

Your Community Council - Getting Involved

Community Councils come in many different forms, reflecting the different communities they represent. Even though there are differences, they all have the same core purpose, which is to act as a voice for their community. In Inverclyde, that means their main role is to let Inverclyde Council and other public bodies know the view of their community.

For many Community Councils, that is simply the beginning. Many are actively involved in the organisation of community events, and in gathering the views of other groups in their community, such as tenants and residents groups or clubs and associations, making sure their views are also heard.

We at Inverclyde Council have a Community Council Liaison as a point of contact for Community Councils, who will be happy to discuss Community Council matters. **The Community Council Liaison can be contacted on:**

community.councils@inverclyde.gov.uk or **01475 712 618**

If there is no Community Council in your area, then you can ask for one to be set up. At least 20 people registered to vote in the area must write to us at Inverclyde Council asking that elections be held to set one up. In practice, this usually means one person write a letter, and the other 19 add their signatures. If you are interested in setting up a Community Council, and wish to discuss this further, please contact the Community Council Liaison.

We would like more people to get involved in the work of their local Community Council, either by putting themselves forward for vacancies as they arise or simply by attending their regular meetings, raising concerns and contributing ideas. This will be to their, their community's and their Community Council's benefit.

We would also like to see our Community Councils represent the wider communities they serve and have representatives from neighbourhood groups of all types either in attendance at Community Councils meetings or as Community Councillors.

There are a minimum of 6 meetings per Community Council per year, and they are publicised in advance. If you wish to attend and are unsure of how to contact your Community Council, feel free to contact the Community Council Liaison, and who will be happy to put you in touch with them.

An agenda setting down what will be discussed will be available before each Community Council meeting, and Minutes will be taken to publicise what was discussed and decided at the meeting.

If you wish to get more involved in your Community Council, you can also seek to become a member. Community Council elections are held every 4 years, giving new members the

opportunity to be elected. If more people seek nomination than the maximum number of members allowed on the Community Council, then a ballot will be held in which the members of the community will be entitled to vote for their Community Councillors.

Vacancies may also arise during the four year period. These may be filled either by an interim election or by the Community Council co-opting of further members. How such vacancies are filled is normally a decision for the Community Council involved, so if you do wish to join, you should contact them to discuss matters. Again, the Community Council Liaison will also be happy to discuss matters with you and put you in touch with your Community Council.

A good Community Councillor is someone who:

- is committed to their community;
- puts forward the views of the community not their own; and
- wants to make their community a better place to live, learn and work.

Anyone can seek election as a member of a Community Council provided they are:

- at least 16 years old;
- live within the Community Council Area;
- are on the registered to vote in that area; and
- are not elected as a member of The Inverclyde Council or the Scottish, UK or European Parliaments.

Community Councils can also appoint Associate Members. Their role is more as an advisor and they cannot vote at meetings. They are often chosen for their particular knowledge or expertise on a matter or issue that the Community Council is dealing with. There is no limit on the number of Associate Members and there is more flexibility on how long they are appointed for.

We provide ongoing training, guidance and support for Community Councils and their members through our Community Learning and Development Service (CLD). CLD staff are active in neighbourhoods across Inverclyde, working with Community Councils to recruit, organise and engage with the communities they represent. **CLD staff can be contacted on:**

CLD.Admin@inverclyde.gov.uk or **01475 715 450.**

We also provide Community Councils with grant funding to cover administrative costs, such as general running costs, stationery, publicity, hall hires and the like. They can also seek to raise funds, be that further grants or other fundraising, for other matters or specific projects.

If you have questions about Community Councils, or are interested in joining or forming a Community Council, then please contact the Community Council Liaison who will be happy to discuss matters with you.