Now meetings of the principal committees of Shetland Islands Council will be [webcast live](#), allowing the public to watch the debate on any desktop or mobile device, making them even more accessible.

We'd suggest you take a look at the [online meeting diary](#) and pick a few meetings to watch – if you choose ones with a full agenda, you'll get a good idea of how meetings work, who speaks when, and how and when a decision is made. There's also more information in our [Standing Orders](#).

Please also check out some of the resources on the Useful Links page overleaf.

ARE YOU A WOMAN INTERESTED IN STANDING FOR SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL?

Join the community of
women at Elect Her to access community,
tools and resources you need to stand for
local Government.

For more information check out our social media
platforms or our email below.

<https://www.elect-her.org.uk/selection-and-election>

Instagram: [@electher_uk](#)

Twitter: [@ElectHer_UK](#)

Facebook: [ElectHerUK](#)

Or email us at: community@elect-her.org.uk

ELECTHER

Useful links

Being a local councillor (www.localcouncillor.scot)

Find out more from the Improvement Service and COSLA (the voice of local government in Scotland) about the different aspects of a councillor's role.

Improvement Service (www.improvementservice.org.uk/)

You'll find a range of resources for elected members. We'd recommend you take a look at:

- The series of [induction notebooks](#) including: getting started with your roles and responsibilities, being a community leader, governing effectively and developing your working relationships
- [Roles and responsibilities of the elected Member at ward level](#)
- [Roles and responsibilities of the elected Member at council level](#)
- Find out more about [becoming a councillor](#)
- [A day in the life of a councillor](#) – examples from some councillors' diaries of what a working week can look like

Shetland Islands Council (www.shetland.gov.uk)

Including:

- [Our Ambition corporate plan](#)
- [How we perform](#)
- [Budget and finance](#)
- [Council meetings calendar](#)

Standard Commission for Scotland – Codes of Conduct (www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/codes-of-conduct)

Electoral Commission (www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

Audit Scotland (www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)

Including:

- [Best Value Assurance Report: Shetland Islands Council](#)
- [Shetland Islands Council annual audit plan 2020/21](#)
- [Local government in Scotland – Overview 2021](#)



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