

Name: Melanie Martin

Please tell us your reasons for wishing to become a Town Councillor.

I live and work in Newbiggin and feel passionate about the area and improving the community for living, working and visiting. I see the potential and the hard work that the Town Council currently do and would like to be a part of that.

What is your knowledge specific to Parish Councils?

I believe that Parish Councils are in place to represent the community and their views on local matters and concerns. They are responsible for local services and amenities such as bus shelters, litter bins and public seats. They can also be responsible for encouraging tourism and other community projects.

Do you have any experience of voluntary, partnership or community work? If so, please provide details.

I previously was a business owner of a tea room in Newbiggin and established a lot of local links within the community, this has continued to grow and expand as my role as a Community Engagement Tutor at the Newbiggin Learning Hive for the Northern Learning Trust. I have worked hard to build solid working relationships at the Sports Centre, the Boxing Club, Maritime Centre and regularly attend the Town Council meetings. I have introduced regular monthly litter picks on the Moor Estate and around the East Lea area to continually improve the appearance of the communal areas. As part of my job role, I have introduced regular monthly drop-in sessions with the local housing officers and police officers to focus on the anti-social behaviour so that local residents feel that they can speak in confidence in a safe space.

I would draw upon a lot of these skills when holding drop-in events so that residents felt that they could approach me and speak with me about issues.

What skills, knowledge, and experience do you have that could benefit the Town Council?

I have a teaching & tourism background and now work mainly with adults within the community. My strengths lie within my communication and building a rapport with people and listening. I am approachable and have worked hard to integrate within the community and feel that I can adapt my communication methods to suit various situations. I enjoy living in Newbiggin and work hard to make it a better and safer place. I am a very motivated and positive person and will work hard to get an outcome.

Unfortunately, under present legislation the Town Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of councillors' childcare or care of dependants.

Are there any factors, other than exceptional circumstances, that might prevent you from regularly attending the Town Council Meetings which generally take place on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm?

No, I can regularly continue to attend the meetings.

Are there any local issues that you are particularly interested in that you believe could be of benefit to the community?

I am very interested in the wellbeing of the local community and as part of my job role I currently run wellbeing sessions and walks, I would like to expand these and involve more members of the community. I would like to be involved in making Newbiggin more sustainable and being part of the Climate group and looking at ways to improve tourism and spending in Newbiggin.

Do you have any hobbies or interests that could benefit the Town Council?

I am good at planning events, creating flyers on Canva and would happily do this as part of my role. I also enjoy cooking and baking and passing on skills to others.

Lastly are there any questions you would like to ask us?

Nothing that I can think of at the minute, thank you.

As a councillor representing your community you will help keep it a great place to live, work and visit. You will be supported in your role and will be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team.