

NORTON-ON-DERWENT TOWN COUNCIL



Co-option

Agenda Item 15

The following are applications for consideration and resolution;

Applicant 1 – Nick Whitteven

1. Please briefly outline why you are interested in becoming a Town councillor.

I would like to become more involved with local issues and I believe I can offer something new and varied to the council. I am interested in politics and what affects everyday life in the area.

2. Please provide information about yourself including; any skills and/or life experience that you could bring to the Council and whether there are any key areas in Norton which you feel as a council we should be addressing.

I have been a teacher of languages since 1995. Although I am originally a Dutch Lancastrian, I have lived in Ryedale for the last 23 years, in Terrington, Welburn, Crambeck and Norton. Key areas that I feel should be addressed our litter, the terrible traffic, antisocial behaviour and the lack of public facilities, particularly for the younger generations.

3. Councillors, like any group of people, will disagree with one another on many issues. In what ways do you see yourself handling this in a public meeting?

Being a teacher, I have vast experience of dealing with people, whether they be pupils, their parents or colleagues. I am a confident speaker and debater, but also a rational and calm individual.

4. What role do you see for the public in a public council meeting? How do you think the council can engage with the public in a positive and inclusive way in the way the council is run?

I believe the public should play an integral part in council affairs. It should be made easier and more transparent for the public to have their voices heard; more open reporting of council minutes and a more inclusive feel to meetings would surely make the public feel a part of the democratic process.

5. Is there any other information you would like tell us about your application?

Not at this moment, but if there is anything specific you would like me to answer, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Applicant 2 – Elizabeth Shields

1. Please briefly outline why you are interested in becoming a Town councillor.

The very existence of Norton-on-Derwent Town Council with its team of 12 elected members, provides the opportunity and ability for local people in the parish to raise matters of interest or concern within the town: I would like to be a part of that team to help.

2. Please provide information about yourself including; any skills and/or life experience that you could bring to the Council and whether there are any key areas in Norton which you feel as a council we should be addressing.

My own life has been a mixture of education and local politics. I trained as a teacher, reading classics at University College London and taught mainly Latin and Greek in England and Isle of Jersey.

In 1980, I was persuaded to stand for Ryedale District Council and won the Norton seat – This I held for 39 years (a record for the council!)

I stood for the County seat in 2013, won and managed to help the continued existence of our library 'The Hive'.

I had the honour and pleasure of becoming Member of Parliament for Ryedale in 1986-1987.

Key areas in Norton:

We need to keep an eye on our local businesses; they are important for the town and its very existence.

Housing has always been a matter of concern since I became a District Councillor and is a truly basic necessity. Local people's needs should be regarded with respect to any new build and hand-in-hand with further projects, jobs and work of a permanent nature.

Norton in Bloom has done much to enhance the appearance of the town and the Christmas decorations have given real brightness in the winter months.

In these very difficult days of inflation and increased expense for those with mortgages. I know the council has helped with the food bank to try to assist people, especially those with children.

Likewise, I am aware of the help that the council has provided towards the upkeep of our library and community centre, which many local people have supported. Its existence is valuable not only as a library but for many additional education courses and particularly 'Sight Support'!

The children's section has always been a favourite with parents and small children and local schools who visit.

3. Councillors, like any group of people, will disagree with one another on many issues. In what ways do you see yourself handling this in a public meeting?

It is important to start with an open mind and then listen to the 'pros' and 'cons' of any argument or disagreement. Diversity of opinion can sometimes be compromised by giving a little on both sides; sometimes one argument can prevail.

4. What role do you see for the public in a public council meeting? How do you think the council can engage with the public in a positive and inclusive way in the way the council is run?

Members of the public are entitled to express their views but with respect of Councillors and other people who may be present. Likewise, Councillors should listen to whatever matters are brought before them and perhaps deal with some individual items on a one-to-one basis.

5. Is there any other information you would like tell us about your application?

I enjoy working with people and would welcome the opportunity to be involved, again, more fully with Norton and its community.

Applicant 3 – Simon Pearson

1. Please briefly outline why you are interested in becoming a Town councillor.

I want to make a difference in the town where I live, work and love. Norton is a place that has many different ages and ethnicities within its community. I am a great believer in people reaching their full potential in work and life. I am in a fortunate position in that I have managed to see quite a bit of the world and experienced many different cultures as a result and I have continued to push myself academically, firstly within Marketing and Graphic Design, but these days within Property Management (Block and Public Open Space Management) and Legislation.

I have always continued to try and give something back to those less fortunate than myself, including raising monies for mental health charities (Young Minds), volunteering with a local homeless charity (SASH) by offering our spare room to homeless young people.

2. Please provide information about yourself including; any skills and/or life experience that you could bring to the Council and whether there are any key areas in Norton which you feel as a council we should be addressing.

My professional background covers Property Management, Marketing, Communication, and Graphic Design. I have also worked in the charity sector for several years within sexual health and the support of LGBTQ+ individuals and have chaired an NHS Mental Health Board.

More recently, I have been volunteering my time on various community events within the development I moved to with my family by assisting with residents' queries around services charges and community events like an Easter Egg Hunt.

I have also been supporting young and vulnerable people in the town; providing short and more long-term accommodation.

As with any town there are always matters that need addressing and I feel Norton is a great place to live but could be 'loved' that bit more. Norton in bloom is positive for the town and really adds colour to 'would be' glum areas.

But I feel given the diversity and different age groups within the town, we could celebrate diversity that bit better with more cultural events and champion local sporting and annual events that take place as well as maximising the opportunity for volunteering for the town within these areas.

3. Councillors, like any group of people, will disagree with one another on many issues. In what ways do you see yourself handling this in a public meeting?

I believe strongly in the 'Freedom of Speech' and find that differences of opinion is healthy. It's also important I feel Councillors are respectful, remain patient and empathetic. Listen actively, analyse the issues / topics being discussed and try to work together as a team. Look at all sorts of possible outcomes, working together, focussing on what the outcome can be and if you agree to disagree then remain positive, supportive and try not to be in any way personal to the issue(s).

Most importantly. It's about keeping an open mind and allowing the opportunity for all voices to be heard. Having chaired many meetings in my professional career, including as a Property Manager for a development of 5,000 homes, I have faced lots of different opinions and conflicts and always tried to take the above approach.

4. What role do you see for the public in a public council meeting? How do you think the council can engage with the public in a positive and inclusive way in the way the council is run?

The council are managing public money and any decision making will have an impact across the town every day for every single resident of the town at some point. What is therefore important is that councillors remain visible and approachable for all areas of the community. The council can already engage with all ages of the community through meetings, the website, and noticeboards amongst other areas. These areas should continue to be used and updated where possible and maximise other affordable and popular ways of communication to suit everyone.

The public should always be given the opportunity for their voices to be heard at a meeting with a right to reply. As some residents may not be able to attend town council meetings because of other commitments, the council should continue to find ways to allow all residents to input into key issues prior to meetings and the council could try introducing drop-in surgeries in various public places. The council can also look at ways to push volunteering for key events across the town, empowering residents to give back a little to the community.

It is therefore essential that the council remain transparent, inclusive, welcoming, and making themselves available for residents of Norton; young and old. What is also important for different age groups is what may work for young people (social media or other forms of digital communication for example) may stress or confuse an older person, so to have as many options available as possible is imperative.

5. Is there any other information you would like tell us about your application?

I wish to express that I do not have a personal agenda, nor do I belong to any political party. I would like to add that I see working as a councillor as an extremely privileged position. I am applying for this vacancy as I believe I am an extremely strong character and am a positive individual, inclusive, team player and most of all a people person and one who always looks for the best in other people. I want to make a difference for people in a town I am proud to live in Norton.