



Quarterly Newsletter

**SPRING 2021**



New Grants Scheme launched



**MAKE A CHANGE  
BECOME A  
LOCAL COUNCILLOR**



Stand for Election

Pategill Ward

6 May 2021

# Welcome



## Spring Newsletter 2021



Councillor Doug Lawson Mayor and Councillor Scott Jackson Deputy Mayor

This will be our final issue as in May at the Annual Town Council meeting the Members will be voting for Council Chair and Vice Chair. With Spring in the air we are feeling optimistic about the future as we progress through the Pandemic road map and return to normality. We urge everyone who is offered, to have a Covid vaccination and as lockdown restrictions are eased please stay safe and well. With this sense of renewed positivity, we thought this article should be leaping forward with the British Summertime to share new opportunities with you.

**‘Get involved in ‘in bloom,’ helping the environment using creative approaches associated with Arts & Culture’ and regenerating Penrith**

Join us to make Penrith bloom this summer. Due to the continuing impact of COVID, the RHS Community Awards will replace the usual Britain in Bloom UK Finals to run in digital form.

Stories can be told using the written word, photos and/or short videos.

Projects can be any size and they can be new or ongoing and initiated or maintained by a community group.



There are five categories to get your teeth into while making sure to maintain local Government guidelines regarding COVID to ensure everyone stays safe. All the categories are related to projects that many groups in the UK, including Penrith, have been involved in over the past year. They include 'Nourishing Your Community;' 'Planting with Purpose;' 'Nature Friendly Gardening;' 'Green Solutions' and 'Cultivating your Community.'

**'Nourishing Your Community'** focuses on how groups are using food growing as a way of supporting their community and bringing people together during a worrying time in our lives. Using recycled or repurposed items can maximise what is needed to develop projects, for example, old bins, upcycled tins or making raised beds or compost areas with unwanted wood pallets.

For many years, Penrith has been lucky to have our Garden of Eden Community Gardeners, who have recycled and upcycled to help them plant and grow beautiful flowers around town and lovely edibles in the 'Stricklandgate' Garden, the Polytunnel and elsewhere in town. Volunteers at Little Dockray and Angel Lane have banded together using recycled sunflower tins and creative thinking.

Pupils at St Catherine's School have been involved in growing beautiful fruit and vegetables, and a simple 'Give and Take' box is kept supplied by a small team growing vegetables and fruit in season in Carleton Hall Walk. This local small-scale project utilises a small-unused green space on the street. Other groups in Penrith, large and small, can emulate these examples.

**'Planting with Purpose'** focuses on creative ways to address challenges in the town, for example, specific groups working together to co-design and develop projects to reinvigorate an area for older people to enjoy or develop spaces for people who have sensory and/or other needs.

**'Nature Friendly Gardening'** focuses on gardening in a wildlife friendly way. Small spaces in gardens and unused green spaces can be used to grow wildlife friendly plants to attract a greater variety of insects and wildlife. It might also be possible to put images of many small wildlife friendly spaces together to form a composite 'Penrith Community Nature Reserve' in digital format. If you are interested, please get in touch.

**'Green Solutions'** recognises the work people in the community may want to undertake to create nature-based solutions to environmental challenges in the community, for example, to reduce air pollution along the edges of streets, planting to reduce flooding or to create rain gardens or slow water run-off. We all know that planting trees is extremely important for the environment.

Some of the young people on the Town Council's Youth Advisory panel are interested in getting involved if a suitable space is available. Please get in touch if you have land that could be used, and we will support and enable young people on the Panel and in other groups in town to plant trees in the spring.

The '**Cultivating Your Community**' theme is designed to help people in the community enjoy the benefits of growing, perhaps volunteering together with others and sharing skills and gardening tools, also perhaps finding ways to plant that reflects the town's rich heritage and culture.

Art comes in many forms including creative gardening like some of the projects developed at the Train Station and in Little Dockray by volunteer gardeners. Such projects fit in well with the Town Council's 5-year work-plan to develop an 'Arts and Culture' Strategy.

A clear aim of this strategy is to develop a wide range of creative projects and bring a range of social and economic benefits for residents and the town to enjoy, including inward investment, new funding streams, an increase in tourists and visitors to the town as well as regeneration and revitalisation of the town centre.



The Town Council are currently engaging with individuals, groups in different ways so that their views feed into the development of the Arts & Culture Strategy, and truly reflect what is needed and wanted in Penrith.

Focus groups and one-to-one interviews are in progress to gather insights and help develop the Strategy. In addition, everyone in the local community is invited to take part in an online survey and have a say on Arts & Culture in Penrith.

Your opinions will feed into decision-making to help progress the Town Council's 'Arts & Culture' Strategy and the strategy to 'Make Penrith a Carbon Neutral Town by 2030.'

The survey can be found at:

<https://cumbria.citizenspace.com/other-public-sector/arts-culture-penrith/>

It has been set up for completion by those who have access to the internet, a safe option during the COVID restrictions. Anyone who would like to take part off-line, please get in touch with the Town Council:

Tel 01768 899 733

Email [office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk)

**Getting involved in any of the aforementioned ways combined with taking part in engagement exercises, will help reinvigorate the town.**



Importantly, everyone working together - local people, businesses, community groups, and the Town Council - will help regenerate Penrith and make a difference in the town and improve everyone's quality of life.

**Do not hesitate  
PLEASE GET INVOLVED**



A by-election for the Pategill Ward of Penrith Town Council takes place on 6<sup>th</sup> May, why not stand for election to speak on behalf of the local community. If you are interested, you can speak to the Town Council but should also visit the Electoral Commission website and read the revised guidance for candidates.

Nomination forms are available from EDCs website under Upcoming Elections and will be accepted from **25<sup>th</sup> March** until **4pm on 8<sup>th</sup> April** but you must make an appointment to deliver them to the Town Hall to comply with Covid requirements.

**Contact:** Elections Office

**Email:** [elections@eden.gov.uk](mailto:elections@eden.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01768 212253

**Address:** Eden District Council, Town Hall, Corney Square, Penrith,  
Cumbria CA11 7QF

## What Does Being a Councillor Involve?

Being a local Councillor involves holding a position of trust and the role can be a rewarding and enriching experience. It is no easy task being a Councillor. Society needs to have people, whether at a national or local level, who are able, willing and prepared to take decisions on its behalf. These can relate to matters which affect the lives of citizens and Councillors must be prepared to be accountable for these decisions.

Democratic election gives local Councillors, like Members of Parliament, a special status in public life which brings with it opportunities to contribute to the wellbeing of society and, in doing so, responsibilities to act fairly and within the law.



## **What does Local Council do and what is the Role of a Councillor?**

### **Local Government serves the people:**

Providing public services is a prime function of local government. No other public body provides the range of services that a local Council does. Providing services to meet community needs and aspirations requires the development of policy about the nature of services to be provided and the planning of delivery and resourcing of those services.

A Councillor, therefore, shares a collective responsibility with other Councillors to:

- Make policy
- Formulate and monitor strategies and budgets
- Take executive decisions
- Check on the effectiveness of the Council in delivering services
- Develop an effective Councillor/officer partnership

### **Local Government represents the people:**

Local Councils consist of Councillors who are democratically elected. Although the majority are elected on a party political basis, they represent all the people of their communities, including those who did not vote for them. This representational function would remain even if the Council ceased to deliver services.

### **A Councillor, therefore, is:**

- A representative of his/her constituents
- A community leader providing a focus for the development of his/her community
- A representative of the wider interests of Penrith; and may also have a party political representative role
- Local Government makes rules:
- All societies need principles to which they must conform if they are to safeguard the freedom, safety and wellbeing of their citizens. At a national level, there is a clear distinction between Parliament, which makes the rules, and Government on the one hand, and Courts (or other tribunals) on the other, which have separately defined roles to administer these rules.

### **A Local Council, however, has three roles:**

- It must administer certain rules which Parliament has laid down for it
- It may make rules of its own
- It must administer the rules of its own which it makes

By participating in making or administering the rules, which affect the rights and obligations of citizens, Councillors, are involved in granting or refusing permissions, licences and planning applications.

### **A Councillor, therefore:**

- Pays attention to relevant considerations and ignores irrelevant ones
- Considers and weighs evidence
- Considers each issue on its merits
- Acts fairly and within the law
- Local Government works with others

Councils not only plan and deliver their own services but also overall have a community leadership role. As part of this leadership role, Councils take the lead in community planning by drawing together the activities of a whole range of public bodies, and the business and voluntary sectors, in identifying a common agenda and drawing together the plans of the partners to address the needs of the communities. Beyond that, Councils work in a national framework with Government and Parliament at UK and Scottish level, and with other agencies.

### **A Councillor fulfils an ambassadorial role:**

- On behalf of his/her community in a local context
- As a champion and representative of the interests of Penrith Town Council in a wider national and international arena

### **Councillors and employees:**

In the context of the above, it is important to understand the different responsibilities of Councillors and Council employees.

Councillors are responsible to the public and the Council but employees are responsible to the Council as employer.

A Councillor's role is to decide on policy and not become involved in the direct operational management of the Council's services; that is the responsibility of the Council's employees. As paid employees, senior Council Officers:

- Have responsibility for the day-to-day running of Council services
- Give professional advice to allow Councillors to make informed decision on the provision of services
- Implement policies which committees have agreed on
- Observe a code of strict political neutrality and serve all Councillors irrespective of political party

### **Councillor's Role Description and Person Specification**

A Councillor must apply the following principles in all their dealing with council employees, colleague Councillors and others:

**Selflessness:** Decisions must be taken solely in terms of the public interest. Councillors must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, family, or friends.

**Integrity:** Councillors must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence them in the performance of their duties.

**Objectivity:** Councillors must make decisions solely on merit when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

**Accountability and Stewardship:** Councillors are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public. They have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others, and they must ensure that the council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.



**Openness:** Councillors have a duty to be as open as possible about their decisions and actions, giving reasons for their decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

**Honesty:** Councillors have a duty to act honestly. They must declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership:** Councillors have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the council and its Councillors in conducting public business.

**Respect:** Councillors must respect all other Councillors and all council employees and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. It is also expected that others reciprocate this degree of respect in their dealings with Councillors.

## **Main Activities**

- Regular attendance at meetings of the Council and of any Committee to which the Councillor is appointed is an essential component of the policy-making and decision-taking life of the Council.
- Contributing constructively to debates within and about the Council. This is usually done through formal Committee structures but dependent upon the role that you play within the Council, it can also take place informally.
- Dealing with issues raised by constituents by correspondence, telephone, electronically and in person on an on-going basis, and arranging to make themselves available to constituents, including "surgeries" or in other ways, contributes to the representative role of the Councillor.
- Actively being aware of issues affecting the Councillor's electoral ward and the wider community (inside and outside the Council) is part of fulfilling a community leadership and representative function.
- A key role for a Councillor is to scrutinise how effectively the Council is performing and meeting its targets, and whether it is achieving best value for the money it is spending.
- Working in partnership with other local organisations, as well as other ward Councillors, to identify and pursue local needs and aspirations and encouraging community action is fundamental to the role of community leader.
- As a local community leader, Councillors will be invited by local organisations to participate in local forums and events that collectively provide a focus for community activity and development.
- Representing Penrith on other organisations or agencies to which the Councillor may be appointed or nominated by the Town Council. This involves an ambassadorial function where he or she must promote the Council's policies, views and profile while serving the relevant organisation's or agencies best interests.
- Treating all other Councillors and Council employees with respect and courtesy at all times.

Clearly, becoming a Councillor is a time-consuming occupation and should not be entered into lightly. Being a Councillor may or may not be a full-time occupation. Councillors should not be faced with excessive demands on their time but should be able to combine this work with other responsibilities and/or interests. In addition to attendance at meetings during the day, many of the groups that Councillors have regular contact with meet in the evening and attendance at such meetings can add to the length of the working day.

## Skills and Attributes

The list below may seem daunting at first, but Councillors are not expected to have all these skills and attributes when first elected. Support will be provided to help them develop over time.

- ✓ A commitment to the ethos of public service and equality lies at the heart of being a local Councillor.
- ✓ Active citizenship is a commitment to contributing to and focusing on what best improves the wellbeing of communities.
- ✓ The ability to take on board a wide range of information, combined with clear thinking and common sense and to provide the analytical skills, which enable objective and fair decision-making.
- ✓ Dealing with constituents requires a polite and fair approach to understanding the problems, which they bring to their local Councillor.
- ✓ Presentational and communication skills enable the Councillor to publicise the needs of their constituents as well as the policies and aspirations of the Council.
- ✓ Resolving often-conflicting points of view and contentious issues requires skills of negotiation, diplomacy and clear thinking.
- ✓ Resourcing the provision of local authority services involves very significant levels of expenditure, which requires a local Councillor to develop an understanding of the Council's budgeting and control system.
- ✓ The ability to work with others to attain mutual goals. This can include partnership working with external bodies as well as cross-party working.

## Thinking about it?....

## TWELVE EXCUSES FOR NOT JOINING THE TOWN COUNCIL

### 1. 'I'm too young'

If you're 18 you're old enough (see 4 below)

### 2. 'What's the point of just joining a talking shop – you don't do anything'

Have you ever been to a meeting? It sometimes takes a little time as we all have rules to follow but basing your judgement on the Vicar of Dibley, social media posts or the 'Handforth' video is definitely not valid

### 3. 'I'm too busy and I couldn't commit to attending every single meeting'

We only have six meetings of full Council in a year. If you do not want to sit on a committee, missing the occasional Council meeting is acceptable. Meetings generally only take a couple of hours but we would love you to attend as much as you can. You can put as much or as little into the role that suits you.

- 4. 'I'm concentrating on finding a job or furthering my career'**  
This is a plus for your CV – it shows you can work in a team, make decisions, are community minded and proactive. Prospective employers will be impressed.
- 5. 'I haven't lived in the area long and am still finding out about the area'** If you are a British, eligible commonwealth or EU citizen and have lived or worked in the parish area for a year, or already have your name on the electoral roll you can stand... your views as a new person to Penrith would be welcomed as you will probably see things more objectively.
- 6. 'I'm worried I won't get many votes and look silly'**  
No one looks silly, at least you tried. If you are not voted on, you may be approached if a future vacancy occurs and have the opportunity to be co-opted.
- 7. 'The Town Council is full of old fogeys'**  
It is not true but if this is what you think join up and change it then,
- 8. 'I won't know what's going on and will look a fool'**  
You will be eased in gently and help, advice and training is available. The Town Clerk is like a CEO and will be able to explain the rules we have to follow.
- 9. 'I'll have to sign the Code of Conduct that the press keep on about'**  
It is not as bad as you read and is there to protect you. You need to follow the Council's Code of Conduct and national ethical standards.
- 10. 'I'll have to let everyone know about my business and personal affairs'**  
The declaration of interest form asks you to list business interests in the parish area to guard against bias when issues are debated. As for personal affairs, Cumbria is a small county, everyone probably already knows!
- 11. 'I'm too lazy and not interested in helping my community'** Fair enough, an excellent reason for not joining!
- 12. 'I prefer to let others do the work and criticise from the side lines or on social media'**  
Another valid reason but complaining on social media or in the pub (when they reopen) will not change a thing in the town – if you can't be bothered does that mean its fair game for those that do.

Please ring us or email us if this has sparked your interest. You do not have to be political, be a member of a political group just be passionate about Penrith and be keen to make a difference.

You can contact us on 01768 899773 for an informal chat.



## **NEW GRANTS AVAILABLE!**

Penrith Town Council has grant funds available to help your project. On 1 April, we launch our refreshed Grants Scheme. The scheme now includes grant funds for projects that support biodiversity, nature and sustainability.

For applications under a £1000, we have simplified the application process to help the smallest community projects. Council Officers will consider applications when they are submitted, and officers will release funds if applicants meet the criteria. Officers will then report their decision to a committee. It is hoped that by managing these smaller grants in this way the Town Council can be more responsive to the needs of the community.

The Town Council also provides a Large Grant Scheme for projects up to £5,000.

A Council Committee will consider applications in this category.

The Grants Scheme is designed to support local community organisations, charities and Community Interest Companies (CICs) delivering projects in Penrith. We will consider one application per organisation each financial year (1st April to 31st March) but will not consider applications from individuals.

The council will not fund salaries, hospitality, religious organisations (except for non-religious activities), core school expenditure or projects with party political links.

If you are interested, it is recommended that you read thoroughly the Councils Grants Scheme before applying and where necessary contact us for advice on your application. All the information will be available on our website from 1 April 2021, from where you can download the appropriate form.

The Town Council will score applications using information from the application form based on achieving outcomes, value for money, strong governance and fitting with the council's strategic aims.

Successful applicants are invited to meet with other community groups who have had grant funding at our Annual Town Meeting where these groups are asked to share with the community the success of their projects and plans for the future.

Please feel able to contact us by email or by phone if you need more information or assistance completing the application.

This newsletter is produced to help keep Penrith residents up to date with the activities of the Council, and local events of public interest.

If you represent a local community organisation, or philanthropic group, and you would like to be featured in our next edition please send us your editorial and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Please be advised, inclusion will be on a first come first served basis.



Tel: 01768 899 773

Email: [office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk)

If you wish to raise any matters concerning Penrith this can be done by contacting the Town Council at:

Penrith Town Council,  
Unit 1, Church House  
19-24 Friargate  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA11 7XR

Editor: Town Clerk

## Together We Can Make a Difference

NAME	DIRECT LINE	EMAIL
<b>General Enquiries</b>	01768 899773	office@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Viv Tunnadine Town Clerk</b>	01768 425851	Townclerk@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Ros Richardson Deputy Town Clerk</b>	01768 425854	deputyTownclerk@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Paul Foote Solicitor</b>	01768 899773	legal@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
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<b>Jack Jones Responsible Finance Officer</b>	01768 425852	rfo@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
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<b>Dr Anna Malina Community Engagement Officer</b>	01768 425997	ceo@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk

Interviews with the Town Clerk and officers by appointment only.

**We write monthly editorials about Penrith Town Council in our local free magazine that is posted throughout Eden to nearly 16,000 households.**

**To find out more and look at past editions please click below:**

<http://www.cumbrianlocal.co.uk/previous-issues>

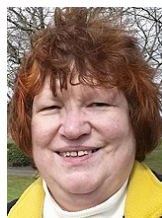
Whilst every effort was made to ensure the information in this newsletter was correct at the time of going to print, the Town Council cannot accept legal responsibility for any errors, omissions, nor can they accept responsibility for editorial contributions.



The Town Council is made up of 15 Councillors. They represent the six wards of Penrith Councillors are elected for four years and will be in place until 2023. Being a Town Councillor is a voluntary unpaid role. Penrith Town Councillors are listed below. Their full contact details are available on the Town Council website: [www.penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](http://www.penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Doug Lawson  
Carleton Ward  
**Council Chair**  
07969 481508  
[cldr.lawson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.lawson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Margaret Clark  
Penrith South ward  
07732 704133  
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Councillor Scott Jackson  
Penrith North ward  
**Council vice Chair**  
07920 408 094  
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Councillor Stephen Clarke  
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0788 536 1822  
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Pategill ward – Vacant



Councillor Jonathan Davies  
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Councillor Dave Knaggs  
Penrith West ward  
01768 899773  
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