



Thinking of Becoming a Fylde Councillor in 2023?

(Information for Prospective Candidates)

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is for anyone who is thinking about being a candidate for election to Fylde Council at the elections in May 2023. It includes information about the council, the role of a councillor and the practicalities of standing for election. It signposts other sources of advice that may be useful.

At Fylde Council, 37 seats are up for election on **4 May 2023**. This offers you the perfect opportunity to stand as a representative of your local community and become a Fylde Councillor in one of the various wards that currently make up Fylde Borough Council. We hope that this document will be used by anyone who is thinking of standing for election and is interested in finding out about the role of Councillor.

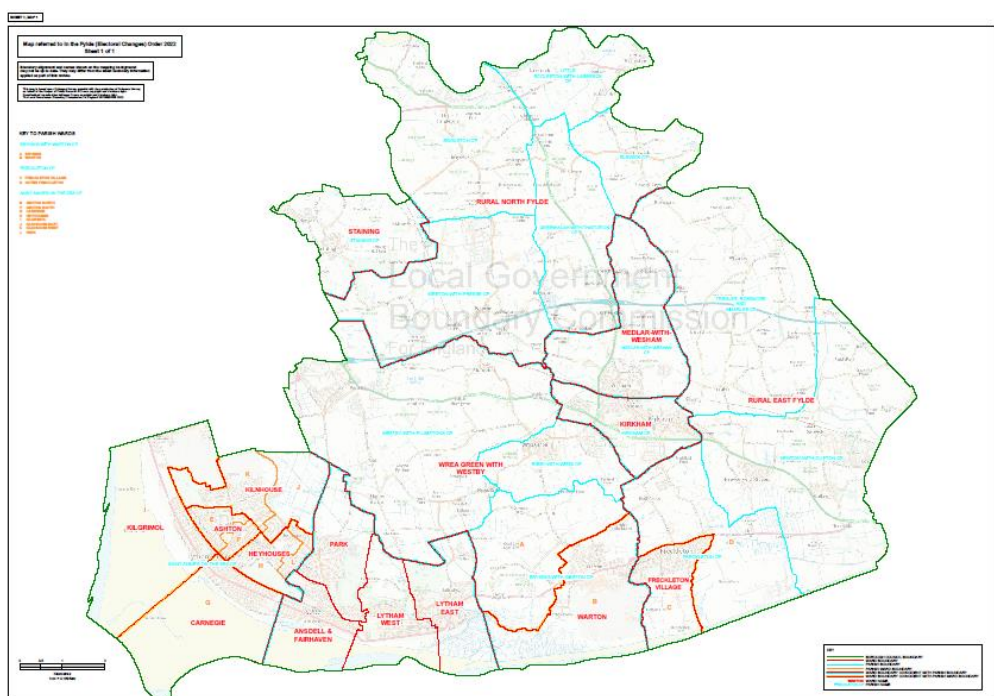
GLOSSARY

This section explains some of the words and phrases that appear in the guide

Candidate	You are a “candidate” when you are standing for election to the Council
Councillor	Sometimes referred to as a “member” or “elected member”
Ward	The borough is split into 17 specific areas, known as wards.
Electoral Commission	Is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK

ABOUT FYLDE COUNCIL

Fylde Council (formally called “Fylde Borough Council”) is a district council that provides local government services to people living in the area shown on the map below.



Other local government services are provided by Lancashire County Council. In most areas of Fylde, there are also town or parish councils.

Fylde Council’s 37 councillors set the strategic direction and policies for the council and take the most important decisions. They set out parameters and guidance for all council functions. They take decisions on controversial or

significant applications for planning permission, alcohol licences and similar consents. They do this collectively, meeting as committees and in other bodies. Some decisions are contentious and need discussion and debate.

WHO CAN BECOME A COUNCILLOR AT FYLDE COUNCIL?

Anyone can stand for election to Fylde Council, provided that they meet certain legal qualifications. But becoming a councillor depends on being successful at the election. You can find more information about who can stand for election [here](#) (opens link to Electoral Commission website, see part 1).

Most people stand for election because they want to make a difference and be involved in shaping the future of their local community. They may be concerned about the area where they live and want to ensure that their local area gets the services it needs. They may want to represent the views of local people and ensure that their interests are taken account of. They may want to pursue their political beliefs. Any or all of these would be good reasons to become a candidate in the borough elections on **Thursday, 4 May 2023**.

You don't need any formal qualifications to stand for election. Life experience is probably the best thing you can bring to the role, together with a passion for representing your community. You don't need to be an expert in how local government works. If you are elected, we will provide you with support, information and a comprehensive training package to help you become the best councillor you can be.



The local election process for Fylde commences in **March 2023** when a Notice of Election will be published in public places throughout the Borough and on the council's website. If you are thinking about being a candidate, you will need to submit nomination papers by **4 April**. Information about the nomination process and what candidates need to do is available [here](#) (opens link to Electoral Commission website, see part 2a and 2b).

WHAT DO COUNCILLORS DO?

Councillors are elected to represent local residents in an area called a ward. The role of a Councillor can be very varied and it is up to each individual Councillor how they work. Councillors have responsibilities to their ward, to the Council and to the community.

A Councillor's role and responsibilities can include:

- Being an advocate for their local areas
- Community leadership and engagement
- Assisting local people with council services
- Being part of the council's decision-making machinery by attending formal committee meetings
- Helping develop and review Council policy

- Taking part in decision-making on individual applications for licences and permissions.

It's up to each councillor to decide how involved to be in council business. Some councillors are engaged with their communities through drop-in surgeries, visiting residents in their homes or being visible within the community through other means, and dealing with large amounts of emails, letters and phone calls. Dealing with casework or council business may involve visiting council offices during the working day.

Councillors are encouraged to check their e-mails regularly and respond to officers, colleagues and constituents.

Most councillors are appointed to at least one committee. Committees include the Executive Committee, which takes most of the important decisions on behalf of the council; scrutiny committees, which help develop and evaluate policy and regulatory committees that make decisions on applications for planning, licensing and other consents. If you are a member of a political party, you will also be expected to attend political group meetings, party training and other events.



How do I get elected?

You can stand for a political party, if you have been authorised to stand for them you can then use the name or emblem for the political party concerned. Political parties will often have an internal competitive process to select their candidates. You should contact the local political party directly. But you don't have to be a member of a political party to be a candidate and can stand as an independent. If you are standing independently, you can only describe yourself as "Independent" or give no description at all.

Each candidate needs to complete a number of forms. This includes a nomination form, which must include the name, details and signature of two people who are on the electoral roll for the ward in which you want to stand, and who sign to formally propose and second you as a candidate. You must also give, in writing, your consent to your nomination. You can collect a candidates pack, and get more advice, from the elections team at the Town Hall, from 24 March.

If you require further advice about nominations, election expenses or any other aspects of the election, you can contact the Electoral Services email: electoral@fylde.gov.uk. The Electoral Commission website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk, also provides information about elections in England, including comprehensive guidance for potential candidates.

Will I have to pay a deposit?

No deposit is required to stand in local elections.

How long will my term of office be?

Your term of office will be four years - until the beginning of May 2027..

What support will I receive, and will I be given any training to help me perform my duties as a councillor?

All of the Council's officers will be on hand to offer information and advice. More guidance and support is also provided by the Democratic Services team.

Important – If elected you will be invited to attend a number of important training events shortly after the election. You should bear this in mind in terms of the time commitment, and any other personal commitments. **This is particularly important if you are new to local government.**



All new councillors are provided with a **comprehensive Induction Training package** which has been designed to enable you to get the most out of your first few months of being a councillor. A supplementary sheet, attached to this document, will provide you with a list of provisional dates and times for essential training. If you are a member of a political group, there could be training and support from your group. Amongst other things, your induction will include:

- A Welcome Pack (Issued at the election count)
- Informal session on **Tuesday, 9 May 2023**
- A Welcome Event will be held on the evening of **Monday, 15 May 2023** shortly after the election which will include an opportunity to meet the council's Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Heads of Service.
- A series of induction training on topics such as: planning; scrutiny, licensing; Code of Conduct; speaking in public; using IT etc.
- An officer 'Buddy'

How much time will I have to commit?

How much time you spend on your duties as a Councillor is largely up to you and will depend on the commitments you take on and this can differ from councillor-to-councillor. For example, a if you become a Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a committee, you will have a bigger time commitment. Meetings are generally held in the evening, and there is an expectation you will attend meetings of committees to which you are appointed. If you can't attend the meeting, you can ask a colleague to substitute on your behalf. The duration of meetings can vary in nature depending on the nature of the business to be discussed.

Each committee that you sit on will have reports, in the form of an agenda, which will be sent to you electronically prior to the meeting for you to consider. Again, some committees are more demanding than others. Members of the Planning Committee may wish to visit the site of the proposed application and there will also be letters from

residents to read. The Planning Committee also meets more frequently. Members of other committees may need to do some background research (on behalf of their residents) of a topic prior to attending a committee.



In general, the committees of the Council commence at **18:30** with the exception of the Council which commences at **19:00** and the Planning Committee meetings and Licensing Committee /Panel hearings which meet during the day at **10:00am**.

Time-management will be a key skill required to fulfil the role of councillor. There will be a learning curve to develop your knowledge of council services, and processes. Your investment will be rewarded by making a difference to the wider Fylde community and assisting residents.

Can I be a Councillor and have a job?

By law, if you are working, your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a councillor. This is covered by the Employment Rights Act 1996, section 50. The amount of time given will depend on your responsibilities and the effect of your absence on your employer's business. You should discuss this with your employer before making the commitment to stand for election.

I have a disability; can I be a Councillor?

If you fulfil the general criteria for being a councillor, you can stand for election. Once you become a councillor, the Council will make reasonable adjustments to allow you to fulfil your role.

Our policy 'Working with Councillors with Disabilities and Councillor Welfare' document is available on request.

Will I be paid to be a councillor?

Being a Councillor is not a full-time job.

You are paid an allowance to reimburse you for time and expenses incurred whilst on Council business. The allowance is reviewed each year by an Independent Remuneration Panel and the Council then considers any recommendations the Panel makes. The 2022/23 allowance was £4,000 per annum. The allowance, which is taxable, is paid into a bank account in 12 monthly instalments. You can also claim an allowance to cover subsistence and travel costs, where applicable,.

Some councillors receive an additional allowance to cover any special responsibilities such as Leader, Chairman of a committee etc. and this is set and paid in the same way as the basic allowance.

If you are in receipt of any benefits, you should consider if the receipt of an allowance, will have an impact on your entitlement.

Further information on allowances/subsistence allowances is made available on the Council's website

<https://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/DocumentsandInformation.aspx>

Will training be provided?

A training package is provided for all Councillors. This starts with an induction leading to more specific and tailored ongoing training. Training for Councillors in specific skills and roles will continue throughout the term of office. In addition, regular monthly briefing sessions are organised on differing subject matters.

Following election, you will get the opportunity for a 1-2-1 session with the IT team to get you started.

Will I have my own office and administrative support?

There is a Members' Room available for the exclusive use of councillors (or for meetings with officers). This can be booked in advance. Although you are not provided with direct administrative support, the Democratic Services team attend all committee meetings and take minutes in support of the decision-making process.